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Khodorkovsky to Support Russian Opposition Candidates

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Mikhail Khodorkovsky

Former oil tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky's Open Russia foundation will support opposition candidates at Russia's upcoming parliamentary elections, Kommersant newspaper reported Friday.

Open Russia will aid candidates via its new Open Elections project, introduced last summer, according to Khodorkovsky's website.

“We will provide the resources. There aren't any people who know to attract funds for election campaigns, and no political technologists to run them,” Open Elections head Timur Valeyev told Kommersant.

A special jury will choose up to 25 candidates to support, Valeyev said.

Open Russia is already in talks with two possible candidates from the People's Freedom Party (Parnas) political party, Kommersant reported.

Russia's parliamentary elections are scheduled for Sept. 18.

Khodorkovsky spent more than a decade behind bars after being stripped of his oil company assets in what was widely seen as politically motivated case. He was pardoned by President Vladimir Putin in December 2013.

On Dec. 11, 2015, he was charged with masterminding two murders in the 1990s, the Interfax news agency reported.

Since his release, Khodorkovsky has been a vocal critic of the Kremlin. Two days before the charges were brought, he said that a "revolution" in Russia was inevitable and could happen as soon as 2018.

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