

**Breaking news:****Prosecutor-General's Office tried to arrest Yuliya Tymoshenko**

After eight hours of interrogation Yuliya Tymoshenko left Prosecutor-General's Office

On 24 May 2011, at about 1100 a.m Ukrainian media burst out with reports alerting that the former prime minister, leader of the opposition Fatherland party, Tymoshenko, was detained at the Prosecutor-General's Office (PGO) when summoned to an interrogation.

Later, at about 11.40 a.m. Tymoshenko's defence lawyer and a Tymoshenko's Bloc MP, Serhiy Vlasenko, said that on 24 May 2011 Tymoshenko was presented with a court's resolution on taking her to custody. Vlasenko also said that the resolution was approved by the Kiyev's Pecherskyy District Court and dated 23 May 2011. "This resolution was approved yesterday (23 May 2011) secretly, not informing anyone", - Vlasenko said to LB.UA correspondent. Answering a specific question from LB.UA on whether he personally talked to the investigator whose name is signed on the document on Tymoshenko's arrest, Vlasenko said: "In a private conversation he told me: I do not decide anything here".

According to former prime minister's defence lawyer, the real reason for detaining Tymoshenko was her unexpected coming to the studio of the live evening political talk show Shuster Live on 20 May 2011. As you know, on that day Tymoshenko failed to come to an interrogation saying she felt sick that day. Vlasenko also said that he sent a written notice to the interrogator on 23 May 2011 saying that Tymoshenko already feels well enough to take part in investigation procedures.

Vlasenko also said that he was actually blocked in the PGO building. "Despite that fact that I am an MP, now I am physically blocked in the PGO's building at the Borysohlibska street. They also took our mobile phones, all communications are completely blocked", - Vlasenko said.

Tymoshenko's press-secretary Maryna Soroka said for her part that PGO's representatives prohibited Tymoshenko's personal security to be physically present at the part of the building where the investigation procedures took place. "Normally the security personnel and myself, we stay in the corridor next to the doors of the office where the investigation procedures take place. However, today they asked us to leave this part of the corridor. In the corridor there are two exits from the PGO building: the central and the back exists", - Soroka said adding that people with mask-covered faces were staying there, about 25-30 persons. Soroka suggested that these were members of the police special guard.

According to Ukrainian media, at the back yard of the building of the PGO's Main Investigation Directorate, where Yuliya Tymoshenko is currently staying, there is parked a special vehicle for transportation of detainees, surrounded with people dressed in black uniforms and mask-covered faces. Also, a special escort vehicles are parked near the detainees transportation vehicle.

At the same time, Deputy Prosecutor-General Renat Kuzmin said that Yuliya Tymoshenko would be released after completing the investigating procedures. "Investigating proceedings are now ongoing. After they are finished, Yuliya Tymoshenko will be free to go home," - Kuzmin said.

The member of parliament on Our Ukraine-People's Self-Defence Bloc, Volodymyr Aryev, said for his part that the leader of the Fatherland party, Tymoshenko, would be

released from the PGO in a few hours. "I had a friend of mine, an Interior Ministry's official, on the phone. He said he was asked to pass us the information that they will release Yuliya in two or three hours. So, we will wait and see", - Aryev said.

Nevertheless, Tymoshenko's lawyer Vlassenko said that after the interrogation Yuliya Tymoshenko would be taken to court to establish an arrest as a restraint measure to her.

Later, at about 12.40p.m. Ukrainian media spread PGO's press release regarding the detention of Yuliya Tymoshenko. "Yesterday (23 May 2011) the Kiev's Pecherskiy District Court approved a resolution to detain Tymoshenko and take her to the court to resolve the issue of taking to custody as a possible restraint measure. The court's ruling is based on the fact that Tymoshenko has been avoiding pre-trial investigation procedures for a long time and impeding legal proceedings. Nevertheless, because today Tymoshenko, accompanied by her lawyer Vlasenko, came to interrogation at the Main Investigation Directorate, the issue of taking her to custody as a possible restraint measure is not finally approved". The PGO representatives also said that legal proceeding on Tymoshenko's case continued. "Based on requirements of the law, Tymoshenko was presented with the final revision of the accusation in committing a crime by abusing powers while signing the gas contract", - the PGO press release says.

