

Ukrainians Foil Holiday Bombing

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KIEV — Ukraine's state security service said Monday that it had detained three people who had planned to explode a bomb in Kiev on Aug. 24, the country's Independence Day.

The announcement by the SBU was likely to add to political tension, already high because of the trial of former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko whose supporters plan to hold a demonstration in Kiev that day.

SBU operatives found a homemade explosive device stuffed with nails when they raided premises rented by the suspects, the security service said in a statement. It said they had prevented a "terrorist act."

"According to information available to investigators, the attackers had planned to carry out the bombing on Aug. 24 in Kiev or its suburbs during the celebrations of Ukraine's Independence Day," the SBU said.

The agency said it found 100 "extremist" leaflets, but gave no details on the suspects' nationality or their affiliation.

Unlike Russia, Ukraine has no recent history of large-scale bombings or violent political attacks.

But the trial of Tymoshenko, a leader of the peaceful 2004 Orange Revolution and the fiercest opponent of President Viktor Yanukovich, has polarized the nation of 46 million.

State prosecutors accuse Tymoshenko of illegally forcing state energy firm Naftogaz into a gas supply deal with Gazprom that went against Ukraine's interests.

Tymoshenko, who narrowly lost to Yanukovich in the 2010 presidential elections, denies any wrongdoing and has called the case politically motivated.

Hundreds of her supporters plan to hold a demonstration in Kiev on Wednesday when Ukraine marks 20 years since it broke from the Soviet Union and became independent.

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