

Groups demand Ma's imprisonment

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Photo: CNA

Former president Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) and Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) caucus whip Ker Chien-ming (柯建銘) yesterday attended a court hearing at the Taipei District Court over a 2013 wiretapping case, while Taiwanese independence groups protested outside, demanding that Ma be imprisoned over alleged abuses of power and illegal activities.

It was Ma's second appearance as a defendant in the case since leaving office in May last year.

Ker, who filed the case, accused Ma of contravening the Criminal Code, the Communication Security and Surveillance Act (通訊保障及監察法) and the Personal Information Protection Act (個人資料保護法) in connection with alleged wiretapping of telephone conversations between Ker and then-legislative speaker Wang Jin-pyng (王金平).

Ma smiled but did not answer reporters' questions when heading into the courtroom yesterday afternoon, escorted by security personnel.

The court also called former prosecutor-general Huang Shih-ming (黃世明) and Lin Yu-chen (林郁陳), Ma's personal secretary in 2013, for cross-examination.

"I call on Ma to stop his arguing and quibbling. He should have some dignity. If not, he will face judicial punishment and will certainly be judged by bianshi (扁屍)," Ker told reporters, referring to a traditional Chinese punishment for disgraced dead political figures, whereby the corpse is exhumed and publicly flogged.

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Ker said that the case is to “defend the nation’s constitutional system” and “rid the governance of a secret-police state.”

“Ma abused his authority and violated the Constitution. Prosecutor-general Huang conducted wiretapping on the Legislature. These actions cannot be tolerated in a democratic nation,” Ker said. “This is a litmus test for judicial reform.”

“In this case, Huang was found guilty last year, which means Ma should not escape prosecution,” he said.

The court hearing aimed to clarify a telephone call on Sept. 1, 2013, when Ma allegedly instructed Lin to call Huang and request a lunch meeting the following day, during which Huang allegedly told Ma confidential information from the wiretapping.

Outside the court, supporters of Taiwanese independence held a rally to demand that the judiciary charge Ma and sentence him to prison. About 200 police officers were on site to control the crowd.

Taiwan Independence Party Chairman Huang Kuo-huang (黃國煌) said the first step toward judicial reform is to prosecute Ma for his numerous illegal activities, manipulation of the justice system and abuses of power.

“Taiwanese will not accept a justice system that gives such leniency to Ma, who is an unscrupulous and corrupt politician. We see justice has not been served. Ma has broken the law many times and he must be imprisoned to serve time for his wrongdoings,” Huang said.

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