

Canadian lawmaker calls for Russia visa blacklist

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OTTAWA — A Canadian lawmaker on Monday urged the Canadian government to issue a blacklist of Russian officials linked to the death of a young lawyer.

Sergei Magnitsky died of untreated heart condition and pancreatitis in an isolation cell in November 2009.

The 37-year-old lawyer's death after 11 months in a Moscow jail sparked global outrage and came to symbolize problems in the Russian judicial system.

In September, his mother Natalia Magnitskaya alleged that the death of her son was not caused by negligence but was a premeditated murder brought on by months of torture to keep him silent.

"The tragic torture and death in detention of Russian lawyer Sergei Magnitsky... is a looking glass into the pervasive culture of corruption and impunity implicating senior government officials in Russia today," Canadian Liberal MP Irwin Cotler said Monday.

Canada's former justice minister introduced legislation last week calling for those individuals believed to be responsible for Magnitsky's death to be barred from Canada.

It must still be debated in parliament and adopted.

Before his arrest, Magnitsky claimed to have uncovered a scheme used by police officials to reclaim about \$235 million in taxes paid by his employer Hermitage Capital. He was charged with fraud and spent nearly a year in Moscow prisons.

The United States and other Western countries expressed alarm over the tragedy and Washington imposed a visa blacklist against Russian officials whom it believes were involved.

Last week, Russia announced a tit-for-tat blacklist of US officials who would not be issued visas over their involvement in "uninvestigated murders of civilians in Iraq and Afghanistan" and the indefinite detention of prisoners at Guantanamo Bay.