

1. Alexey Pichugin



Alexey Pichugin is the Kremlin’s longest serving political prisoner.⁴ At the time of his arrest, Pichugin was a mid-level security manager at Yukos, then one of Russia’s biggest and fastest-growing oil companies. Although he was never himself political, Yukos’ CEO Mikhail Khodorkovsky was publicly critical of Putin’s government and was actively funding opposition parties.⁵ In what was widely seen as politically-motivated retaliation,⁶ a number of Yukos leaders and employees were arrested and charged with various crimes, and Yukos itself was broken up and sold to state-controlled Russian energy firms.

Pichugin was convicted of multiple counts of murder and attempted murder (Criminal Code Article 105), as well as robbery (Article 162), in two trials marred by blatant due process violations. There was no non-hearsay evidence introduced in his trials that linked Pichugin to the underlying crimes – only the statements of jailhouse “confessors” who claimed that they had been told by third parties that Pichugin was behind the crimes. In the first trial, the judge closed the proceedings to the public and prevented the defense from cross-examining the key witness against him – one of the Kremlin’s confessors who at one point stated that his future was now in “in the hands of the President of Russia.”⁷ In the second trial, the state developed “expert” reports without participation of the defense, and the court did not allow the defense to introduce an expert report exonerating Pichugin or to cross-examine Pichugin’s four co-defendants

⁴ Vladimir Kara-Murza, *For Russia’s Longest-Serving Political Prisoner, It’s 15 Years and Counting*, WASHINGTON POST, June 19, 2018, available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/democracy-post/wp/2018/06/19/for-russias-longest-serving-political-prisoner-its-15-years-and-counting/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.496f480c87b1.

⁵ THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE ARREST AND PROSECUTION OF LEADING YUKOS EXECUTIVES, RAPORTEUR OF THE PARL. ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE, Nov. 29, 2004, at § III, ¶ 69, available at <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/X2H-Xref-ViewHTML.asp?FileID=10730&lang=EN>.

⁶ *Russian Federation: The Case of Mikhail Khodorkovskii and Other Individuals Associated with YUKOS*, AMNESTY INT’L, Apr. 11, 2005, available at <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/84000/eur460122005en.pdf> (“Amnesty International acknowledges the widespread perception . . . that the cases are politically motivated . . .”).

⁷ *Pichugin v. Russia*, App. No. 38623/03, Eur. Ct. H.R., Oct. 23, 2012, at ¶¶ 185–92, 200–13, available at <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#%7B%22itemid%22:%5B%22001-114074%22%5D%7D> [hereinafter *Pichugin v. Russia 2012*].

(all of whom had originally implicated him but later recanted, explaining that investigators had provided them Pichugin's name).⁸ In addition, Pichugin was arrested without a warrant; interrogated without and denied access to counsel; given limited access to case materials and time to prepare a defense; held in extended pretrial detention; drugged by interrogators; and publicly denounced by government officials before he had been convicted.⁹ Confirming the political nature of the charges against him, Pichugin was also repeatedly pressured to falsely implicate Khodorkovsky and Khodorkovsky's partner, Leonid Nevzlin, in criminal activity.¹⁰

The European Court of Human Rights ruled, in two separate cases, that Pichugin's convictions violated his right to a fair trial.¹¹ In addition, leading organizations, such as the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights and the Lantos Foundation, have recognized Pichugin as a prisoner of conscience.¹²

2. Alexey Navalny



Former political prisoner Alexey Navalny is an anti-corruption activist and one of Russia's leading political opposition figures.¹³ He has been called "the only credible opposition

⁸ *Pichugin v. Russia*, App. No. 38958/07, Eur. Ct. H.R., June 6, 2017, at ¶¶ 20–23, 34–38, available at <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#%7B%22itemid%22:%5B%22001-174061%22%5D%7D> [hereinafter *Pichugin v. Russia 2017*] and Petition to the U.N. Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, *Pichugin v. Russian Federation*, July 31, 2018, at 18, available at <https://www.perseus-strategies.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Alexey-Pichugin-v.-Russian-Federation-7.31.18.pdf>.

⁹ Petition to the U.N. Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, *supra* note 8, at 13–19.

¹⁰ *Pichugin Alexey Vladimirovich*, MEMORIAL HUMAN RIGHTS CTR., accessed Feb. 12, 2019, available at <https://memohrc.org/ru/defendants/pichugin-aleksey-vladimirovich> [in Russian].

¹¹ *Pichugin v. Russia 2012*, *supra* note 7 and *Pichugin v. Russia 2017*, *supra* note 8.

¹² Irwin Cotler, *For the Sake of Human Rights, We Must Stand for the Nameless*, THE HILL, Feb. 16, 2018, available at <https://thehill.com/opinion/civil-rights/373756-for-the-sake-of-human-rights-we-must-stand-for-the-nameless> and Katrina Lantos Swett, *Interpol and Pichugin: Unwilling Pawns in Putin's Yukos Game*, HUFFINGTON POST, Nov. 16, 2015, available at https://www.huffingtonpost.com/katrina-lantos-swett/interpol-and-pichugin-unw_b_8483784.html.

¹³ *Russia: Nationwide Assaults on Political Opposition Campaign*, HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH, Sept. 6, 2017, available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/09/06/russia-nationwide-assaults-political-opposition-campaign>.