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The Scottish Conservatives have called on Michael Matheson to resign after it was revealed that his department tried to interfere over the release of a Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (PIRC) report.

E-mails published by the Sunday Post show that the Scottish Government tried to stop the publication of a damning PIRC investigation into SPA complaints.

It comes after evidence in the Scottish Parliament this week showed that Matheson had been instrumental in stopping Scotland's most senior policeman returning to work, despite the SNP claiming otherwise.

Scottish Conservative shadow justice secretary Liam Kerr MSP said:

"These new revelations show that the SNP Government's meddling in police matters is endemic, both at the SPA and now with the PIRC.

"Michael Matheson's department has torn up the rule book that is supposed to protect the independence of our police service, and as such the Scottish public can no longer have confidence in him.

"Simply put, the best course of action would be for him to resign.

"It's also clear that this issue goes beyond justice, with accusations also rife over the SNP's tapping up of witnesses giving evidence on named person.

"Nicola Sturgeon's government seems to think it can hector people in private in order to get its own way.

"It's a disgrace."