

## Supreme Court rejects Chen's detention appeal

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The Supreme Court yesterday rejected an appeal by former president Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁) to revoke a Taiwan High Court ruling last month that he remain in custody for another two months.

Chen filed the appeal after a three-judge panel from the High Court ruled on Dec. 17 that he be kept behind bars for another two months, on the grounds that he might abscond if released from detention.

After a review, the Supreme Court upheld the High Court ruling and turned down Chen's appeal.

The high court ruling said Chen should be detained for another two months from Dec. 24 to Feb. 23. The next hearing on whether he should be detained for a longer period might be held before the Feb. 13 to Feb. 21 Lunar New Year holiday.

The judges said in their ruling that Chen has had the chance to come into contact with foreign governments and members of the private sector, making him "more familiar than ordinary people with ways to flee overseas."

With Chen's influence and the assets stashed overseas by his family, he could live a comfortable life if he were to run away to evade the severe sentence he could face, the judges said.

Both Chen and his wife, Wu Shu-jen, were sentenced on Sept. 11 by the Taipei District Court to life in prison, in addition to receiving fines of NT\$200 million (US\$6.13 million) and NT\$300 million, respectively, on several counts of corruption, including embezzling from a presidential fund for state affairs, taking bribes from local businessmen and money laundering.

Chen was first detained on Nov. 12, 2008, and was 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 and he has not been released since.

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