

Case Into Magnitsky's Jail Death Nears End

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The Investigative Committee said Tuesday that it would conduct a fourth forensic inquiry and question Hermitage Capital lawyer Sergei Magnitsky's employer and human rights advocates as it wrapped up an investigation into his death.

The [announcement](#), released on the first anniversary of Magnitsky's death in a pretrial detention center, said three forensic medical examinations had confirmed that the death was caused by heart failure. But unspecified inconsistencies in the examinations warranted a fourth one, it said.

Magnitsky complained of poor health while in detention, and his supporters say he was intentionally denied medical treatment.

The committee said investigators were finalizing their overall investigation into Magnitsky's death and would release their findings soon. "Investigative Committee investigators have

questioned all the medical staff and officials working at the detention centers where Magnitsky was jailed,” the committee said in a statement published on its web site.

Investigators also said they intended to question Magnitsky's former employer, U.S. lawyer Jamison Firestone of the Firestone Duncan law firm, and members of the presidential human rights council, which conducted an independent investigation into the death.

Firestone has left Russia and says he has no plans to return.

Lyudmila Alexeyeva, a veteran human rights activist and member of the presidential council, urged investigators Tuesday not to play down Magnitsky's death in their final report.

“I don't think they intended to kill him. They wanted him to retract his telling testimony. He uncovered the theft of 5.4 billion rubles from the federal budget,” Alexeyeva told journalists, Interfax reported.

Alexeyeva was questioned earlier this month in connection with the case.

Magnitsky, 37, who represented Hermitage Capital, once Russia's biggest foreign investment fund, was arrested in November 2008 on tax charges after he accused senior Interior Ministry officials of embezzling 5.4 billion rubles (worth \$230 million at the time) in federal funds. He died on Nov. 16, 2009.

The Interior Ministry's Investigative Committee said Monday that it suspected Magnitsky had helped devise the 5.4 billion ruble embezzlement scheme for Hermitage Capital, an allegation Hermitage denies.

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