

Record Bail Set in Magnitsky-Style Case

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Seemingly thumbing its nose at Kremlin attempts to ease penalties for suspects of white-collar crime, a Moscow court has agreed to release a seriously ill woman from pretrial detention — if she posts an all-time record bail of \$3.3 million by Monday.

The Kremlin did not comment Tuesday, but the Public Chamber said it would seek to have businesswoman Natalya Gulevich, whose kidneys are failing and bladder has stopped functioning, transferred from pretrial detention to a hospital, RIA-Novosti reported.

Gulevich's supporters compare her to Hermitage Capital lawyer Sergei Magnitsky, who also was accused of white-collar crimes and died in pretrial detention after not receiving adequate medical treatment in November 2009, 11 months after he was detained.

Gulevich was detained last December on embezzlement charges, and the Moscow City Court ordered the Tverskoi District Court to review her bail request last month.

The lower court complied last Wednesday, setting bail at 100 million rubles (\$3.3 million)

and giving a deadline of next Monday to pay it, the judicial news agency Rapsi [reported](#).

"The size of the bail is unprecedented in the history of the Russian judiciary," Gulevich's lawyer Anna Stavitskaya said by telephone Tuesday.

In contrast, she said, bail for Dominique Strauss-Kahn, the former International Monetary Fund head detained in New York on sex charges in May, amounted to only \$1 million. The charges against Strauss-Kahn were later dropped.

Bloggers have started a fundraiser for Gulevich but have only managed to raise 7 million rubles, RIA-Novosti reported.

The court on Monday refused to reduce the bail and ruled that Gulevich remain in detention until Dec. 2, saying she posed a flight risk or might negatively influence the investigation.

Gulevich promised the court that she would stay in Moscow. "My goal is not to leave. My goal is to get myself acquitted," she said. Photos from the courtroom showed her with heavy bags under her eyes.

Gulevich has used a urine catheter for the past eight months — even the catheter should not be used for more than three weeks, her lawyer said.

Gulevich is accused of failing to repay a loan of 590 million rubles (\$26.5 million at the time) to Moscow-based Nomos Bank by 2008. Investigators say she had no intention of returning the money and transferred most of the loan to bogus companies.

But Kommersant [reported](#) Monday that she has repaid \$24 million to the bank.

Gulevich says she is a victim of an illegal corporate raid aimed at taking over her business.

A spokesman for Nomos Bank — controlled by billionaire Alexander Nesis, multimillionaire Alexei Gudaitis and their Czech business partner Peter Kellner — said the bank would have no comment on the case while the investigation was ongoing.

The case is raising concerns after several ill suspects accused of economic crimes died in detention in recent years, including Magnitsky, businesswoman Vera Trifonova and Andrei Kudoyarov, the director of a posh Moscow school.

The Kremlin has tried to change the situation by passing several batches of legislative amendments softening the punishments and treatment of suspects. But courts have largely ignored the new rules.

Investigators are often reluctant to release suspects before trial, said Maria Khannabikh, who oversees the country's prison system at the Public Chamber.

"It's much easier for them to conduct the investigation when the person is in complete isolation," Khannabikh said by telephone.

"But the worst thing is that such suspects don't have a criminal record and can hardly survive in extreme prison conditions," she said.

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