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Interior Ministry Investigator In Magnitsky Case Promoted

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An investigator implicated in the death of Hermitage Capital lawyer Sergei Magnitsky has been promoted by the Interior Ministry, although police officials said it was not a reward for his work in the case.

Oleg Silchenko was promoted in July, an Interior Ministry's Investigative Committee spokeswoman said by telephone Tuesday, adding that it was an "automatic" promotion for longevity of service, for which all officers in active service are eligible.

The promotion was first made public by Hermitage Capital, whose representatives learned about it from paperwork signed by Silchenko, a company spokesman told The Moscow Times.

"The documents received from the Investigative Committee were signed by Silchenko as a major, but by the end of September we received documents signed by him as a lieutenant colonel," the spokesman said.

Hermitage, in a statement, criticized the promotion as "a shameful response from the

Russian authorities to the requests to bring to justice Silchenko and other officials responsible for the arrest and torture of Sergei Magnitsky."

The company has filed four requests to open criminal cases into Silchenko but no action has been taken against him, the spokesman said.

Magnitsky, 37, died of health problems in November after spending 11 months in pretrial detention. His supporters say he was denied sufficient medical help and the charges were fabricated by corrupt police officials whom he had implicated for $230 million fraud.

Silchenko rejected a request by Magnitsky for medical treatment in September 2009.

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