



Former French President Nicolas Sarkozy Appeals Against Corruption Charges



Paris, October 1 (RHC)-- Former French President Nicolas Sarkozy has launched a bid to have corruption charges against him dropped, which would pave way for a political comeback. Sarkozy appealed on Monday to the Court of Cassation, the country's highest court for civil and criminal matters, to overturn a recent ruling by a lower court that medical evidence in the corruption case was permissible.

The former president was charged in March with accepting illegal donations to finance his 2007 presidential campaign from French billionaire and L'Oreal heiress Liliane Bettencourt, when she was allegedly too frail to understand the decisions she was taking.

The medical evidence presented to court states that Bettencourt has suffered from dementia since at least 2006. Sarkozy's lawyers are challenging the validity of the medical evidence on a procedural point, alleging that the legal-medical expert is a close acquaintance of one of the examining magistrates and therefore not neutral.

The appeal does not halt the ongoing case against him as the examining magistrates in charge are entitled to send Sarkozy for trial at any time or they can decide to wait for the ruling by the Court of Cassation.

If convicted, Sarkozy could be sentenced up to three years in jail, receive a fine of 375,000 Euros and a five-year ban from public office, destroying any chances of a possible political comeback.



Meanwhile, Sarkozy is also being investigated in a separate case, in which he is accused of accepting up to 50 million Euros in cash for the 2007 campaign from Libyan leader Col. Muammar Gaddafi.