

Former president Chen Shui-bian seeks release

Written by Taipei Times

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Former president Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁) yesterday asked to be released from jail while appealing a 20-year graft sentence, saying that he had sent back most of the money that had been wired abroad.

After the Special Investigation Panel confirmed it had received almost all of the NT\$662 million (US\$22 million) Chen's family had wired into Swiss bank accounts, Chen's attorney said he was filing an application to secure the former president's release.

The former president said that the money was political campaign money and that it was wired abroad by his wife without his knowledge.

Cheng Wen-long (鄭文隆) said that the Taiwan High Court stated last month that Chen had to wire all the money back if he wanted to increase his chances of being released. Cheng said that since the money had now been returned to Taiwan, the Taiwan High Court had no reason to continue keeping Chen in custody.

In the many rulings extending Chen's detention, the High Court generally claimed that the former president represented a flight risk.

He said the application with the Supreme Court requested Chen's immediate release.

With the last portion of the money returned to Taiwan yesterday, Chen had done everything in his power, said Chen Sung-shan (陳永善), the former president's secretary.

The Taiwan High Court on June 11 reduced the life sentences for Chen and his wife, Wu Shu-jen (吳淑珍), to 20 years in prison. Chen and his wife were convicted of embezzling public funds, forgery and money laundering during Chen's two terms as president. He has been in detention for more than 600 days.

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