The first deputy head of the Fatherland party, Oleksandr Turchynov, said the government "should not cross the line". When asked what actions the Fatherland party and members of parliament on the Yuliya Tymoshenko Bloc plan, Turchynov said: "We will clarify the exact situation first, and our response actions will be adequate". Turchynov added that Prosecutor-General Viktor Pshonka would hardly manage to explain his actions towards the former prime minister to the European community. "Those actions demonstrated today are clear to both Ukrainians and residents of other countries. Much can be said in explanations, but how to explain those brutal actions, breach of Constitution. It is not possible to explain that in so-called 'fighting corruption' Ukraine appeared at the top of the list of corrupted countries in Europe. Of course, they can organise different press conferences, but it is hardly possible to explain those crimes", - Turchynov said.

It is worth mentioning that the number of both supporters of Tymoshenko, members of parliament on opposition Yuliya Tymoshenko Bloc and Our Ukraine-People's Self-Defence Bloc, representatives of the Fatherland party, and law enforcers has increased near the PGO's building.

The head of the parliament's temporary investigation commission to look at signing the gas contracts with Russia in 2009, an MP on Party of Regions, Inna Bohoslovska, is certain that the detention of Yuliya Tymoshenko will not affect the image of Ukraine and its government. "What government will forgive hiding from an investigation so explicitly and cynically?" - Bohoslovska said surprised. "A fair trial, with no conspiracy, which will clearly show people how brutally the prime minister breached the law, will only improve the image of the president. The fact that some experts say the detention of Tymoshenko for implementing legal proceedings will adversely affect Ukraine's reputation is related to Tymoshenko large lobby abroad, and everyone knows that", - Bohoslovska said. Bohoslovska also said that the detention of Tymoshenko is a natural outcome of the former prime minister's evading the investigation.

The first deputy head of the parliamentary committee for legal support to law enforcement activities, an MP on Party of Regions, Volodymyr Oliynyk, subscribes to this opinion. Oliynyk said that "if an investigator sees that a person is evading investigating proceedings for no serious excuse, for instance, saying she was ill and was on sick leave and that is why she did not come to interrogations, but at the same time she appeared at other places, in particular, she took part in political talks shows, this may be considered as ignoring cooperation with the prosecutors". Oliynyk also said

that if the former prime minister fulfils all the investigating proceedings she was evading before, no-one would speak about her arrest.

The member of parliament on Our Ukraine-People's Self Defence Bloc, leader for the Front of Changes party, Arseniy Yatsenyuk, said that Tymoshenko's arrest would mean that the government officially declares political war in the country.

Representatives of the European People's Party have seriously condemned the arrest of the leader of Ukrainian opposition, Yuliya Tymoshenko.

Later, Prosecutor-General Viktor Pshonka said at the meeting with EU countries' ambassadors on 24 May 2011 that Tymoshenko would not be arrested. Based on the information available to LB.UA, Pshonka informed those present at the meeting that there was a sanction for taking on custody the leader of the Fatherland party, however he considered it an excessive measure, and today after finishing the investigating actions Tymoshenko shall be free to leave the PGO building.

Deputy Prosecutor-General Kuzmin said for his part that the PGO did not think that Tymoshenko's arrest would be an appropriate measure now but reserved the right to use this measure in future.

In the long run at 17.40 p.m. LB.UA reported Tymoshenko left freely PGO's building.

The Gorshenin Institute expert, Volodymyr Zastava, thinks that the detention of Tymoshenko at the building of the PGO's Main Investigation Directorate is the last attempt to frighten the leader of the Yuliya Tymoshenko Bloc. "They made it clear to Tymoshenko that the government is ready to act against her seriously, - he said. - But the most important is that Tymoshenko's detention and the attempt to arrest her is a test to see the society's reaction. It was important for the government to understand whether Ukrainians are ready to protest if they employ harder measures to fight the opposition and what is the level of personal support to Tymoshenko. And based on the PGO's statements that Yuliya Tymoshenko will be released after the interrogation, the government has received certain signals," - Zastava said.

However, Zastava does not rule out that the government's retreat was caused not by the reaction inside Ukraine but rather by signals from abroad. "We do not rule out that certain diplomatic moves were made today and the Ukrainian government was made aware of European leaders' reaction to what has happened", - the Gorshenin Institute expert said.

Just to remind you, the PGO launched a third criminal case against Tymoshenko in April 2011. She is suspected of abusing power, which presumably took place when she signed the gas contract with Russia in 2009. A temporary commission of the Supreme Council (Parliament) of Ukraine is currently investigating the documents which served as a basis for signing the gas contract.

Our contact information:  
4, Chapayeva street, office 14  
Kiev 01030, Ukraine  
+38 044 230 4962  
+38 044 230 4966 f



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<http://gorshenin.eu/>