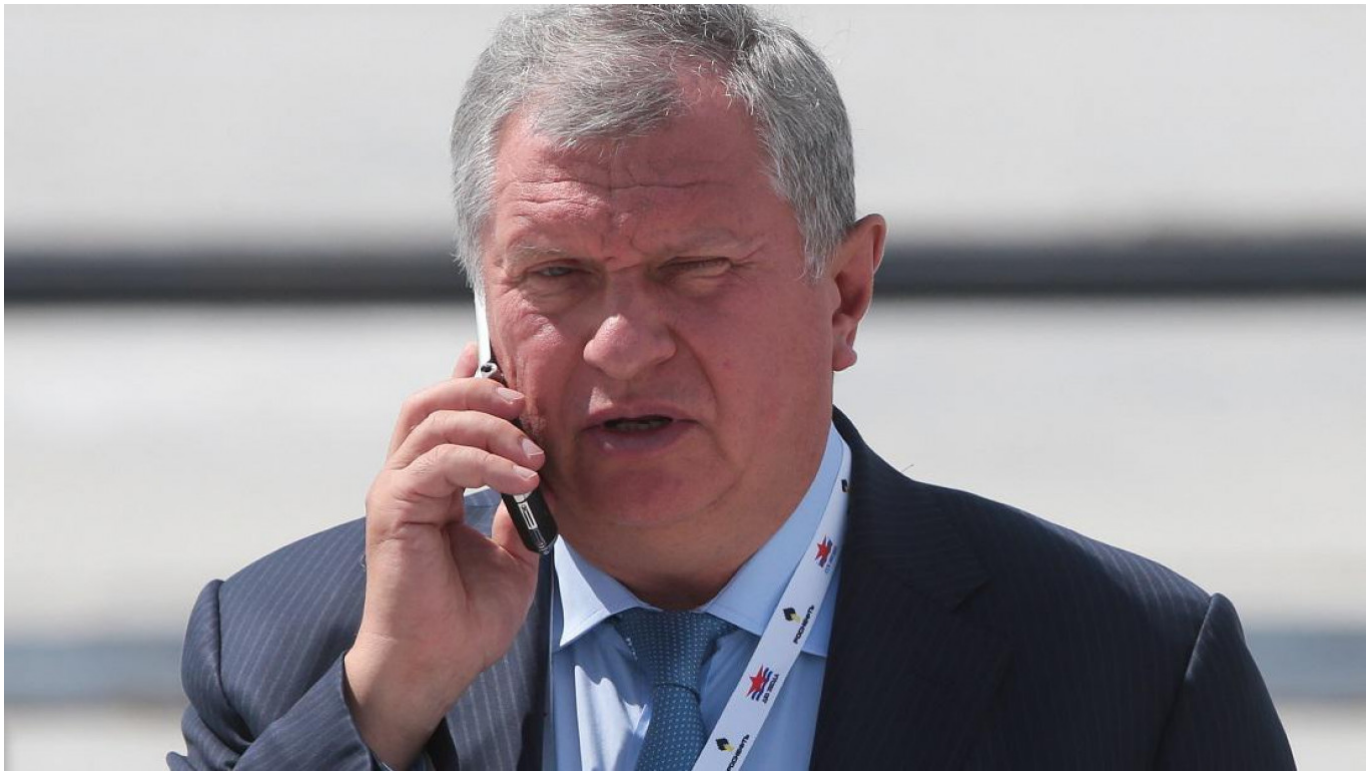
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# Russian Court Will Stop Issuing Summons to Rosneft CEO Sechin in Ulyukayev Case

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**Igor Sechin / Mikhail Metsel / TASS**

After failing to appear on four separate occasions, a Russian court has said it will no longer issue summons to the CEO of Russia's oil giant Rosneft, to testify in a case against former economic development minister Alexei Ulyukayev.

Ulyukayev faces up to 15 years in prison for allegedly soliciting a $2-million bribe from Sechin in 2016. Prosecutors say Ulyukayev requested the sum in exchange for signing off on Rosneft's acquisition of another oil firm last year. This led to Ulyukayev's arrest in a November 2016 sting operation at Rosneft's Moscow headquarters staged by Sechin.

Ulyukayev told the court Tuesday that he believed the "basket" offered to him during a brief visit to Rosneft's office had only contained bottles of wine, though it actually contained cash.

**Related article**: Russia's Sechin Passed Off $2 Million Bribe as Wine, Court Told

Sechin was added to the case's witness list on day one of the high-profile trial but has failed to appear in court four times already, citing urgent business meetings.

"We are confident that the questioning of Sechin will enable the removal of charges against Ulyukayev," the independent Novaya Gazeta cited Timofey Gridnev, Ulyukayev's lawyer as saying in court Tuesday.

While the prosecutor originally said Sechin, a close ally of President Vladimir Putin, would have to appear in court, he later said Sechin "had a valid reason" not to attend.

The judge also turned down the prosecutor's request for Sechin's written testimony to be read in court, after Ulyukayev's counsel objected that Sechin himself had not appeared.

Final arguments will be heard on Dec. 4 when the prosecutor will request a sentence, Interfax reported.

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