

Supreme Court Throws Out Khodorkovsky Appeal

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A demonstrator showing his support for the jailed tycoon held on his 50th birthday in 2013.

The Supreme Court has refused to consider an appeal in the embezzlement and money laundering case against former oil tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky and his business partner Platon Lebedev.

The defense has sought to cancel all court rulings against the businessmen as illegitimate and unjustified.

The tycoons' sentences were commuted first by the Moscow City Court in December 2012 and then by the Supreme Court in August 2013. Khodorkovsky and Lebedev are to be released on Aug. 25 and May 2 of next year, respectively.

In what was widely considered a politically motivated case, the businessmen were initially arrested on fraud and tax evasion charges in 2003 and subsequently sentenced to nine years in prison each.

In 2010 Khodorkovsky and Lebedev were also found guilty of money laundering and stealing \$27 billion worth of oil, an amount equal to the value of all the crude produced by their oil company Yukos in 1998 to 2003, and their imprisonment was extended to 2017. The defense called the charges absurd, saying that they were essentially accused of stealing their own oil and were being tried for the same supposed crime for a second time. The sentence has since been reduced several times.

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