

Russia Must Pay Yukos Security Chief \$12,000

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The European Court of Human Rights ruled Tuesday that Russia has to pay 9,500 euros (\$12,355) in damages to a former Yukos security chief for trial violations.

Alexei Pichugin, former head of the security service of what was once Russia's biggest oil company, was prosecuted for organizing a killing and an attempted murder. In 2005, he was convicted on the first charge by a jury and sentenced to 20 years in prison, while in 2007 he was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment.

Pichugin's prosecution was part of the Kremlin's crackdown on Yukos, widely believed to be revenge for CEO Mikhail Khodorkovsky's political ambitions.

In his complaint to the Strasbourg court, Pichugin said that during the investigation into the killing, he was tortured and deprived of his rights to liberty, personal safety and a fair trial, treatment that violates three articles of the European Convention on Human Rights.

The European Court found that Russia had violated Article 6 of the convention and ruled that it pay Pichugin 9,500 euros in compensation for moral damage and legal costs, Interfax reported.

In particular, the court found that the Russian court's decision to hear Pichugin's case behind closed doors was not justified. In addition, the Strasbourg court ruled that during the trial, Pichugin was deprived of the opportunity to contest evidence against him.

Although the Strasbourg court found that Pichugin's arrest was legal, it accepted Pichugin's claim that the slow and inefficient handling of his petitions by the authorities constituted a violation of Article 5 of the Convention on Human Rights, guaranteeing personal liberty and security.

The court did not consider Pichugin's complaint on the possible violation of Article 3, which prohibits torture.

Pichugin, 50, served with the KGB and later with one of its successors, the Federal Security Service, from 1987 to 1994.

After retiring at the rank of major, Pichugin worked in the security department of the Menatep Bank. In 1998, he was appointed chief of the internal economic security department of Yukos, which was headed by Khodorkovsky.

The former Yukos chief executive is serving a prison term on separate charges. Pichugin was arrested in June 2003, four months before Khodorkovsky.

In the same session Tuesday, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that Russia is to pay 12,000 euros to three activists of the banned National Bolshevik Party — Alexei Zentsov, Lira Guskova, and Ivan Drozdov — who complained about bad prison conditions during their pretrial detention.

They were detained after party activists were suspected of raiding one of President Vladimir Putin's public reception offices in 2004, Interfax reported.

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