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Russia to Pay British Law Firm $3.2 Million for Litvinenko Inquiry

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Former FSB officer Alexander Litvinenko

The Russian government will pay more than £2 million ($3.2 million) for the legal services of British law firm Harbottle & Lewis in the ongoing Alexander Litvinenko inquiry, the RBC news website reported Tuesday.

The contract covers the period of 2013-16, during which the London law firm has represented the interests of the Russian Investigative Committee. According to an additional agreement signed last week, £1.12 million ($1.7 million), the bulk of the total sum, will be paid to the firm in 2016.

A former officer of the Federal Security Service (FSB), Litvinenko fled to Britain in 2000 and became a vocal critic of President Vladimir Putin. He died in a London hospital in 2006 after being poisoned by radioactive polonium-210.

Litvinenko accused Russian security services of staging terrorist acts in 1999 in order to bring Putin to power.

A British investigation names former security officer Andrei Lugovoi as the prime suspect. Lugovoi is currently a member of the State Duma. British authorities requested Lugovoi's extradition, but Russia refused, citing constitutional restraints.

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