

## Association, groups rally support for a jury system

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Members of the Taiwan Jury Association and groups advocating Taiwanese independence yesterday demonstrated outside the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) headquarters in Taipei to demand that the government implement a jury system.

Protest leaders said they want a “true jury system,” not the “citizen judge” system favored by the Judicial Yuan.

Chang Ching (張清), a former judge and chairman of Taiwan Jury Association, said the citizen judge system would still leave the decisionmaking to judges, and it was a means for conservative forces to block judicial reform efforts.

Chang and other protesters urged the public to join them on Saturday in a “Support the jury system” march, which is to start at the Liberty Square at 2pm and proceed through downtown Taipei.

“There are too many abuses and too much misconduct in Taiwan’s judiciary. Only by instituting a jury system can people have the dignity and respect they deserve, and not have their legal rights violated. It would also decrease the possibility of innocent people being found guilty and wrongly jailed,” Chang said.

Peter Wang (王彼得), convener of the 908 Taiwan Republic Campaign group, said the majority of the public are disappointed by the government’s attempts at judicial reform, and have shown their dissatisfaction with the Judicial Yuan’s decision to have citizen judges instead of implementing a jury system.

The public is fed up with “dinosaur judges” who make rulings based on whims and that are out of touch with society, Wang said.

Most of the judges were educated through decades of brainwashing and party-state propaganda by the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT), and they have acted as the KMT’s tools to

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suppress Taiwanese fighting for democracy and freedom, he said.

Former minister of national defense Michael Tsai (蔡啟芳), who has a juris doctor degree and had practiced law in US before returning to Taiwan, attended the protest to lend his support.

“In Taiwan, we need a jury system now, because this is the best way for the judiciary to have transparency, fairness and equal protection of rights for all citizens. It is also the system in the US, Canada, the UK, and other advanced nations, and many Asian nations are also moving toward a jury system,” Tsai said.

“Public surveys have consistently shown that Taiwanese have no confidence in the justice system, as there have been wrongful judgements and selective prosecution based on political considerations,” he said.

“Most people believe that their legal rights are being abrogated and violated under the current system. A jury system can restore the public’s trust in the fairness and equality of all citizens in the judicial process,” he added.

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