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Russia Brings New Criminal Charges Against Khodorkovsky

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Mikhail Khodorkovsky

Russia has brought new criminal charges against the exiled former oil tycoon turned political opposition figure Mikhail Khodorkovsky, sending an official summons for questioning to his father's Moscow address, the activist and his allies said Monday.

Khodorkovsky, who has been living in Switzerland since his release from prison two years ago, tweeted an image of the Investigative Committee's summons on Monday, adding: "Dragged this to my father today. As if they don't know my address." He then listed the London address of the Open Russia Club — a branch of the Open Russia pro-democracy organization that Khodorkovsky founded.

The summons ordered Khodorkovsky to show up for questioning Friday "as a defendant," but an investigator added in a handwritten note at the bottom: "Since M.B. Khodorkovsky is residing outside of Russia's borders, appearing is impossible."

Khodorkovsky, the former chief of the Yukos oil company, spent a more than a decade behind bars in what was widely seen as politically motivated case. He was pardoned by Russia's President Vladimir Putin in December 2013, several months before his sentence was to run out, escorted by guards to St. Petersburg, and put on a flight to Berlin.

The Investigative Committee summons described the latest charges as part of "Criminal case No. 18/35-03." The number refers to a case against former Yukos security chief Alexei Pichugin, Open Russia coordinator Vladimir Kara-Murza, Jr. said on his Facebook page Monday.

Pichugin is serving a life sentence for the 1998 killing of a former mayor of the oil town of Nefteyugansk, Vladimir Petukhov, and other murders. The ex-security chief and his supporters maintain he is innocent.

The RBC business news agency cited an unidentified source familiar with the investigation as also saying that "case No. 18/35-03" was the inquiry into the Nefteyugansk mayor's killing.

The Investigative Committee announced on June 30 it was reopening the case into Petukhov's killing and considered Khodorkovsky a prime suspect.

"According to information acquired by the Investigative Committee, this murder and an array of other major crimes may have been commissioned directly by Yukos chief Mikhail Khodorkovsky," the committee said at that time.

A month later, investigators questioned Khodorkovsky's 82-year-old father in connection with the case in August.

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