

## Chen Shui-bian sues three judges for abuse of power

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Former president Chen Shui-bian's lawyer filed a lawsuit yesterday against Taipei District Court Judge Tsai Shou-hsun and two other judges involved in Chen's corruption trial, accusing them of abuse of power.

Chen's office issued a statement criticizing Tsai, the presiding judge, and Hsu Chien-hui and Wu Ding-ya for violating the law and Constitution for forming what it called "an illegal joint-decision court" to gain authority over Chen's cases.

The trio abused their power by illegally detaining Chen, the statement said, infringing upon articles 125 and 28 of the Civil Code, adding that the detention was a pretext to retaliate against Chen after he denied any wrongdoing and refused to plead guilty.

Last month, the court extended Chen's detention for a third time. In the ruling, the judges reiterated several of the reasons cited in their previous detention rulings.

Among the reasons mentioned were that Chen would collude with witnesses, destroy evidence or try to abscond. The court also cited Chen's "interference" with the case by talking to the public through friends and colleagues who visited him at the detention center.

Chen has been held at the Taipei Detention Center since last December.

He is suspected of money laundering, accepting bribes, forgery and embezzling NT\$15 million (US\$450,000) during his presidency.

His wife, Wu Shu-jen, was indicted in 2006 on charges of embezzling NT\$104 million from the presidential "state affairs" fund.

Chen was declared a defendant in the case shortly after his presidential term ended on May 20 last year. He could not be charged earlier because of presidential immunity.

Chen and Wu are also accused of accepting NT\$100 million in bribes and US\$6 million in connection with a land procurement deal, as well as US\$2.73 million in kickbacks to help a contractor win a tender for a government construction project.

The couple's son Chen Chih-chung and daughter-in-law Huang Jui-ching have pleaded guilty to the charges against them. Prosecutors have rejected the couple's plea-negotiations.

Chen Shui-bian has denied all the charges and accused the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) administration of "political persecution" and of waging a "political vendetta" against him to curry favor with China.

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