

Ex-Yukos Partner Charged

April 10, 2012

The  **Moscow Times**

Russian prosecutors have charged a fugitive business partner of jailed oil tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky with tax evasion.

Alexei Spirichev headed two companies affiliated with Khodorkovsky's Yukos conglomerate. He fled Russia after Khodorkovsky's 2003 arrest and now lives in London.

The Prosecutor General's Office said Tuesday that Spirichev's companies were "fictitious" and earned more than \$300 million by abusing tax privileges and receiving illegal tax returns between 1998 and 2001.

Khodorkovsky's lawyer, Vadim Kluvgant, said the charges were "yet another bit of a big fake case" against Yukos.

Khodorkovsky was convicted of tax evasion and embezzlement and is due to be freed in 2016. His case is widely seen as Kremlin punishment for his funding of opposition parties.

(AP)

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