

Prosecutors said to be avoiding Ma Ying-jeou lawsuits

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Various groups yesterday hold a news conference outside the Taipei District Prosecutors' Office criticizing prosecutors for "passing the buck" and failing to bring charges against former president Ma Ying-jeou for his alleged involvement in the controversial Taipei Dome project when he served as Taipei mayor.

Photo: CNA

Pro-localization groups yesterday accused prosecutors of not taking the necessary steps to prosecute former president Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) for his suspected role in the Taipei Dome project and a classified information leak, demanding that they take action immediately.

A coalition of groups, including Taiwan Forever Association, Northern Taiwan Society and Taiwan Association of University Professors, held a news conference in front of the Taipei District Prosecutors' Office building, accusing the agency and the Special Investigation Division (SID) of the Supreme Prosecutors' Office of ignoring three criminal lawsuits the groups have filed against Ma.

Lawyer Huang Di-ying (黃迪盈) said that Ma, when serving as Taipei mayor, was suspected of helping Farglory Group (芳榮集團), the contractor for the Taipei Dome, secure profits by agreeing to waive royalty fees for land use.

"The royalty waiver was allegedly negotiated under the table between Ma and [Farglory founder] Chao Teng-hsiung (趙騰興), which could be proved with negotiation recordings provided by [former Taipei finance commissioner] Lee Sush-der (李述德). Such incriminating evidence is rarely found in corruption cases, but prosecutors ignored the evidence and failed to launch an investigation," lawyer Cheng Wen-lung (鄭文龍) said.

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Another lawsuit focuses on Ma's role in a classified information leak in 2013, which involved wiretapping of telephone conversations of former legislative speaker Wang Jin-pyng (王金平).

Former prosecutor-general Huang Shih-ming (黃世明) leaked details of the conversation to Ma, which led to Huang Shih-ming's conviction last year, but prosecutors did not investigate Ma's alleged role in instigating Huang Shih-ming to leak the information.

Ma was also implicated in a lawsuit that accused him of unexplained increases in personal wealth during his time as president.

The SID, which received the Taipei Dome lawsuit, transferred the case to the Taipei District Prosecutors' Office, but the office did not launch investigations into the cases, the groups said.

"We are here to issue a formal condemnation of the Taipei District Prosecutors' Office, whose failure to launch an investigation has significantly harmed the public's trust in the judiciary. Such an apparent attempt to protect Ma from prosecution is the reason more than 80 percent of the public do not trust prosecutors," Huang Di-ying said.

"Minister of Justice Chiu Tai-san (邱太三) should toughen up rather than allowing Ma to travel to Hong Kong, which I believe is an attempt to test the possibility of absconding," Cheng said.

A travel restriction should be imposed on Ma, who is planning to visit Hong Kong on Wednesday next week, they said.

Youth Against Oppression in Taiwan deputy secretary-general Lin Chia-yu (林佳宇) said the SID becomes a "no investigation division" when it comes to accusations involving Ma, compared with its handling of cases involving former president Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁).

The Supreme Prosecutors' Office said the Taipei District Prosecutors' Office and Agency Against Corruption are investigating the cases.

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