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Tymoshenko to Run for President in May Election

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An archive photo of former Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko.

Ukrainian former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, released from jail last month after her arch-foe Viktor Yanukovych fled from power, said Thursday she would run again for president in an election on May 25.

She also pledged to build a strong army and said she hoped to be able to recover Crimea from Russia, which annexed it last week.

The announcement by the flamboyant Tymoshenko set up a contest with boxer-turned-politician Vitaly Klitschko, who has also declared his candidacy, and other figures who have emerged to contend for top posts after four months of political turmoil.

"I plan to run for president," she told her first news conference since being released from jail a month ago. "None of the politicians understand the depth of lawlessness [in the country] and nobody wants to end it as desperately as I do," she said.

Tymoshenko, 53, a powerful speaker known in her heyday for her trademark peasant hair-braid, served twice as prime minister and ran for president in 2010, only to be narrowly beaten in a run-off vote by Yanukovych.

Yanukovych, her nemesis, subsequently launched a campaign against her and her allies, and she was jailed in 2011 for abuse of office linked to a gas deal she brokered with Russia in 2009.

She served two years of a seven-year term, mainly under prison guard in a hospital in Kharkiv, before being released when Yanukovych fled on Feb. 20 and was subsequently ousted by parliament.

She was wildly popular at the height of her power 10 years ago when she led tens of thousands on the streets of Kiev against an earlier bid for power by Yanukovych in what became known as the Orange Revolution.

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