

Khodorkovsky Accuses Putin of Pursuing 'Personal Grudge' Against Ukraine

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Former Russian oil tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky speaks during the opening of the "Ukraine-Russia: Dialogue" congress in Kiev, Ukraine.

Former oil tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky has said ordinary Russians are paying the price for President Vladimir Putin's "personal grudge" against protesters in Ukraine.

Putin "is offended because of the revolution, because the thieving former President Yanukovich and his corrupt entourage have been forced into exile. The parallels hit too close to home for him," Khodorkovsky said at a conference held Thursday in Ukraine's capital Kiev.

"Once again, this time in Ukraine, he is using his office to avenge a personal grudge," the former Yukos CEO said, according to a transcript of the speech posted on his website.

The annexation of the Black Sea peninsula Crimea last month has boosted Putin's domestic approval ratings and increased many Russians' perception of their country's standing, recent

polls show.

But Khodorkovsky, who spent almost a decade in prison in a case that many believe was politically motivated before his release under presidential amnesty in December 2013, said Russians themselves were paying the price for Putin's focus on "rules of centuries past."

The "saddest thing for us, citizens of Russia, is that President Putin is not addressing global and strategic challenges," he said.

Khodorkovsky, a staunch opponent of Putin, has repeatedly accused the Russian government of encouraging Yanukovich to use force against Maidan anti-government protesters.

Also see:

[Khodorkovsky Addresses Crowds on Kiev's Independence Square](#)

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