

Former first lady receives apology from prosecutors

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Prosecutors in charge of investigating former president Chen Shui-bian's (陳水扁) corruption and money laundering cases apologized yesterday to former first lady Wu Shu-jen (吳淑珍) for saying the family still had NT\$50 million (NT\$1.6 million) in active bank accounts.

"The prosecution apologizes to [Wu] for mistakenly saying that the total amount the Chen family holds in [active] checking deposits is [NT\$]50 million, when in fact the amount is a little more than [NT\$]5 million," said Chen Yun-nan (陳雲南), spokesperson for the Supreme Prosecutor's Office's Special Investigative Panel (SIP).

The apology came after Wu issued a statement on Saturday saying that the funds in the accounts of Chen Shui-bian, their son Chen Chih-chung (陳智雄), daughter-in-law Huang Jui-ching (黃璦晶) and herself to which they have access totaled about NT\$1.23 million, and was not enough to cover living expenses, a mortgage, attorney fees and her medical and nursing expenses.

Wu said her medical and nursing expenses come to NT\$200,000 a month, while a NT\$3.8 million life insurance payment was being used to pay legal fees.

Chen Yun-nan confirmed on Wednesday that the SIP had frozen the bank accounts, stock holdings and real estate holdings of several members of the former president's family.

The prosecutors said the assets needed to be frozen to ensure illegal profits would be returned to the treasury in the event the former president and other defendants were found guilty by the Taiwan High Court.

They said the money in the unfrozen accounts was enough to sustain Wu, Chen Chih-chung and Huang.

Prosecutors said if Wu felt the family needed more money to cover their expenses, she and her attorneys should tell the High Court, which is reviewing the family's corruption and money laundering cases.

The only family member whose assets were not frozen was daughter Chen Hsing-yu (陳幸瑜), because prosecutors said they have no evidence she had participated in the alleged money-laundering.

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