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Legislator Hsiao Bi-khim calls Chen Shui-bian's prison conditions horrible

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Legislator Hsiao Bi-khim is critical of Ma Ying-jeou's treatment of Chen Shui-bian
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[Taiwan Political Prisoner Report](#), Jan. 18, 2013. Legislator [Hsiao Bi-khim](#) has taken a strong advocacy role within the Democratic Progressive Party and has [directly challenged Ma Ying-jeou](#), president of the [Republic of China](#) in-exile, over the treatment of Ma's predecessor, [Chen Shui-bian](#). In December, Hsiao appeared at Democracy Camp outside the ROC presidential office building to protest Chen's mistreatment in prison where he is serving a lengthy sentence for alleged corruption.

During an interview in her office, Legislator Hsiao explained her analysis of the case, "There are mainly two parts to the issue, one is the trial itself, but the second part is the way he was treated in prison which is another part we have to look at."

"The way he has been treated in prison is a cause for concern, especially from a human rights perspective. The [prison conditions](#), I think, by all international standards were horrible," said Hsiao.

“When we saw him transferred to the first hospital he was probably in the worst situation.

“In his prison cell he had no bed, in a very crowded space with another prison mate,” Hsiao said of Chen. “He did all of his eating, writing, reading, sleeping, everything on the floor, in a very, very small and limited space.”

“Other prisoners had the opportunity to work,” Hsiao complained. “There was a prison factory that offered an opportunity to talk to other people and to get some fresh air, but President Chen had been denied that option. Also, there are other prison cells that had bunk beds that were available but that option was also denied the former President.”

“We are very much concerned the prison conditions are what caused his medical situation. The medical doctors feel that a change of environment is needed,” Hsiao asserts.

Hsiao feels the excuse given by the Ministry of Justice to keep Chen from work, his safety from other prisoners, is not valid. She said, “The safety concerns should be the prison’s responsibility. You don’t punish a prisoner who is already being punished by his incarceration and the limitation of his freedom. This is a dual punishment which is not part of our legal system.”

“There has never been any indication that President Chen was a violent prisoner.”

“The denial of a bed and table, a lot of us feel, is a way to humiliate him by his political opponent. Also, the security camera in his room that monitors all his movements was installed just right above the toilet with no privacy whatsoever. We feel that was a cause of his urinary dysfunction,” an opinion echoed by one of Chen’s doctors.

“It is ironic the former President Chiang Ching-kuo, who governed Taiwan under martial law was willing to give political prisoners more humane prison conditions than the current President Ma Ying-jeou, who was actually elected by the people, and that is the most difficult irony. Former Vice-President Annette Lu, when she was in prison in the 80’s, she had a bed, and she had some time every day to exercise, she could write, she had a desk. The conditions back then, that is the irony, they were better than they are today for President Chen.” Hsiao said, “This is something we do not want to see happening in Taiwan.”

“On a more positive note, if we can unseat the current government win an election in the coming years maybe there will be an opportunity for amnesty for our former president, or medical parole. Of course, this is what we are working towards. What we are calling for is medial parole for the former President.”

Legislator Hsiao concluded, “I want to extend my appreciation to others around the world who have



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taken an interest and expressed concern for the political situation in Taiwan and the condition of our former president. His medical conditions are deteriorating and we certainly hope there can be more pressure exerted on this current government to take steps recommended by the former president's medical team to improve his situation.”

Next: [Legislator Liu Chien-kuo calls Ma Ying-jeou's actions shameful](#)



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