

## Ma faces Taipei District Court date next month

Written by Taipei Times

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Former president Ma Ying-jeou, left, speaks with Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) Chairwoman Hung Hsiu-chu at a meeting of the Overseas Community Affairs Council in Taipei yesterday.

**Photo: Wang Yi-sung, Taipei Times**

Former president Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) is to appear in court early next month on charges of soliciting confidential information from a chief prosecutor, the first time he has faced court as a defendant since leaving office in May.

The Taipei District Court yesterday said that it has summoned Ma to appear on the afternoon of Nov. 8 over charges of leaking state secrets, soliciting former prosecutor-general Huang Shih-ming (黃世銘) to disclose secret information and breaches of the Communication Security and Surveillance Act (通訊保障及監察法) and the Personal Information Protection Act (個人資料保護法).

Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) caucus whip Ker Chien-ming (柯建銘), who brought the charges against Ma in October 2013, and his attorney are also to appear, while Huang is to appear in court on Tuesday next week.

Ma's office yesterday acknowledged that it has received a summons over the case.

"Ever since he entered public service, Ma has respected justice, abided by the law and behaved with integrity. His behavior will undoubtedly stand the test of judicial scrutiny," Ma's office said, adding that the former president would arrive at the court on time.

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Although Ma has made court appearances twice since leaving office, the Nov. 8 court session is to be the first time he has appeared before a judge as a defendant.

The former president appeared in the Taiwan High Court on Aug. 2 and Aug. 30 — both times as a plaintiff — in connection with his case against media personality Clara Chou (周子瑜), against whom Ma has filed a defamation lawsuit over claims that he received an illicit political donation of NT\$200 million (US\$6.34 million at current exchange rates) from Ting Hsin International Group (鼎新國際) during his second presidential term.

The charges Ma is facing are from a high-profile case in September 2013, in which Huang allegedly leaked confidential information to Ma regarding a then-ongoing investigation into allegedly improper lobbying involving Ko and then-legislative speaker Wang Jin-pyng (王金平).

The case was initially dismissed by the Taipei District Court in 2014 on the grounds of a lack of substantial evidence, but the Taiwan High Court later remanded the case to the district court for retrial after Ko filed an appeal.

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