

UK Passes Amendment to Russian Bill Modeled on U.S. Magnitsky Act

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The  **Moscow Times**

British lawmakers have passed an amendment to the country's Criminal Finances Bill, inspired by the U.S. Magnitsky Act – a 2012 bipartisan bill passed by Congress and President Obama intending to punish Russian officials responsible for the death of lawyer Sergei Magnitsky.

The law will allow UK authorities to ask courts to freeze the assets of British citizens involved in or profiting from abuses around the world. If the amendment is approved by the House of Lords, the upper chamber of the British parliament, the UK will become the second European country after Estonia to adopt a Magnitsky Act.

Bill Browder, the man behind the U.S. Magnitsky Act, has called the move a “huge triumph.” In a press release, his Magnitsky Justice Campaign said: “The new Magnitsky Sanctions Legislation is going to cause perceptible fear for kleptocrats in Russia and other authoritarian regimes. They all have expensive properties in London and they think they are untouchable.”

Theresa May has been under pressure to act as London becomes a prime location for “dirty money.” Conservative MP Dominic Rabb previously warned that Britain was “becoming a haven for the blood money of the world's nastiest despots and their henchmen.”

Today, Rabb told the House of Commons: “We have the opportunity to nurture the flame of freedom on behalf of those brave souls like Sergei Magnitsky who suffered the very worst crimes for standing up for the very highest principles.”

UK Security Minister Ben Wallace, said this was a “clear statement that the UK will not stand by and allow those who have committed gross abuse or violations around the world to launder their money here.”

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