According to a judicial source, the ex-French finance minister visited = court in the northern city of Douai to seek a lifting of the gagging =rder and other restrictions that include a 100,000-euro bail bond and = ban on speaking to any plaintiffs in the case.

After a closed-door meeting, magistrates said they would deliver their =ecision on May 30.

"We argued that it (gagging order) was not part of measures outlined in =egal texts and that it breached fundamental principles like freedom of =peech," Richard Malka, one of Strauss-Kahn's lawyers, told Reuters.

Strauss-Kahn's career at the head of the Washington-based International =onetary Fund was cut short when he was arrested in New York in May =011 on charges, since dropped, of attempting to rape a hotel maid.

After criminal charges were abandoned over concerns about the maid's =redibility, she pressed ahead with a civil case. A New York judge =ejected Strauss-Kahn's claim of diplomatic immunity earlier this =onth, allowing the case to move forward.

Strauss-Kahn was placed under formal investigation in March in the =eparate French case, which had led to the arrest of eight people, =ncluding two Lille businessmen and a police commissioner.

If Strauss-Kahn were found guilty on charges of "aggravated organized =imping", he could face up to 20 years in prison.

PS. Please excuse the typos, predictive substitutions and imperfect =.I.
as ever,
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<?xml version=.0" encoding=TF-8"?>
<!DOCTYPE plist PUBLIC "-//Apple//DTD PLIST 1.0//EN" "http://www.apple.com/DTDs/PropertyList-1.0.dtd">
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