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Jailed Tymoshenko faces list of new charges



Julia Tymoshenko: Ukraine's former prime minister was found guilty on 11 October of abuse of power
Getty Images

Ukraine's former prime minister Julia Tymoshenko, sentenced to seven years in prison for abuse of office, has been charged with tax evasion, theft and concealing foreign currency revenues, authorities said yesterday.

The new charges indicate that she is less likely to go free in the near future despite calls from the West for her release, keeping Ukraine's ties with the European Union strained. The charges are linked to her activities as head of gas-trading company United Energy Systems of Ukraine, a post she held in the 1990s, an administration statement said. Her lawyer, Serhiy Vlasenko, dismissed them as "baseless".

Tymoshenko was found guilty on 11 October of abusing her powers as prime minister in 2009 when she forced through a gas-supply deal between Ukrainian state energy firm Naftogaz and Russia's Gazprom. She has denied all charges against her and said her trial reflected a political vendetta waged by President Viktor Yanukovich.

There is a possibility that her conviction will be overturned by an appeals court or reclassified. However, state prosecutors have said they could launch more cases against Tymoshenko and were studying her possible involvement in a 1996 contract killing of a parliament deputy.

Tymoshenko was a leader of the 2004 Orange Revolution, which doomed Yanukovich's first bid for the presidency. She served twice as prime minister before losing the 2010 election to Yanukovich.