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## Former French President Sarkozy Jailed in Libya Funding Scandal



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Paris, September 25 (Xinhua) – Former French president Nicolas Sarkozy has been sentenced to five years in prison after being found guilty of criminal conspiracy in a high-profile case involving alleged campaign funds from the late Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi.

The Paris criminal court acquitted Sarkozy of other charges, including passive corruption and illegal campaign financing, but ruled that he had allowed close aides to pursue illicit funding

during his 2007 election campaign. Judge Nathalie Gavarino said Sarkozy's entourage sought financial support from Libyan officials, though direct evidence of him receiving the funds was insufficient.

The 70-year-old former leader, who served as president from 2007 to 2012, denied wrongdoing, calling the verdict "extremely serious for the rule of law." He vowed to appeal but must serve jail time even during the appeals process. Sarkozy was also fined €100,000.

The trial stems from accusations dating back to 2013, when Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, son of the Libyan leader, claimed Sarkozy accepted millions for his campaign. Subsequent testimony from Lebanese businessman Ziad Takieddine alleged payments totaling €50 million.

Other senior figures, including ex-interior ministers Claude Gueant and Brice Hortefeux, were also convicted on related charges. Sarkozy's wife, Carla Bruni-Sarkozy, faces separate allegations of concealing evidence.

This ruling marks the first time a former French president could face imprisonment, dealing a historic blow to Sarkozy's political legacy.