

No appeal on Chen's assets

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Prosecutors investigating former president Chen Shui-bian's (陳水扁) corruption and money laundering cases yesterday said they would not appeal a High Court ruling to unfreeze certain assets of the former first family.

In November, the Supreme Prosecutors' Office's Special Investigation Panel (SIP) confirmed that it had requested the court to freeze NT\$300 million (US\$9 million) in bank accounts, stock holdings and real estate holdings of several members of the former president's family.

The suspension of their accounts angered the wheelchair-bound former first lady Wu Shu-jen (吳淑珍), who said the family's monthly expenditures added up to about NT\$300,000 because of her medical expenses. The family also owes legal fees to lawyers who are defending them in the corruption and money-laundering cases at the Taiwan High Court. The family then filed an appeal of the ruling in order to have their assets unfrozen.

About two weeks ago, the Taiwan High Court ruled in favor of Wu, ordering the SIP to free up more than NT\$4.63 million in Wu's bank account. Judges said they found Wu indeed needed to pay at least NT\$120,000 a month for her living and medical expenses, and roughly NT\$3.9 million in legal fees.

SIP spokesperson Chen Yun-nan (陳運南) yesterday said: "Prosecutors respect the court's decision. We will not appeal."

The SIP previously argued that the former first family had enough money in the unfrozen accounts to sustain itself, with NT\$5 million in unfrozen bank accounts and rental income from properties, insurance compensation and monthly stipends from Chen Shui-bian's terms as president.

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