

Magnitsky Family Claim Harassment

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Relatives of Hermitage Capital lawyer Sergei Magnitsky have appealed to the Kremlin human rights council to stop "harassment" by Interior Ministry officials pursuing a posthumous criminal case against Magnitsky, Hermitage Capital said Tuesday.

The request came after Magnitsky's relatives were summoned for the fifth time to aid the investigation against the anti-corruption whistleblower, who was arrested on tax evasion charges in 2008 after he accused officials of stealing \$230 million from the state budget. He died in pretrial detention a year later.

Magnitsky's relatives, who have called for the investigation to be closed, will not cooperate with investigators and resist their threats to "illegally" appoint a lawyer to represent them, Hermitage Capital said in a statement.

Officials have blamed Magnitsky's death on health problems, but the Kremlin human rights council said in July that he was severely beaten shortly before his death.

Two prison doctors have been charged in connection with his death, while several police officials whom Magnitsky accused of theft and who facilitated his arrest have received

promotions.

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