

Daily nation. – 21.02.2012

Czech MEP says Tymoshenko 'abused, tormented'

Ukraine's Yulia Tymoshenko is being "abused and tormented" in detention, a Czech member of the European Parliament said Tuesday after paying a visit to the jailed former prime minister.

Roithova, a doctor by profession, travelled to Ukraine on Sunday to draft a report on Tymoshenko's health for the European Parliament.

"I now take far more seriously her family's concerns that she might be exposed to the effects of toxic substances to (make her) submit to the regime's pressure," Roithova told the CTK news agency from Kiev.

"She's really being abused and tormented," Roithova said.

"They took away her crutches instead of treating her, they stopped giving her analgesics, and she underwent hours of demanding interrogations."

There have been no specific allegations on the part of Tymoshenko's legal team that she could be deliberately exposed to toxic substances while in detention to make her a more pliant prisoner.

However her supporters said in January that she had suffered a fainting spell immediately after taking medication for a cold prescribed to her by prison doctors.

Roithova said that Tymoshenko's health record from last November showed she should have been treated for spinal problems at the time, and that she was being "denied fundamental rights" that prisoners are entitled to.

Last Friday, Ukrainian prosecutors denied that Tymoshenko required surgery or medical treatment outside prison, quoting German and Canadian doctors who had visited Tymoshenko in her jail in the eastern Kharkiv region last week.

The doctors have not yet made their findings public.

Tymoshenko was transferred to the Kharkiv jail on December 30 to serve a seven-year sentence for abuse of power, after a Kiev court rejected her appeal against the conviction.

She claims the sentence is purely political and was ordered by her rival President Viktor Yanukovich.

Her jailing has led to a drastic deterioration in ties with the European Union, which Ukraine hopes one day to join.