

Firestone: Interior Ministry Clears Magnitsky Officials

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The Interior Ministry is saying there is "no data whatsoever" to implicate the officials investigated for a \$230 million tax fraud at the heart of the Sergei Magnitsky case, Magnitsky's supporters said Wednesday.

Jamison Firestone, Magnitsky's former colleague at the Firestone Duncan law firm, said in a statement that he received the letter from the ministry in response to his own Aug. 1 letter to investigative agencies.

According to Firestone, the Interior Ministry letter states: "Currently, there is no data whatsoever in the criminal case files about the complicity of officials in the investigated crime. ... No data has been obtained indicating the complicity of officers of law enforcement and tax bodies in the above stated theft."

Firestone's statement was released by investment fund Hermitage Capital, for which the law

firm did the tax preparations that ultimately led to Magnitsky's jailing. Magnitsky, 37, died on the floor of a Moscow prison in November 2009 while awaiting trial.

He had been arrested in 2008 on suspicion of fraud and tax evasion, charges that his former colleagues say were falsely made by the officials whom he had accused of the \$230 million tax fraud. A report by the Kremlin's human rights council in July 2011 said the investigators who had charged Magnitsky should never have been involved in the case because of conflict of interest and that he was severely beaten on the day he died.

The case has become a rallying cry for human rights and a sticking point in U.S.-Russia relations, with the U.S. House of Representatives on Friday passing a bill that would impose financial sanctions on Russians suspected of human rights abuses, including those implicated in Magnitsky's death.

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