The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Parnas Party Envisions Navalny, Khodorkovsky as Future Leaders

July 05, 2015



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Russian opposition party RPR-Parnas, which was co-founded by slain opposition leader Boris Nemtsov, announced two major changes to the faction's structure Sunday, and voiced hope that two of Russia's most famous opposition activists could soon be perched at its helm.

Nemtsov had been serving as RPR-Parnas' co-chairman when he was gunned down outside the Kremlin in February. At the party's convention Sunday, Mikhail Kasyanov was elected its sole leader, and the party's name was shortened to Parnas.

Kasyanov told reporters during the convention that though Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny and prominent former oil tycoon-turned-activist Mikhail Khodorkovsky were not yet members of the party, that may soon change, and indeed they could one day serve as the party's co-chairmen. "I think in the future the time will come," he was quoted by state-run news agency RIA Novosti as saying Sunday.

According to Kasyanov, the party is mulling changes to its charter so that when the "time comes," Khodorkovsky and Navalny could be elected as the party's co-chairmen. He noted that this could theoretically happen even if either or both of the opposition firebrands did not wish to officially become party members.

In April 2015, RPR-Parnas and Navalny's Progress Party joined forces, agreeing to form a joint list of candidates for various upcoming elections, including the State Duma elections in 2016.

The coalition was later expanded to include another three parties — Democratic Choice, the December 5th Party and the Russian Libertarian Party.

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