

Zeek's case back in court

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Convicted Matthews Lane area leader Donald "Zeeks" Phipps failed on Thursday in his bid to press the authorities to return \$18 million seized from him three years ago.

Resident Magistrate Georgiana Fraser ruled that she did not have the jurisdiction to order the authorities to return the money to the convicted gangster.

The magistrate handed down her decision following an application by lawyers representing Zeeks.

The lawyers had requested the return of the \$18 million in January, after government prosecutors freed Zeeks and his girlfriend Yvonne Salesman of being in unlawful possession of the money.

But the magistrate ruled that once the Director of Public Prosecutions decided to withdraw the case, she had no jurisdiction to order the return of the money.

Lawyers for Zeeks are expected to sue the authorities for the return of the money.

Zeeks and Ms Salesman were charged in 2005 after members of Operation Kingfish seized the cash in a vault at their Highland Drive residence in Havendale, St Andrew.

Investigators believe the cash was collected as part of the multi-million dollar extortion racket in downtown, Kingston.

Government prosecutors have already argued that the money will stay in the possession of the State.

They argued that the \$18 million has no true owner as Zeeks and Ms Salesman had denied that the money belonged to them when they were arrested.

Zeeks who appeared in court under heavy police and military security was convicted in 2006 for a double murder and sentenced to life in prison.