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Poroshenko's Letter Urging Savchenko to End Hunger Strike Fake

By Daria Litvinova

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Ukrainian military pilot Nadezhda Savchenko — currently on trial in Russia's Rostov region — has stopped her hunger strike, her lawyers Mark Feygin and Nikolai Polozov told The Moscow Times. However, the letter she received from Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko urging her to stop the hunger strike was a fake planted by the Kremlin, the lawyers claim.

“Last night the general consulate of Ukraine [in the Rostov region] contacted us about a letter [from Poroshenko]. The letter was passed to us, and we passed it on to Nadezhda, but it now turns out it was a trick by Russian law enforcement,” Feygin told The Moscow Times.

The lawyers wanted to pass on the letter to Savchenko as soon as possible and had no time to look into its provenance, Polozov told The Moscow Times. Later they received a call from the Ukrainian presidential administration. “They said they didn't sent such a letter,” Polozov said.

Later on Thursday Poroshenko’s spokesman Svyatoslav Tsegolko confirmed that the

Ukrainian president did not write said letter.

Both lawyers attributed the stunt with the letter to Russian law enforcement, saying they had pressured the defense team from the very beginning. The Ukrainian consulate in the Rostov region declined to comment, citing a lack of information.

Pozolov insisted that Poroshenko's letter was not the only thing that convinced Savchenko to end the hunger strike. “We gave her copies of all the requests to end it from different people. Poroshenko's letter was the cherry on top, obviously,” Polozov said. “Anyway, at the end of the day the most important thing is that she ended the strike.”

Savchenko declared a dry hunger strike — no food or water — after a court deprived her of a chance to make a final closing statement during a hearing last Thursday. She later promised to continue the strike if her sentence was postponed for more than a week, regardless of a significant deterioration in her health.

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