

# U.S. May Expand Magnitsky List to Punish Other Rights Abusers

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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**The  Moscow Times**

U.S. authorities could expand the list of Russian officials banned from obtaining U.S. visas and holding American bank accounts as they investigate new cases of human rights abuse in Russia, a senior White House official has said.

The unidentified official told a closed briefing that Friday's publication of part of the so-called Magnitsky list was "not a one-time action," Kommersant reported in its Monday issue.

So far, the Magnitsky list imposes sanctions on 18 Russian officials implicated in the 2009 death in pretrial detention of Hermitage Capital lawyer Sergei Magnitsky and other human rights violations.

Russia responded over the weekend by banning 18 American officials involved in the running of the Guantanamo Bay prison camp and prosecution of Russian citizens in what it judged to be a symmetrical response.

Late Sunday, President Vladimir Putin's official spokesman Dmitry Peskov condemned the U.S. for initiating the tit-for-tat exchange, calling the Magnitsky list "a blow to bilateral relations" in an interview broadcast late Sunday.

"This is our own business [the Magnitsky case], ... and when somewhere abroad they start punishing us, this is unacceptable," Peskov told Vladimir Solovyov, a talk show host on state television Russia 1, Interfax reported.

Peskov said the blow comes at a time when "regional conflicts [and] potential new conflicts dictate the need for rapprochement between Russia and America, since these are two countries that bear responsibility for global stability," Peskov said.

U.S. officials have called the Magnitsky list an attempt to highlight the failure to prosecute those involved in the anti-corruption lawyer's death, but Peskov on Sunday defended the results of the Russian probe, saying authorities had "no grounds to doubt the professionalism of those who led the inquiry."

The Investigative Committee in late March wrapped up its investigation into Magnitsky's death, finding no evidence of any crime and concluding that Magnitsky died of health problems. President Vladimir Putin's human rights council earlier ruled that Magnitsky died as a result of a severed beating by prison officials.

Magnitsky was arrested in 2008 on tax evasion charges by law enforcement officers, whom he accused of defrauding the Russian government of 5.4 billion rubles (roughly \$230 million at the time).

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