

TNK-BP Shareholder Case Dashed

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A court is likely to throw out a \$2.8 billion lawsuit against two BP executives on the board of the British major's Russian joint venture, TNK-BP, after a judge denied plaintiffs more time to secure the necessary shareholder support.

Andrei Prokhorov, a minority shareholder in TNK-BP, had filed the lawsuit against Peter Charow and Richard Sloan, related to BP's failed attempt to sign a tie-up with state-controlled Rosneft, despite a previous commitment by BP to use TNK-BP as its main investment vehicle in Russia.

However, Russian law on joint-stock companies stipulates that a plaintiff in such an action must own at least 1 percent of the company's shares for the case to proceed.

Prokhorov does not have this threshold in TNK-BP, the country's third-largest oil company, and a Russian judge refused him more time to attract other investors to his case, his lawyer and a lawyer for BP said.

"Today the court, during preliminary hearings, thwarted the plaintiff's requests to present him with more time so that other shareholders would join the lawsuit," Konstantin Lukoyanov, a lawyer for BP, said by telephone. This means that the case should be thrown out on the date set for a hearing on Nov. 10.

A lawyer for the TNK-BP minority shareholder confirmed the court decision. "The request [for more time] was not satisfied," Dmitry Chepurenskiy from Liniya Prava law firm said.

It is a welcome court victory for BP, which is locked in a dispute with the AAR consortium, the other main shareholder in TNK-BP and which is a grouping of Russian and Russia-connected oligarchs, over the failed Rosneft share swap and Arctic exploration deal.

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