

Ill Businesswoman Convicted, Released

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The  Moscow Times

A seriously ill businesswoman was convicted of fraud in a Moscow court late Monday, but given a three-year suspended sentence and immediately released, Interfax said.

Natalya Gulevich, who spent more than a year in pretrial detention despite her kidney and bladder having stopped functioning, was found guilty of failing to repay a loan of 590 million rubles (\$26.5 million at the time) to Moscow-based Nomos Bank by 2008.

Investigators said she never intended to repay the loan, while Gulevich maintained the case against her was fabricated and accused the bank of corporate raiding.

She was given a three-year suspended sentence and a fine of 1 million rubles (\$33,000). It remained unclear Monday whether Gulevich would appeal.

A string of deaths of ill inmates in pretrial detention has prompted the Kremlin to soften legislation in economic cases, but courts have largely ignored the new rules.

In November, the judge agreed to free Gulevich, but only for an all-time record bail of \$3.3 million, which she could not afford.

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