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## Russia picks Israeli lawyer to get Nevzelin extradited

Dan Izenberg  
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In an unprecedented move, the Russian Federation prosecutor-general has given power of attorney to an Israeli lawyer to represent it in its efforts to extradite a Russian-born Israeli citizen who was a partner in the Yukos oil company. The lawyer, Yoram Muszkat, who recently returned from Russia, told *The Jerusalem Post* he would meet with Justice Ministry officials to persuade them to send the suspect, multi-millionaire Leonid Nevzelin, back to Russia where he is wanted on charges of embezzlement, tax fraud, murder and organizing contract killings. Nevzelin has denied the allegations and said they were part of a persecution campaign against him by President Vladimir Putin because of his opposition to the government and his attempts to further democracy in Russia. Nevzelin's partner, and the former majority holder in Yukos, Mikhail Khodordovsky, is serving an eight-year prison sentence in Russia on charges of tax fraud. According to Muszkat, Israel has not acknowledged receipt of the Russian extradition request against Nevzelin for the economic crimes he is charged with and said there were problems with the quality of the evidence submitted by the Russian prosecution regarding the murder allegations. Muszkat said the Russian Federation prosecutor-general promised to send him more evidence allegedly compiled in Russia against Nevzelin to help him persuade Israeli authorities to send him back to Russia as quickly as possible. He added that the Russian prosecution got to know him because he represented a petitioner, Yisrael Nudelman, who called on the High Court of Justice to strip Nevzelin of his Israeli citizenship and deport him on the grounds that he had lied to Israeli immigration officials when he told them he was not wanted for questioning by Russian police. Muszkat filed the petition on February 1, 2006 but the court has still not heard it. He said the court had informed him his petition would be heard no earlier than April 2007. Nevzelin entered Israel on July 30, 2003 and received Israeli citizenship on November 2.

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