

Koo decries prosecutors' powers

Written by Taipei Times
Thursday, 02 July 2009 08:09 -

Chairman of the Taiwan Bar Association Wellington Koo accused prosecutors yesterday of abusing their authority by barring people under investigation from leaving the country.

At a press conference, Koo said prosecutors usually impose a ban on a litigant as it makes it more convenient to probe legal cases if the individuals concerned stay within the country.

"However, such authority is usually entrusted to courts in civilized countries," Koo said, adding that a court can serve as an impartial third party to determine whether such a ban is necessary and not excessive.

Koo made the comments after Taipei prosecutors on Tuesday rejected a request by former president Chen Shui-bian's daughter, Chen Hsing-yu, that her travel restrictions be lifted to allow her to study in the US with her three children.

Spokesman for the Taipei Prosecutors' Office Lin Jinn-tsun said that prosecutors rejected her request "to ensure that the litigation process goes smoothly."

Prosecutors placed travel restrictions on Chen Hsing-yu on June 6, three days after she was charged with giving false testimony during investigations into the former first family for alleged corruption and money laundering.

Prosecutors rejected her petition despite her offer to have her passport held by government officials overseas after she enters the US if prosecutors were concerned about her laundering money in the US.

Other options she put on the table included leaving one or all of her children in Taiwan to show her sincerity about coming back to the country after completing her registration.

Chen Hsing-yu's lawyer said she broke down after learning of the rejection, as she had been planning to study in the US for almost three years.

Koo said Chen Hsing-yu's case highlighted the problem of authorizing prosecutors to impose travel bans, adding that lawyers in Taiwan had been calling on the government to limit the power of prosecutors.

In response, Hsieh Wen-ting, secretary-general of the Judicial Yuan, yesterday said the Judicial Yuan would take Koo's suggestions into consideration and was mulling proposing amendments to legislation.

However, the Judicial Yuan would not interfere with individual cases, Hsieh said.

Source: [Taipei Times 2009/07/02](#)