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# Khodorkovsky Calls on Business Ombudsman to Examine Jail Sentence

By The Moscow Times

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Ex-tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky standing trial in Moscow's Khamovnichesky District Court in 2009. **Igor Tabakov**

Mikhail Khodorkovsky has appealed to business ombudsman Boris Titov to review his prison sentence, shortly after his business partner found out he could get out of jail as early as next year.

The Business Against Corruption center, which Titov co-chairs, received the package of documents from the jailed tycoon's lawyer on Wednesday, the center's vice president, Tatyana Marchenko, told Russian media.

Titov, a business lobbyist appointed commissioner for entrepreneurs' rights by President Vladimir Putin in June, has said Khodorkovsky's release would have a favorable impact on the business climate. He later denied a report in Bloomberg that cited him as saying he would petition the president for the tycoon's release.

Khodorkovsky expressed skepticism about his appeal because of Titov's links to the Kremlin, but made the application because "it is useful for entrepreneurs to know what risks they are taking when they rely on our "justice" [and] how the entrepreneurs' ombudsman can realistically help them," he said in a letter to Titov.

A lawyer for Khodorkovsky, Vadim Klyuvgant, told Gazeta.ru that his client's appeal was made directly and personally to Titov, rather than the center.

"Titov is in a hard situation," Ivan Ninenko, deputy director of Transparency International Russia, said by telephone. "It is obvious that Khodorkovsky's case is politically motivated, that it is unlawful," he said, but finding in his favor "would be a strong political step."

The former head of Yukos oil company is not due for release until 2017, after being tried for a second time in 2010 for embezzlement. The charge was widely seen as trumped-up to keep him behind bars at the behest of Putin.

His appeal to Titov follows a decision by an Arkhangelsk judge on Wednesday to cut the sentence of Khodorkovsky's business associate, Platon Lebedev, by more than three years.

Khodorkovsky was unlikely to get early release, Ninenko said. "Khodorkovsky is so politically based and so personally based that I don't really believe that any appeal will somehow change Khodorkovsky's fate."

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