

Browder Given 11 Hours to Fly to Moscow

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The  Moscow Times

Accusing investigators of a political crackdown, Hermitage Capital said its head, William Browder, was given 11 hours' notice to travel from London to Moscow for questioning — even though he has been banned from Russia.

The summons is a clumsy attempt to create a pretext for issuing an arrest warrant for Browder, the fund said in a [letter](#) published online Monday.

Browder was banned from entering Russia in 2005 on unexplained "security grounds," which means he could not travel to Moscow for questioning, said the letter, which is dated Sunday and addressed to top officials, including Kremlin chief of staff Sergei Naryshkin, Prosecutor General Yuri Chaika and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.

Moreover, Browder was given less than half a day to make travel arrangements to arrive for a first round of questioning Thursday, followed by a second round Monday, the letter said.

Interior Ministry spokeswoman Irina Dudukina said Thursday that failure to meet with investigators might result in an arrest warrant being issued for Browder.

Dudukina denied the allegations in Hermitage's letter Monday, saying there are no visa restrictions in place for Browder, Interfax reported. She added that investigators discussed the matter of Browder's summons with his lawyers Monday, but refused to elaborate.

Browder was earlier placed on an international wanted list in connection with a tax evasion case that he says is revenge from officials involved in a \$230 million tax fraud that Hermitage was trying to expose. Browder's colleague Sergei Magnitsky was arrested in connection with the same case in 2008 and died from health problems 11 months later in detention. Hermitage says Magnitsky was intentionally denied medical help.

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