

Thousands protest Chen's detention

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Former president Chen Shui-bian's (陳水扁) mother yesterday said at a protest against his detention that she was saddened by the fact that for the past two years her son has been unable to call her on Mother's Day.

Chen Lee Shen (陳麗珍) came to Taipei from Tainan to join a sit-in rally on Jinan Road calling for Chen's release that was organized by various pro-localization groups, including some Democratic Progressive Party officials from southern Taiwan.

"I have not seen my son for so long. I have not heard his voice for so long," she said, crying. "I feel deep sadness and pain every day. I am more than 80 years old, but I have to live with that pain every day."

Today marks the former president's 551st day in custody over money laundering and graft charges.

"My son has been wronged. He is innocent," his mother told the crowd.

Chen Lee Shen was accompanied by her two daughters and Chen Shui-bian's son, Chen Chih-chung (陳致中).

An estimated 5,000 people joined the rally. Hundreds of Chen and Taiwanese independence supporters were bused in from all over the country to join the protest.

The Taiwan High Court last month prolonged Chen's detention until June 23.

"The justice system is dead, but A-Bian [Chen Shui-bian] is not lonely. A-Bian's mother is not lonely. We are always with them and will always support them," Central Taiwan Society president Chen Wan-te (陳萬泰) told the crowd.

A few blocks away on Ketagalan Boulevard, a second protest took place. Unlike the rambunctious crowd on Jinan Road, however, this protest offered something far more sober: silence. Under the watchful eye of a dozen police officers, more than 1,000 plastic stools were arranged, each anchoring a balloon. When viewed from above, they formed the character "Ma," or horse — President Ma Ying-jeou's (馬英九) surname — with a large yellow arrow pointing at the Presidential Office a few hundred meters away. At one point, a Buddhist monk walked among the chairs and stood there for a few moments in contemplation.

"Justice is dead," read signs posted around the venue. A picture of a plaque from Green Island, which served as a prison for political prisoners during the White Terror era, also graced the area.

The former president was first detained on Nov. 12, 2008, and released on Dec. 13, 2008, following his indictment. He was detained again on Dec. 30, 2008, after the Taipei District Court approved a request by prosecutors to take him back into custody. He has remained in

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detention ever since.

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Slideshow of the activity: [Bian Mather's Calling](#)