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## **Protest Set Over Arrest of a Leader in Ukraine**

Supporters of the Ukrainian opposition leader Yulia V. Tymoshenko say they are planning a street protest on Monday to demand her release from jail, where a judge ordered her detained for contempt of court.

Already over the weekend, her allies had erected tents in downtown Kiev, the capital, in the hope of gaining traction for a broad-based protest. By Saturday evening, a few hundred people had turned up.

Ms. Tymoshenko, a former prime minister and a leader of Ukraine's 2004 Orange Revolution, was arrested on Friday in a Kiev courtroom where she was on trial for exceeding her authority as prime minister, a charge her supporters dismiss as politically motivated. During the hearing, the judge ordered her arrested for contempt; she had refused to rise for the judge and was accused of mocking witnesses.

In one prominent show of support, Vitali Klitschko, the World Boxing Council heavyweight champion and one of Ukraine's best-known athletes, announced Saturday that he would delay a title fight planned for September to focus on drawing attention to Ms. Tymoshenko's arrest.

Mr. Klitschko, who had been in Austria training for a match against Tomasz Adamek of Poland, said he returned to Ukraine after learning of Ms. Tymoshenko's detention on Friday.

"I understand that the real fight for democratic values is unfolding exactly here, in Ukraine," he said, according to the Interfax news agency. "These events could well lead to Ukraine's international isolation, which would absolutely dash Ukraine's desire to live in a free, democratic country where European values are professed."

Ms. Tymoshenko's detention, coming on the heels of the arrests of dozens of other politicians, has alarmed Western rights groups, which fear it is part of a purge of political opponents by the government of President Viktor F. Yanukovich.

Freedom House, which tracks political freedom around the world, condemned the arrest, saying in a statement that it "lacks any credibility in the eyes of the international community."

The Foreign Ministry responded Saturday with a statement saying the judge had acted in accord with established judicial practice in punishing Ms. Tymoshenko for contempt because she had been refusing to rise to address the judge as an act of protest.

"Demonstrative disrespect for the court on the part of the former prime minister makes one think that a widely promoted politician can do things in the court which no rank-and-file citizen would allow himself to do," the statement said. "The court put an end to this."

Mr. Yanukovich has also said that he is pursuing an anticorruption inquiry, and that most of the politicians arrested or under investigation are not members of the opposition.

The charge of exceeding authority concerns Ms. Tymoshenko's order to the state gas company to sign a natural gas deal she had negotiated with Russia in 2009. If convicted, she faces 7 to 10 years in prison.