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Ukraine's Tymoshenko back in jail after check-up

KIEV: Jailed Ukrainian ex-prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko was taken to hospital on Wednesday for a medical check-up and then returned to jail after doctors found she had no life-threatening ailment, the prison service said.

"Today, Tymoshenko received medical checks (magnetic resonance imaging, X-ray, sonography) at one of Kiev's hospitals," it said in a statement. "As a result of Tymoshenko's checks no life-threatening pathological changes were found."

President Viktor Yanukovich promised on Tuesday to provide hospital treatment for his political opponent, who was sentenced last month to seven years' imprisonment for abuse of office, after a human rights monitor expressed alarm at her condition.

Tymoshenko's supporters say she has been unable to rise from her bed for weeks and her questioning by prosecutors investigating fresh criminal cases against her amounted to torture.

Tymoshenko, 50, who was beaten narrowly by Yanukovich in a run-off for the presidency in February 2010, says her trial is a vendetta by him aimed at neutralizing her as a political force in Ukraine, a former Soviet republic.

The European Union, with which Ukraine is trying to establish closer political and trade ties, has largely taken her side, saying that her trial was politically motivated and calling for her release.

But Kiev has instead heaped more charges on Tymoshenko, reopening previously closed investigations into her activities as a head of a gas trading company in the 1990s.

Tymoshenko's appeal against last month's verdict is due to be heard in the coming months but her defense counsel says chances of it being overturned are slim.