

Hunger-Striking Ukrainian Pilot Moved to Hospital From Russian Jail

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Ukrainian military pilot Nadezhda Savchenko stands inside a defendants' cage as she attends a court hearing in Moscow Apr. 17.

Jailed Ukrainian air force pilot Nadezhda Savchenko will be transferred to a Moscow hospital Tuesday as her health has worsened following a renewed hunger strike, according to her lawyer.

"Nadezhda will be hospitalized ... because of low blood sugar levels. It is true she recently resumed her hunger strike," lawyer Mark Feigin told Russian news agency Interfax on Monday.

Savchenko has been held in Russia since July last year, accused of having abetted the killing of two Russian journalists in eastern Ukraine. The pilot, who ended an 83-day hunger strike in March, denies the charges and claims she was kidnapped on Ukrainian soil and brought to Russia illegally.

Feigin tweeted a photograph on Monday of a letter from Savchenko saying she currently

weighs 50 kilograms. She weighed over 70 kilograms when she began her hunger strike in February and doctors have previously said that 50 kilograms is a critical level.

The head of the Kremlin's council on human rights, Mikhail Fedotov, said Monday that Savchenko had lost a total of 8 kilograms over the last week alone, Interfax reported.

Russia's prison service confirmed the deterioration in Savchenko's condition.

"For the last three days Nadezhda Savchenko has refused food," Federal Prison Service spokesperson Kristina Belousova told Russian news agency RIA Novosti on Monday. She added that a board of doctors meeting was set to take place later the same day in connection with the issue.

Inside Ukraine, Savchenko has become a symbol of resistance against Russian aggression and her case has been repeatedly raised by Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko and Western leaders.

Russian officials including President Vladimir Putin have said that Savchenko can be freed only if her innocence is proven in a Russian court.

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