

PRESS RELEASE

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**Khodorkovsky's son tells U.S. Congress rejection of his father's appeal is
"a gross violation of the rule of law."**

Washington DC, September 22, 2005. On the day his father's appeal was rejected, Pavel Khodorkovsky, son of imprisoned former YUKOS Chairman Mikhail Khodorkovsky, told the United States Congressional Human Rights Caucus the appellate court's ruling "is further evidence that this political vendetta is a gross violation of the rule of law."

Just hours following the conclusion of Mikhail Khodorkovsky's appeal hearing at the Moscow City Court, The Congressional Human Rights Caucus, in conjunction with the Russia Working Group, hosted a Members briefing entitled "Russia: Decline of Rule of Law and Democracy: What Lies Ahead?" In addition to Khodorkovsky, the briefing, chaired by Congressman Tom Lantos, also featured members of the human rights community, including Maureen Greenwood of Amnesty International, John Squier from the National Endowment for Democracy, Archi Pyati of Human Rights First, and Alex Semyonov, director of the Andrei Sakharov Foundation.

Panelists at the briefing focused on the increasing control of the Kremlin over traditionally independent Russian institutions, including the media and legislative and judicial branches of the government, and the negative consequences that such developments have had on Russian rule of law and democracy.

In a separate hearing conducted today by the U.S. Congressional Armed Services Committee, Russia expert Leon Aron of the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) went further, warning the Committee that "all the structural vulnerabilities brought about by the Kremlin's re-centralization policies, particularly its neglect of public opinion and the effective absence of checks and balances, may come home to roost with devastating effect."

In a statement to the Court, Mikhail Khodorkovsky insisted that the charges against him were politically motivated and referred to the guilty verdict delivered by the Meshchansky court as "not a court decision; it has nothing to do with justice."

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