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Ukraine: False accusations against Yulia Tymoshenko

On 18 February, the security service of Ukraine (SBU) was accused by the leadership of the Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc (BYuT) that its counter-terrorism unit was planning to take over the Bloc's HQ in Kiev and confiscate its documents and server, an accusation which proved not to be true. On 21 February, Yulia Tymoshenko likened a routine decision by the Prosecutor's Office during the criminal proceedings against her to a return to Stalin-era practices. This shows that the Bloc's leadership feels threatened and powerless, especially as the Prosecutor's Office has just completed its investigation against Tymoshenko on abuses of authority, and has decided to send the case to court.

The SBU denied the Bloc's allegations that four of its civilian officers had tried to enter the Bloc's headquarters, and so far the BYuT has provided no evidence of this. Tymoshenko also called the Prosecutor's Office decision on her case – which consists of a link between accusations of inappropriate usage of funding received from selling CO_2 emission quotas and charges of abuse when buying vehicles for the health service – a return to the 'Stalinist troikas' (a reference to the show courts of the 1930s which passed summary sentences).

The Bloc's management has long interpreted any investigations of its members by law enforcement organs as a form of political repression, and has often used hyperbolic language when criticising these actions. It can be assumed that this rhetoric is primarily intended for the media and European politicians, and is not aimed at mobilising support within Ukraine itself. This is also an attempt to obtain external support in a situation when the Prosecutor's Office decided to send the case against Tymoshenko to court. <Tao>