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## Russia's Interior Ministry investigates PriceWaterhouse on tax dodging allegations

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MOSCOW – Russian police investigators visited the Moscow office of international auditing firm PricewaterhouseCoopers on Friday as part of an ongoing probe into alleged of tax dodging.

The Interior Ministry said executives at the Moscow office of PriceWaterhouseCoopers Audit are suspected of failing to pay over 243 million rubles (\$9.3 million) in taxes. A ministry statement said the investigation was continuing and gave no further details.

The ministry's move follows the Federal Tax Service's claims against the company over its audit of the now bankrupt oil company OAO Yukos. PriceWaterhouseCoopers has contested the claims in the Arbitration Court.

A spokeswoman for PricewaterhouseCoopers' Moscow office said that a group of Interior Ministry officials visited the firm's offices in Moscow, requesting additional documents. She said that the company was also facing a separate probe by the Prosecutor General's Office in connection with Yukos, which was PWC's client until 2004.

Yukos, once Russia's largest oil company, was bankrupted after the enforcement of \$28 billion in back-tax claims widely seen as a Kremlin-ordered effort to crush the political ambitions of company founder Mikhail Khodorkovsky and boost state control over the energy industry. Khodorkovsky is serving an eight-year prison sentence after being convicted of fraud and tax evasion in a politically charged trial.

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