

The government's decision to block exiled Uighur rights activist Rebiya Kadeer's visit in December sparked an outcry among Internet users, with many condemning the decision.

"What an 'honor' for Taiwan that such shameful news has spread throughout the world so quickly," a member of the online social networking system Plurk called "E23" said early yesterday morning when replying to a post by fellow Plurker Lavendersea that linked to reports published by several foreign media outlets on the government's refusal of Kadeer's intended visit.

The news outlets included the BBC, Reuters, Agence France-Presse, Voice of America, the Switzerland-based Radio Suisse Romande and the Barcelona-based Noticias ADN.

"The world must be quite surprised that there is another country besides China [to ban a visit by Kadeer]," Lavendersea said.

The criticism from Internet users came in response to Minister of the Interior Jiang Yi-huah's (江宜華) announcement on the legislative floor that he would suggest the government ban a visit by World Uyghur Congress (WUC) president Rebiya Kadeer, based on "best interests for the country and for the people."

The position was supported by Premier Wu Den-yih (吳登伊) later the same day

Jiang said the WUC has close connections to a terrorist group, and that its secretary-general Dolkun Isa is on the Interpol Red Notice list, hence the decision is justified as the Immigration Act (入出國及移民法) stipulates that Taiwan may deny entry to foreigners who may damage Taiwan's national interest and disturb public order.

Joe and Jenny, a married Taiwanese couple living in Paris, said on a blog that they co-write that Isa is not considered a terrorist by most countries in the world besides China.

"Instead, he was a guest speaker at a UN hearing [last month] on eliminating racial discrimination," the couple said on their blog.

Citing an AFP report that concluded the government made the decision to avoid irritating China, the couple said "Jiang has become famous — yet infamous at the same time — internationally."

Others said if the law Jiang cited applies to Kadeer's visit, then it equally applies to visits by China's Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait Chairman Chen Yunlin (陳雲林) and should be used to block his entry into Taiwan since his visit last year created an uproar and led to severe physical clashes between the police and protesters.

Internet users slam Kadeer visa denial

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“It’s just too much that the Chinese Nationalist Party [KMT] -government calls Kadeer a terrorist and blocks her visit while that Chinese official could come,” said Fan Chiang (范), member of local hip hop band Kou Chou Ching (扣扣).

Guts United Taiwan secretary-general Gary Chiang (江), who has known Jiang for six years since Jiang was a political science professor at National Taiwan University, said he was surprised and disappointed at Jiang’s announcement.

“I still think Jiang is a nice person who is easy to get along with. Professor Jiang — who was known to be a follower of liberalism — has taught me a new lesson,” said -Chiang who studied political science as a graduate student at National Chengchi University. “Now I know the meaning of ‘actions speak louder than words’ and the ‘temptation of power’ — he has given his soul in exchange for power.”

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