

Jail Officials Targeted Over Magnitsky

By [Natalya Krainova](#)

July 18, 2011

The  Moscow Times

Investigators said Monday that a criminal case has been opened into two prison officials in connection with the death of Hermitage lawyer Sergei Magnitsky and that they face possible charges of negligence.

Larisa Litvinova, former medical official at Moscow's Butyrskaya pretrial prison, faces up to three years in prison if charged and convicted of unintentional manslaughter by breach of professional duty, the Investigative Committee said.

Her former superior, Dmitry Kratov, may be jailed for five years if charged with negligence that resulted in death, committee spokesman Vladimir Markin said, Interfax reported.

Other prison officials, including those with high ranks, may face charges in the ongoing investigation, Markin said. The investigation is to wrap up within six weeks.

Magnitsky was rushed from Butyrskaya to a prison hospital as his condition deteriorated in November 2009 after 11 months in custody over tax evasion charges. His supporters say

the case was fabricated by corrupt officials whom he had accused of defrauding the state of \$230 million in tax refunds and that he was intentionally denied medical help.

A U.S. nongovernmental organization, Physicians for Human Rights, echoed these accusations, releasing a report Monday that [said](#) Magnitsky "suffered calculated and deliberate neglect and inhumane treatment which ultimately led to his death."

Earlier this month, the Kremlin's human rights council said in a report that eight prison guards severely beat Magnitsky shortly before his death.

Among those whom Magnitsky accused of stealing companies owned by Hermitage and arranging and embezzling fraudulent tax refunds of \$230 million previously paid by those companies were Interior Ministry officers Artyom Kuznetsov and Pavel Karpov, who proceeded to handle the case against him.

Karpov launched a counterattack on his critics Monday, filing a defamation lawsuit against members of the Kremlin's human rights council for implicating him in Magnitsky's death through the July report.

The lawsuit lists Lyudmila Alexeyeva, Kirill Kabanov and Tamara Morshchakova as plaintiffs, Interfax [said](#).

The human rights council held an independent investigation into the Magnitsky case at the request of President Dmitry Medvedev, who has not commented on the findings and is not mentioned in Karpov's lawsuit.

Karpov demanded a nominal compensation of 1 ruble (3 cents) and asked the court to confirm that he never was accused by Magnitsky of wrongdoing and was not involved in tax fraud. No date for a hearing has been set.

A separate defamation lawsuit was filed by businessman Vladlen Stepanov against anti-corruption blogger Alexei Navalny, who, according to the suit, accused him of purchasing costly assets immediately after Magnitsky exposed the tax fraud. Stepanov was once married to former Moscow tax official Olga Stepanova, who Hermitage has accused of signing off the tax refunds illegally.

Stepanov said he has divorced Olga Stepanova and purchased all his assets with his own money, the RPSI judicial news agency [reported](#), adding that a court hearing will take place Aug. 2.

Stepanov, who is seeking 1 million rubles (\$35,000) in damages, did not comment on the fact that Navalny only reproduced accusations originally made by Hermitage.

Navalny [wrote](#) on his Twitter that he learned about the lawsuit from media reports.

In April, Hermitage released a protracted expose, complete with documents, that accused the Stepanovs of owning assets worth about \$39 million even though their officially declared household income amounted to \$38,300 a year.

Stepanov first denied wrongdoing in a May interview with Komsomolskaya Pravda.

Magnitsky's former boss, Jamison Firestone, accused Stepanov in an interview with Business FM radio in June of "lying" and said the divorce was a sham.

Hermitage and Firestone are not mentioned in either defamation lawsuit.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2011/07/18/jail-officials-targeted-over-magnitsky-a8323>