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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Khodorkovsky Arrested in Absentia, Placed on International Wanted List

By The Moscow Times

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Russian exile, Mikhail Khodorkovsky, is seen between audience members as delivers a speech at Chatham House in central London.

Mikhail Khodorkovsky, the former chief of Yukos oil company who spent 10 years in jail, has been arrested in absentia and declared internationally wanted, the Interfax news agency reported Wednesday, citing Investigative Committee spokesman Vladimir Markin.

Earlier this month, Khodorkovsky, who currently resides in London, was charged in absentia with masterminding two murders and the attempted murder of four other people.

According to the Investigative Committee, Khodorkovsky ordered his subordinates, including Leonid Nevzlin and Alexei Pichugin, to organize the murder of Vladimir Petukhov, the mayor of the Siberian oil capital Nefteyugansk in 1998.

He was also charged with plotting an attack on businessman Yevgeny Rybin, which resulted in

the death of Rybin's bodyguard.

“It's absolutely clear to the investigation that the crimes were committed for mercenary ends,” Markin was quoted by Interfax as saying.

Petukhov's murder was linked to his demands that Yukos return taxes hidden from the state, Markin said, and Rybin's attack to his demands to be compensated for the damage Yukos' illegal activities caused.

According to Khodorkovsky's spokeswoman Kulle Pispanen, Khodorkovsky considered the allegations to be unfounded and was not going to limit himself on any front over the warrant, Interfax reported earlier this month.

Khodorkovsky, who spent over 10 years in prison on charges of tax evasion and embezzlement in in what was widely viewed as a politically motivated case, was freed in 2013 after a pardon from President Vladimir Putin.

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