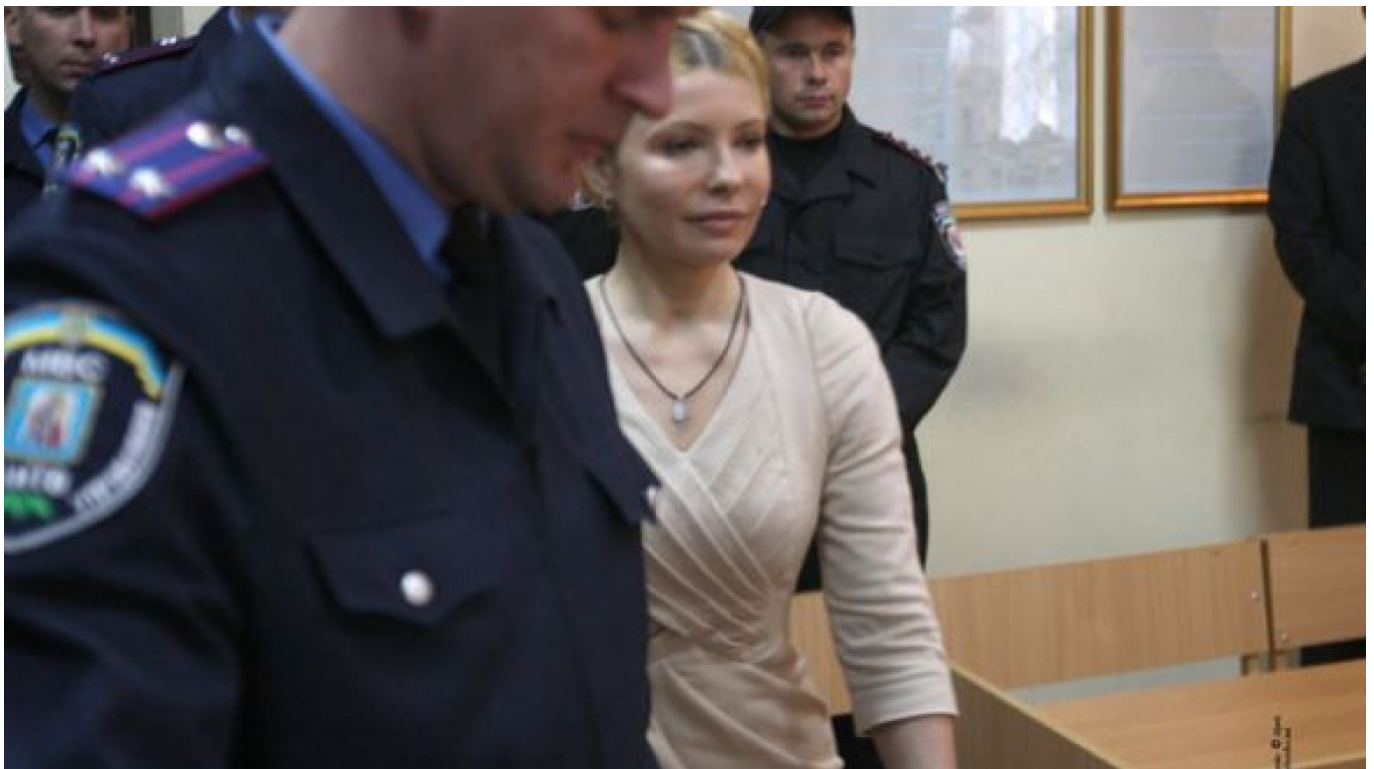# Yanukovych Orders Inquiry Into Tymoshenko's 'Beating'

April 26, 2012

Yulia Tymoshenko in court in 2011.

KIEV — Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych, under fire from European politicians over the treatment of his jailed opponent Yulia Tymoshenko, said Thursday that he has ordered prosecutors to investigate her purported beating by prison guards last week.

Tymoshenko accused prison guards of beating her during a forced move to a hospital last Friday and said she was on a hunger strike.

Prison authorities have denied her allegations, but Ukraine's top human rights official said Wednesday that Tymoshenko was indeed bruised and urged a criminal investigation.

"In line with my powers, I have ordered the Prosecutor General's Office to investigate this issue, and I hope we will soon have a concrete answer," Yanukovich told reporters Thursday.

Catherine Ashton, the EU foreign policy chief, asked Kiev on Thursday to allow its ambassador to see Tymoshenko in prison, and German President Joachim Gauck has canceled a planned

visit to Ukraine next month citing concerns over her treatment.

Casting a shadow over Ukraine's plans to improve its image by hosting one of the biggest sports events on the continent, the European football championship, this year, EU justice chief Viviane Reding drew UEFA's attention to Tymoshenko's case. "I would like to take this opportunity to share my personal concerns about the human rights situation in Ukraine, a country where UEFA Euro-2012 matches will be organized, and especially the dramatic situation of Yulia Tymoshenko," Reding said in an open letter to UEFA head Michel Platini. "Selective, partial justice should not be accepted, and I hope you will use this great moment that is the UEFA Euro-2012 to relay the values to which we are both attached."

Tymoshenko is held in a prison in the city of Kharkiv, one of the four Ukrainian Euro-2012 venues.

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