

# Court Backs Arrest of Magnitsky Colleague

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In an escalation of a legal battle between Hermitage Capital and the Interior Ministry, a Moscow court on Wednesday ordered the arrest of one of the firm's partners, and the case's investigator said Hermitage founder Bill Browder was on an international wanted list.

The Tverskoi District Court sanctioned the arrest of Ivan Cherkasov, a longtime partner at the investment fund based in London since 2006, on charges of tax fraud worth 2 billion rubles (\$73 million).

By making the decision, the court sided with Interior Ministry investigator Oleg Silchenko, who has been implicated by Hermitage in the death of its lawyer Sergei Magnitsky, who died in a Moscow prison in 2009.

Browder denounced Russia's judiciary as working hand in hand with criminals.

"Silchenko was entirely compromised after he tortured and killed my lawyer Sergei Magnitsky in his custody, and he is still allowed to keep his job and misuse his police powers in other situations," Browder said by telephone from London.

Silchenko, however, said Browder was also on an international wanted list following allegations of a 500 million ruble tax evasion with two companies based in the Kalmykia republic, Itar-Tass reported.

Browder said talk of an international search warrant against him had been lingering for two years. "The Russian Interior Ministry has been saying this at every press conference for the last two years, but Interpol rejected the Russians' request a long time ago," he said.

He also complained that the Tverskoi judge, Alexandra Kovalevskaya, was biased in favor of the investigators.

"She refused our request to postpone the hearing, thus allowing [our lawyer] just one hour to read the accusation documents," he said, adding that Hermitage's lawyer Alexander Antipov unsuccessfully tried to have Kovalevskaya replaced.

Hermitage insists that the case is fabricated. The company has linked the latest accusations to its release of several [videos](#) accusing officials linked to the case of enriching themselves on the spoils of Hermitage's demise in Russia.

The accusations against Cherkasov go back to the heart of Hermitage Capital's troubles. In June 2007, the Interior Ministry initiated a tax evasion investigation against Kameya, a Cyprus-registered company that it claimed belonged to Hermitage.

Hermitage has said it only advised Kameya and the authorities used the tax claims to justify wider claims against the fund's assets.

In April 2008, Kommersant cited police sources as saying that security forces had issued an arrest warrant for Browder and Cherkasov.

But city police at the time denied the report, and a spokeswoman told The Moscow Times that there was no arrest warrant for Browder and no pending tax evasion case.

Cherkasov was not the only businessman to be sought for arrest in absentia by the Tverskoi court on Wednesday. At another hearing, the court issued international arrest warrants for Andrei Borodin, the London-based former president of Bank of Moscow, and his deputy Dmitry Akulinin.

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