

Passport application simply routine: Chen's office

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Former president Chen Shui-bian's application for a passport was "old news" and Taiwan's judicial system would be proven unjust if it abused its power and extended his detention by raking up old news as new evidence, Chen's office said yesterday.

On Wednesday, former Presidential Office secretary Chen Hsin-yi testified in court that Chen Shui-bian had told her to file an application for a passport for him "most urgently" soon after he stepped down last July. Chen Hsin-yi added that then-first lady Wu Shu-jen told her to pay for the application fees for passports for the then-first family using the "state affairs fund."

In response, Chen Shui-bian's office issued a statement yesterday saying that local media had already reported on the story and that the office had issued a clarification at the time.

The office said that the former president did not need a passport when traveling abroad during his eight-year presidency, but after he stepped down he realized that his old passport was about to expire, so he simply told his secretary to apply for a new one.

The office said the former president did not have a national health insurance card during his term either, because the presidential medical team was taking care of him. So the former president had also renewed his national health insurance card for the same reasons.

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