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Litvinenko Widow Continues Push for U.K. Inquiry Into Husband's Death

By The Moscow Times

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The widow of former Russian security service agent Alexander Litvinenko says she has decided to continue with her bid to persuade UK courts to hold a public inquiry into her husband's unsolved death.

Marina Litvinenko's lawyer, Yelena Tsirlina, hailed her client's courage, noting that if Litvinenko loses her bid, she will have to cover the legal expenses of the British Home Office, which has declined to hold an inquiry.

"We appeal to the public to donate money in support of Marina to cover the legal costs of the opposing party," Tsirlina said.

Marina Litvinenko's hopes of overturning the government's rejection of an inquiry into the poisoning of her husband in 2006 suffered a setback Friday after a court denied a request to cap her legal costs in the event the judicial bid fails. She was then given two days to make

a decision on whether to continue with her appeal.

British media earlier quoted Marina Litvinenko as saying that legal costs were expected to amount to at least $64,000 and that she could lose "almost everything."

The BBC cited Marina Litvinenko as saying Monday that enough money had been donated over the weekend to cover the cost of over $4,000 worth of court proceedings last week.

"I decided not to quit even though I am threatened to pay tens of thousands of pounds of the government's legal expenses, should I lose my case," BBC quoted her as saying.

Alexander Litvinenko, who was 43 years old when he died, worked with the Federal Security Service but became a virulent critic of the Kremlin and in 2000 moved from Russia to Britain, where he claimed asylum.

He was poisoned with the toxic radioactive isotope Polonium-210 days after being granted UK citizenship.

British police have identified two suspects for the killing, Andrei Logovoi and Dmitry Kovtun. Both deny responsibility and the Russian government has declined to extradite the men, stating that doing so would be in violation of the country's constitution.

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