

Medvedev Refuses to Pardon Khodorkovsky

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Jailed tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky **Sergei Porter**

President Dmitry Medvedev went against the recommendations of an expert panel that said jailed businessman Mikhail Khodorkovksy should be freed, declining to pardon the prisoner during a meeting with the presidential human rights council.

In early February the council urged Medvedev to pardon Khodorkovksy and more than 30 other prisoners. In December, the council said Khodorkovksy had been jailed illegally during his second trial and his verdict should be overturned.

But at a meeting with the council, Medvedev questioned the recommendation, council head Mikhail Fedotov told RIA-Novosti on Monday.

"The president does not agree with the experts' opinion. The president in resolution said he does not understand why he should pardon someone who had not asked for clemency," Fedotov said.

Fedotov did not exclude the possibility that the question of clemency would be discussed at the next meeting of the council with the president April 28.

"It's not impossible, because during the meeting of the council attended by the president, [he] established a very simple rule: everyone should say what he thinks is necessary," Fedotov said.

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