

Court Rejects Reduced Sentence for Khodorkovsky's Associate

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The Arkhangelsk region courtroom where a ruling to reduce the prison sentence of Platon Lebedev was overturned Friday.

An Arkhangelsk court has overturned a lower court's ruling to reduce the prison sentence of Platon Lebedev, the former business associate of former Yukos CEO Mikhail Khodorkovsky.

Lebedev could have been freed as early as March after a judge in the Arkhangelsk region city of Velsk reduced Lebedev's sentence by three years and four months on Aug. 8.

But the Arkhangelsk Regional Court called the ruling "too lenient" on Friday and ordered a different judge to reconsider the case in Velsk, according to Khodorkovsky's website, [Khodorkovsky.ru](#).

Lebedev's lawyer, Alexei Miroshnichenko, who attended Friday's court hearing, suggested that the ruling wasn't handed down independently and vowed to fight for his client's

immediate release.

"Judging by what we've heard here, the decision wasn't made here. It was tailored in a hurry, but not here," Miroshnichenko said in a statement on Khodorkovsky.ru. He didn't elaborate.

The judge in the Aug. 8 decision had cited changes made to the Criminal Code during Dmitry Medvedev's presidency that lowered the maximum punishment for white-collar crimes.

Lebedev is serving a 13-year sentence following convictions on charges of fraud, tax evasion and embezzlement at two trials, in 2005 and 2010. He was convicted together with his businessman partner Khodorkovsky, former head of what was once Russia's biggest oil company.

Their supporters say the case was punishment by the Kremlin for Khodorkovsky's political and commercial ambitions.

Another former associate of Khodorkovsky, Vladimir Malakhovsky, is scheduled to leave prison on Oct. 10. Malakhovsky, who headed Yukos affiliate Ratibor, was arrested in 2004 and sentenced to 12 years in 2007 for embezzlement and money laundering. But courts have reduced his sentence five times, most recently in August.

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