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Chichvarkin Won't Return

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Businessman Yevgeny Chichvarkin ruled out leaving self-imposed exile Wednesday, saying he feared new charges.

Chichvarkin, 36, who helped found mobile phone retailer Yevroset, had faced charges of extortion and kidnapping dating back to 2003, but prosecutors dropped them this week.

Chichvarkin, who now lives in Britain, said he feared a new wave of prosecution if he returned to his native Moscow.

"The probability is almost 100 percent," he told journalists in Moscow via video-link from London. "I don't have any doubt about that."

Chichvarkin also criticized Russia's business climate, saying it was growing worse. "The spirit of Soviet traditions is coming back, it's seeping from the holes in the floor," he said. ◙

(Reuters)

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