

# Taiwan: Political archive declassification begins

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**Thousands of political archives from the Martial Law era and after are to be declassified from today, while the National Archives Administration vowed to expedite the review of potentially sensitive documents.**

The legislature last year passed amendments to the Political Archives Act (政治檔案法), which were promulgated by the president on Dec. 27 and take effect today.

The change requires declassification of files after 30 years unless extended, removing a designation allowing for indefinite classification of documents pertaining to national security or foreign affairs.

In addition to the mandate to declassify documents from Aug. 15, 1945, to Nov. 6, 1992, the archives agency said it is to also reveal related files from after 1992 in the interest of continuity.

Those originally classified due to national security or foreign affairs reasons would be unsealed from today, the agency said in a news release.

An extension may be granted if declassification would seriously jeopardize the safety of intelligence personnel, it said.

Each extension lasts three years, and must be approved by relevant national security agencies, it added.

Extensions must be completed within six months, or they would be considered automatically declassified, it said.

To protect privacy, officials are required to first contact people named in files containing sensitive personal information to notify them of their right to priority access and refusal, it said.

If no objections are raised, such files would be declassified six months after the notice is sent, it said, adding that the first notices would likely go out on July 31.

Political archives constitute about 10 percent of all national documents, the agency said.

Disclosure of historical archives forms the foundation of transitional justice, reflecting the fight for democracy and freedom authored by the lives of those who went before, the agency said, adding that they are key to restoring the truth and achieving reconciliation.

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