

## Organizations demand that Chen be released soon

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A number of pro-independence organizations yesterday called on the government to release former President Chen Shui-bian from Taipei Detention Center, where he has been held in detention for 499 days.

At a press conference in Taipei yesterday, political commentator Chin Heng-wei criticized the government for Chen's protracted detention, saying that it was based on political considerations because Chen no longer posed a flight risk.

Chen's family on Tuesday agreed to wire NT\$700 million (US\$22.1 million) from their Swiss bank accounts to prosecutors in Taiwan, citing comments made by a judge that the move could enhance Chen's chances of release when he comes up for review on April 23.

Political interference from Chinese Nationalist Party [KMT] politicians as well as external pressure from China are the only reasons that Chen's detention has continued indefinitely, Chin said.

In a statement released on Wednesday by the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), the party called for the courts to end Chen's detention in the interest of "preserving Taiwan's democratic freedoms and ensuring the fairness of the judiciary."

Quoting DPP chairperson Tsai Ing-wen, the statement said: "The indefinite detention of the former president has had a serious impact on the international image of and public confidence in Taiwan's legal system."

Both pro-independence organizations and the opposition party are asking the government to support a revision of the Code of Criminal Procedure that would impose limits on the length of time individuals can be held.

A joint statement released by the organizations yesterday said that any law that provides for indefinite periods of detention is a relic of the martial law period.

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