

Taiwan High Court begins hearing on Chen's graft ruling

Written by Taipei Times

Saturday, 24 October 2009 07:48 -



Despite heavy rains yesterday, protesters show their support for former president Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁), who insisted his life term for graft was “illegal” and argued the evidence used to convict him was insufficient.
PHOTO: CHANG CHIA-MING, TAIPEI TIMES

The Taiwan High Court yesterday began to hear the appeal by former president Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁), who insisted his life term for graft was “illegal” and argued the evidence used to convict him was insufficient.

Chen was sentenced to life in prison by a district court last month for embezzling state funds, laundering money, accepting bribes and forgery. His wife, Wu Shu-jen (吳淑珍), also received life imprisonment on graft convictions.

Chen's defense team yesterday challenged the legitimacy of the ruling, saying the district court violated litigation laws by convicting him despite insufficient evidence.

“The ruling is based on presumption rather than concrete evidence. It is unbalanced, illogical and biased,” his lawyer Cheng Wen-lung (鄭文龍) told a panel of High Court judges.

Cheng argued that district court judges overlooked testimonies favorable to the former president as they pointed to his wife being the mastermind of collecting political donations and wiring the family's money abroad.

Chen, whose term as president ended in May last year, has dismissed his conviction as a political vendetta by the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) government for his support for Taiwanese independence.

Some legal academics have expressed concern over the handling of Chen's case, particularly criticizing the length of his detention, which started last December.

Chen suffered a fresh setback last week when the Council of Grand Justices rejected a petition to halt his trial and order his immediate release from detention.

Source: [Taipei Times 2009/10/24](#)