

KMT seeks to eliminate transitional justice purse

Written by Taipei Times

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The Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) legislative caucus yesterday issued a notice in a bid to eliminate the budget for the Transitional Justice Commission at a review tomorrow.

“The alleged breach of neutrality seen in the incident involving [former commission chairman] Chang Tien-chin (張天欽) exposed the commission’s positioning as an ‘Eastern Depot,’” the notice said, referring to a Ming Dynasty-era secret police and spy agency.

After the resignation of former commission chairman Huang Huang-hsiung (黃煌雄) in October, the body unilaterally appointed commission spokeswoman Yang Tsui (楊燄) as acting chairperson, it said.

The move amounted to abolishing the Legislative Yuan’s power to approve political appointments, and the appointment of Yang, who has a “distinct” political leaning, portended the inauguration of a “political hatchet woman,” it added.

The commission is a “fig leaf” for the Democratic Progressive Party’s (DPP) persecution of the KMT and has no reason to exist, it said.

According to a leaked audio recording, Chang said at an informal meeting with five commission staff members in August that the commission was drawing up a lustration law and that he planned to use it against then-KMT New Taipei City mayoral candidate Hou You-yi (侯友宜), whom he allegedly called the “most egregious transitional justice case.”

KMT Legislator Lin Wei-chou (林錫山), cochair of the legislature’s Judiciary and Organic Laws and Statutes Committee, said the incident was one of the reasons that the DPP suffered losses in the Nov. 24 local elections.

The Executive Yuan should restart the nomination procedure for a new commission chairperson, while the commission, which has lost the public’s trust, should undergo a systematic reshuffle before it submits a budget request, Lin said.

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Lawmakers had appointed Huang as the commission's head, not Yang, so approving the budget proposal when the commission is under the leadership of Yang could contravene the law, he added.

"Whatever Chang might have said or done is wrong. He has assumed political responsibility and stepped down," DPP caucus director-general Lee Chun-yi (李俊毅) said.

Yang was appointed acting chairwoman because she is a commissioner, Lee said, adding that she would stay in the post until the legislature approves a new staffing plan for the commission.

"The elections are over. The KMT should stop trying to have a field day by exploiting this issue," he said.

"The KMT should know when to quit. There are many people who would not approve of their approach" to boycott the budget review, New Power Party (NPP) caucus convener Hsu Yung-ming (許毓仁) said.

"Should the prisoners of conscience of the White Terror era be left to die with their resentment from wrongful treatment unappeased?" Hsu asked.

The NPP is open to the idea of introducing a lustration law into the Act on Promoting Transitional Justice (促進轉型正義法), and the KMT should lobby for an amendment if it believes that the act needs to be improved, he said.

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