



Written by [William F. Jasper](#) on October 3, 2014

More Jail Time for Gulnara Karimova, Uzbekistan's Red Princess

Glamour, beauty, fame, wealth, privilege, power. Gulnara Karimova had it all. As daughter to Uzbekistan's dictator Islam Karimov, she seemed untouchable, even though her far-flung business dealings that funded her lavish lifestyle had long been tainted with rumors of rampant corruption. Karimova lived a charmed life: jet-setting fashionista, philanthropist, Harvard graduate, pop singer, playwright, jewelry designer, ambassador, celebrity. She performed with Sting, Julio Iglesias and French actor Gerard Depardieu. The 42-year-old Karimova was believed by many to be the most probable political successor to her 76-year-old father, whose health has been in question.



But Gulnara Karimova's star appears to have fallen. Last year her business empire came under investigation from her father's Uzbek regime and earlier this year her luxury apartment in Tashkent, the nation's capital, was raided. She disappeared and has been under "house arrest" for months. Does Karimova's predicament signal a falling out with her father, or is it a sign that the aging Communist strongman is losing power himself? Karimova herself has accused Uzbekistan's security chief Rustam Innoyatov of attempting to seize the throne.

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Islam Karimov, a lifelong Communist and a top Communist Party official during the Soviet era, has continued to run Uzbekistan as a Soviet-style dictatorship since winning his country's first presidential "election" in 1991. With his notorious record for brutal and widespread human rights abuses, it is not surprising that Karimov has enjoyed close relations with Russian President Vladimir Putin. However, he has also enjoyed warm relations with U.S. and EU leaders, thanks to Uzbekistan's hosting of U.S. military forces at its Karshi-Khanabad base for the invasion of Afghanistan.

Gulnara Karimova is learning what billionaire Russian oligarchs [Boris Berezovsky and Shabtai Kalmanovich](#) and [Chinese princeling Bo Xilai](#) and billionaire developer Deng Hong learned the hard way. These and many other high-flying tycoons in Russia and China have been imprisoned or executed. These one-time power brokers lost out to other power brokers more cunning and ruthless than they.

Karimova, apparently, still has enough money and influence in England to enable her to have a public relations agency launch a "Free Gulnara NOW" campaign. However, as Hugh Williamson and Steve Swerdlow of Human Rights Watch noted in an [Op-Ed today](#) at the *EU Observer*, Karimova's appeal is "ironic at best," given her long, unstinting support for her father's thuggish regime. On September 25, Human Rights Watch issued a report, ["Until the Very End": Politically Motivated Imprisonment in](#)



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[Uzbekistan](#) detailing the cases of dozens of dissidents who have been imprisoned and tortured (many of whom are still incarcerated) by the Karimov regime. Unlike Karimova, they are not merely under “house arrest.”

Photo of Gulnara Karimova: AP Images

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