

Interpol Rejects Russian Request for Browder

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Interpol has refused to include British-based fund manager William Browder on its international search list after deciding that Russia's tax evasion case against him is "of a predominantly political nature."

Inclusion in the Lyon, France-based Interpol's database would have facilitated Russia's request for member countries to monitor Browder's whereabouts, enabling Russia to issue an international arrest warrant to the country concerned.

An Interpol committee on Friday "concluded that the case was of a predominantly political nature" and deleted all information about Browder from its files, it said in a [statement](#) posted on its website.

The 190-nation police organization said it had no further comment to make on the case.

The decision is the latest twist in a long-running battle between the government of President Vladimir Putin and Browder, whose investment company Hermitage Capital was once the largest investor in Russia's equity market.

Browder has spearheaded an international campaign to expose corruption and human rights violations in Russia following the death in 2009 of Sergei Magnitsky, a lawyer working for Hermitage who was investigating a \$230 million tax fraud.

Russian prosecutors have accused both Browder and Magnitsky of conspiring to underpay taxes by \$16 million by using tax breaks for disabled employees. Their supporters have said the charges are trumped up.

"For Interpol to judge this case as being illegitimate and political is highly significant, and just goes to show how far the Putin regime has stepped over the line in the Magnitsky case, and a lot of other cases as well," Browder said Saturday.

Alexei Pushkov, the head of the State Duma's International Affairs Committee, said Saturday that Browder had "mobilized significant political resources" to have Russia's request rejected.

"I think some influential quarters have put pressure on Interpol," Pushkov told Interfax.

Browder is presently lobbying European governments to follow the U.S. in imposing sanctions against Russian officials.

"The objective of the Russian government was to paralyze my European Magnitsky sanctions campaign by making it impossible to travel without fear of being arrested," he said.

Russia's Interior Ministry on Saturday denied that the request submitted to Interpol had been to place Browder on an international wanted list, saying that the request had only been to determine Browder's whereabouts, Interfax reported citing an Interior Ministry spokesman.

The spokesman said that the Russian branch of Interpol would first need the go-ahead from the Prosecutor General's Office to issue a request to place Browder on an international wanted list.

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