

Rebiya Kadeer to sue Taiwan over terrorism claims

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Exiled Uighur activist Rebiya Kadeer plans to sue the government for linking her organization to terrorism, a Taiwanese group said yesterday.

Taiwanese officials last week banned Kadeer from visiting Taiwan, saying her World Uyghur Congress (WUC) has close links to the East Turkestan Islamic Movement — a charge she flatly rejected. The East Turkestan Islamic Movement is listed as a terrorist organization by the US.

“She is planning to sue unless the Taiwanese government apologizes and clears her name,” said Marie Yang (楊瑪君) of the Taiwan Youth Anti-Communist Corps, one of the groups that had invited her to visit.

Kadeer, in an interview with the Chinese-language Next Magazine, expressed indignation at the terrorism allegations.

“The World Uyghur Congress has never had anything to do with the East Turkestan Islamic Movement. I do not wish for nor support violent means,” she told the magazine in Washington.

She reiterated that her organization had received grants from the US and blasted Taiwanese officials for making “reckless” and “irresponsible” remarks.

“Taiwan made the decision under pressure from China. But Taiwan’s calling WUC a terrorist organization, that is too much,” she told the magazine.

“I can back down or keep silent on many accusations, but I can’t remain silent on terrorist claims. I don’t care if the Chinese authorities are making the accusation because everybody knows they are liars,” she said. “Taiwan is a democratic country and it is irresponsible to accuse our organization [of terrorism]. So I am taking it seriously.”

Kadeer said she has asked the Taiwan Anti-Communist Youth Corps to represent her and file the suit with a Taiwanese court.

Yang said her group would do so.

“We have accepted her request and are discussing how and when to file the lawsuit,” she told the Deutsche Presse-Agentur.

Vice Minister of the Interior Chien Tai-lang (陳水扁) said yesterday that the government stood by its decision.

“The decision is based on concerns for national security and national interest. We do not call her a terrorist ... There is no reason to give an apology,” he said.

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