

## **Hundreds rally in Kiev after Tymoshenko verdict**

KIEV (AFP) - One thousand supporters of former Ukrainian prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko rallied in central Kiev on Tuesday in a tense stand-off with security forces after Ukraine convicted her of abuse of power.

A Ukrainian judge sentenced the feisty opposition leader to seven years in jail for abusing her powers in a 2009 gas deal with Russia, a verdict that is set to harm ties with the European Union.

Authorities braced for the announcement of the verdict by dispatching a large deployment of anti-riot police decked out in bulletproof vests to Kiev's main Kreshchatyk avenue where dozens of Tymoshenko's supporters and critics had pitched tents earlier in the day.

Riot police had to push back pro-Tymoshenko demonstrators as they tried to block a road, a police spokesman said, adding that around a dozen protesters were detained by Tuesday afternoon.