

## Government prevents visit by Kadeer

Written by Taipei Times

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The government yesterday decided to deny World Uyghur Congress president Rebiya Kadeer entry to Taiwan on the grounds that her visit would harm the national interest.

Minister of the Interior Jiang Yi-huah (江宜華) said on the legislative floor yesterday afternoon that the government would not allow Kadeer to visit Taiwan if she applied for a visa.

Jiang said the World Uyghur Congress was related to a terrorist organization, while many countries had also been alerted to the congress' general secretary.

"If Kadeer visits Taiwan, the purpose of her visit would have something to do with Xinjiang's independence movement," Jiang said.

"Like the precautionary measures we took during the nation's previous two important [international] sports events [the World Games and the Deaflympics,] we are trying to prevent terrorism from overshadowing Taiwan. Therefore, we decided to give priority to our national interests," he said.

Jiang said the National Immigration Agency cited Article 18 of the Immigration Act (移民法) as the reason for the rejection. It stipulates that the agency enjoys the authority to deny entry by foreign nationals who may harm Taiwan's national interests or social order.

Premier Wu Den-yih (吳登毅), who was fielding questions from Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) legislators, said the Cabinet supported the ministry's decision.

Kadeer had been invited by two civic groups — Guts United Taiwan and the Taiwan Youth Anti-Communist Corps — to visit Taiwan in December.

The groups extended the invitation after China protested against the Kaohsiung Film Festival's decision to screen *The 10 Conditions of Love*, which focuses on Kadeer.

After meeting Guts United Taiwan president Freddy Lim (林正盛) at her Washington office on Wednesday, Kadeer said: "I would love to visit Taiwan, but I have not even applied for the visa yet. I want to tell Taiwanese about our struggle and about the plight of the Uighur people. I hope they will let me visit so that I can tell this human rights story."

The deputy secretary-general of the KMT caucus, Justin Chou (周錫山), yesterday said he respected the government's decision.

"Kadeer is a politician and a sensitive figure in the world," Chou said.

Throughout the question-and-answer session with legislators yesterday, Wu repeatedly said the government would give priority to the national interest when handling Kadeer's planned

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visit.

Wu said the government needed to consider the impact of her visit on Taiwan's international relations, image, cross-strait relations and the economy.

KMT headquarters yesterday also said it supported the government's decision to reject any visa application by Kadeer and condemned the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) for manipulating the issue for its own political interests.

KMT spokesman Lee Chien-jung (李顯章) said US President Barack Obama had recently decided not to meet the Dalai Lama during his trip to the US to protect the country's national interests. Japan had also prevented visits by former president Lee Teng-hui (李登輝) for the same reason.

"The decision made by the government today is based on national and public interests," he said.

Liao Wei-cheng (廖偉程), executive director of Guts United Taiwan, however, criticized the government for making a decision before Kadeer had even filed a visa application.

"If the Chinese Nationalist Party government doesn't even bother to wait to see Kadeer's visa application or look at her reason for wanting to come to Taiwan before refusing her visit, I suspect that there's a blacklist, and we seem to have returned to the White Terror era," Liao told the Taipei Times in a telephone interview yesterday. "The government said they made the decision based on the interests of the country — of which country? Of China?"

He said that as a democracy with the rule of law, Taiwan should issue a visa to Kadeer if she follows the proper procedure.

"The refusal has damaged Taiwan's image in the international community," he said.

Liao said that if the Taiwanese government says Kadeer has connection to terrorists, "Are we accusing the US of harboring terrorists?"

"The Ministry of the Interior should explain to the public where it received the intelligence," he said. "After all, we're the only country other than China that refuses Kadeer entry."

The DPP made a similar response through a press release yesterday.

"Kadeer has been granted refugee asylum by the US — a country that applies the most strict criteria on terrorists, and her organization, the World Uyghur Congress, has long been sponsored by the US' National Endowment for Democracy," the statement said.

"Apparently, the government's criteria on terrorists are different from our long-time anti-terrorism partner," it said.

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So far, Kadeer has visited Germany, Australia, Japan and the Czech Republic, as well as speaking at a hearing of the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights this year, the statement said.

DPP Legislator Huang Wei-che (黃偉哲) said the reasons cited by the government for the refusal were all excuses.

"I think the KMT government is just acting according to a blacklist that China has compiled," he said.

### REJECTION

Meanwhile, the World Uyghur Congress, which is headed by Kadeer, immediately opposed the linkage to terrorism.

"We strongly oppose the minister's comment, made with no evidence at all," said spokesman for the congress Dilxat Raxit. "We demand that he retracts his statement at once."

Guts United Taiwan said in a statement last night that its determination to invite Kadeer to visit Taiwan "will not change and we will not give up applying for a visa for her."

The Chinese-language Liberty Times (the Taipei Times' sister newspaper) yesterday reported that organizers of the festival, the city government and the film's producers had reached a consensus to screen the documentary again during the festival.

Chen, in response to the report, yesterday said the city government would respect the decision of the Kaohsiung Film Archive as to whether to screen the documentary during the Kaohsiung Film Festival next month.

Source: [Taipei Times 2009/09/26](#)