

Khodorkovsky's Partner Charged With Tax Evasion

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Alexei Spirichev headed two companies affiliated with dissolved oil company Yukos. Above, a sign from a Yukos gas station in 2007. **Vladimir Baranov**

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 General Prosecutor'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 Klugant 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.

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