



The Ministry of Justice

Press Release

Publication date : 19 July 2023

Issued by : Department of International and Cross-Strait
Legal Affairs

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Historic Breakthrough in judicial cooperation between Switzerland and Taiwan of recovering NT\$4.3 billion related to the “Lafayette Frigates Scandal”

On July 11, 2023, Switzerland has transferred US\$138.04 million (approximately NT\$4.3 billion) back to Taiwan, which was originally seized from Andrew Wang, the deceased arms dealer, and his family. The illicit kickbacks have arrived in the account of the Taiwan Taipei District Prosecutors Office and will then be confiscated by the office.

Since 2001, the Ministry of Justice has been seeking mutual legal assistance from European countries to freeze Wang’s family's overseas assets. After years of dedicated efforts and with the help of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Délégation culturelle et économique de Taipei in Switzerland, Taiwan first heard the good news from Liechtenstein, which handed over to Taiwan US\$11.03 million (approximately NT\$330 million) in February earlier this year. Now the triumph continues by successfully recovering the huge illegal proceeds from Switzerland.

In 1991, European media revealed that the Wang family had an abnormally large amount of money flowing into European countries. With assistance from the Ministry of Justice, the Supreme Prosecutors Office sought mutual legal assistance from various countries to freeze their overseas assets. From 2001 to 2003, Switzerland successively froze as many as 27 accounts controlled by the family.

The Department of International and Cross-Strait Legal Affairs liaised and actively assisted the Taipei District Prosecutors Office in requesting Switzerland to return the frozen assets of the Wang family. With support from Switzerland, the mutual legal assistance that has lasted for more than 20 years finally came to fruition.

Before transferring, Switzerland had proposed to share the frozen assets of the Wang family. Since Switzerland has assisted in this case for more than 20 years, also considering the spirit of the United Nations Convention against Corruption and international practices, Taiwan agreed to share the assets with Switzerland at a ratio of 50 to 50 to facilitate long-term international collaboration.

To properly respond to people's expectations, the Ministry of Justice will continue working on international cooperation, hoping to recover all the criminal proceeds hidden overseas, completely deprive the illegal benefits obtained, and ensure that social justice prevails.