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Tymoshenko Criminal Probe Reopened

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Ukraine's Prosecutor General's Office has reopened a criminal probe into the activities of jailed former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko.

Tymoshenko — the country's top opposition leader — was sentenced to seven years in prison earlier this month on charges of abuse of office in a case the United States and the European Union have condemned as politically motivated.

Prosecutors said Monday that they had revived an investigation into the alleged embezzlement of 25 million hryvna ($3 million) and evasion of 20 million hryvna ($2.5 million) in taxes by Tymoshenko when she headed an energy company 15 years ago. She also faces three other corruption probes.

A spokesman for the prosecutor's office said it had reversed a 2005 “hurried” decision to drop the case against Tymoshenko after the Orange Revolution protests swept her to power as prime minister.

The investigation dims hopes that Tymoshenko could be released following legal amendments, as her main opponent, President Viktor Yanukovych, hinted earlier.

Ukraine is holding parliamentary elections in October 2012. Tymoshenko's conviction would bar her from running unless a higher court upholds her appeal.

(AP, Reuters, MT)

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