

Groups call for new constitution

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The alleged illegality of the National Security Council (NSC) secretary-general sitting in on meetings of the National Police Agency (NPA) and Ministry of Justice's Investigation Bureau suggests that the nation is in need of a new Republic of China constitution, civic organizations said yesterday.

NSC Secretary-General King Pu-tsung (金溥聰) came under fire from legislators across party lines when he visited the police agency on Wednesday and the Investigation Bureau on Friday.

While lawmakers said that King was overreaching his authority, the council in a statement issued on Sunday evening dismissing allegations that he had violated the Constitution, adding that King would continue making the visits.

The 15 civic groups, which took part in the student-led Sunflower movement occupying the Legislative Yuan in Taipei from March 18 to April 10 in protest against the government's handling of the cross-strait service trade agreement, held a press conference in Taipei yesterday for the "Declaration of the New Constitution Movement."

The declaration said the Sunflower movement highlighted many of the problems in the nation's constitutional government system, adding that it showed how the government's sovereign status was called into question and the principle of separation of powers were teetering on the brink of dysfunction.

Taiwan needs to "unfreeze" its Constitution and lower the threshold for constitutional amendments as one of the goals of constitutional government reforms, the declaration said.

The nation needs a new constitution, one in which the common will of Taiwanese is reflected to better implement human rights, realize social democracy, recognize the autonomy of Aborigines, realize "generational justice" by lowering the age requirement for voting and

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participation in politics and establish a healthy political party system, the groups said.

Despite its amendments, the Constitution cannot truly separate the democratic system from the influence of old institutionalized ways, and only through drafting a new constitution can Taiwanese cement the values of human rights and democracy and establish the nation as a healthy state in East Asia, the declaration said.

Democratic Front Against Cross-Strait Trade in Service Agreement (民主陣線) convener Lai Chung-chiang (賴昌江) said the Constitution has gone as far as it can, and the nation truly needs the movement.

Meanwhile, the groups called on political parties to face the constitutional crisis threatening the nation and asked for their support in the reforms.

“The government should not avoid our calls to hold a civil reformation of the constitutional system by calling for a national meeting on the economy, nor should it disregard the will and determination of society to push through political reforms,” the groups said.

The groups called on the public to support their efforts.

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