

# Magnitsky Family Attorney Forcibly Removed From Case

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An attorney representing the family of late Hermitage Capital lawyer Sergei Magnitsky has been forcibly removed by the Interior Ministry against his relatives' will and a formal complaint has been filed, the company said Tuesday.

Magnitsky's mother, Natalya Magnitskaya, has asked Genri Reznik, head of the Moscow Chamber of Lawyers, "for protection against pressure from officers of the Interior Ministry," Hermitage Capital said in a statement.

Copies of the complaint were also sent to the Investigative Committee and the Prosecutor General's Office.

Nikolai Gorokhov, who had been defending Magnitsky's mother, "was such an effective lawyer and he caused such problems for the Interior Ministry that the only way to continue their cover-up was to exclude him," Hermitage chief William Browder told The Moscow

Times by telephone.

Gorokhov contributed to a report Hermitage put out in November, which argued strongly that Magnitsky died after being severely beaten by prison guards in 2009, instead of from health problems as claimed by the authorities, Browder said.

Gorokhov said his ouster was an abuse of authority by investigator Boris Kibis, as the law only allows such a move to be made by the family themselves.

A spokeswoman at the press office of the ministry's investigative department told The Moscow Times on a customary condition of anonymity that Kibis was "forced" to appoint a state lawyer because "neither the relatives nor the lawyers bother showing up before the investigator" who is looking into Magnitsky's death.

Gorokhov said Magnitsky's mother "doesn't want to take part in illegal investigative activities; therefore I have no right to either."

He said lawyers for Magnitsky's widow also consider the government's investigation illegal and will not take part.

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