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Russia Will Abide by Strasbourg Court Khodorkovsky Ruling

By The Moscow Times

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Russia will abide by the European Court of Human Rights ruling that the 2005 trial of former Yukos oil tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky was marred by rights violations, and intends to pay a 10,000 euro ($13,000) fine, an official said Thursday.

Justice Ministry spokesman said that Russia has not filed an appeal within the three-month period allocated to dispute the July verdict, RIA Novosti reported. He added that Russia will proceed with paying the fine once the court notifies it that the time for appeal has expired and the ruling is final.

"The payment of the damages awarded to Khodorkovsky will be carried out in accordance with the procedure stipulated in the ruling in "Khodorkovsky and Lebedev v. Russia," after receiving notification from the European Court that the ruling is final, and within three months from the day it becomes final," the spokesman said.

As of Wednesday, the ruling was not yet listed as final in the court's HUDOC database, he added.

After reviewing 14 claims brought by Khodorkovsky and his associate Platon Lebedev, the European court ruled that the trial was not politically motivated, but that it did violate seven articles of the European Convention on Human Rights.

The European justices found that the Russian court violated the defendants' lawyer-client confidentiality, rejected appropriate evidence, harassed the defense lawyers, arbitrarily made Khodorkovsky pay over 17 billion rubles ($525 million) in back taxes for his company after he had been convicted and violated his family rights by sentencing him to serve his prison term in a far-off colony.

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