

Cambodia holds off on deportations

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Premier Lin Chuan, left, and Mainland Affairs Council Minister Katharine Chang yesterday answer questions at the Legislative Yuan about the 17 Taiwanese being held in Cambodia on suspicion of telecommunications fraud.

Photo: CNA

The Cambodian government yesterday suspended its plan to send 17 Taiwanese suspected of telecommunication fraud to China, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said.

Cambodian authorities on Monday said 13 Taiwanese were arrested along with 14 Chinese on Monday the previous week, and that another eight Taiwanese were detained on Saturday.

“We will deport them to China this week. China will send a plane to pick up all of them,” Agence France-Presse yesterday quoted Cambodian Department of Immigration Director of Inspection and Procedure Major General Uk Heisela as saying in Phnom Penh.

However, the foreign ministry yesterday afternoon said that the scheduled deportation of the 17 Taiwanese to China had been canceled.

The director-general of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office, in Ho Chi Minh city, Liang Guang-chung (梁廣中), is in Cambodia to convey the government’s insistence that its extraterritorial jurisdiction be honored, the ministry said.

Due to Cambodia’s ties with Beijing and the Chinese government’s reported intervention, Liang and other Taiwanese officials have yet to be given access to the accused, although

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several Taiwanese businesspeople working in Cambodia have been able to see them, the ministry added.

Presidential Office spokesman Alex Huang (黃偉) said that Taiwan would not budge on its right to exercise extraterritorial jurisdiction.

Any unilateral move by Beijing would only deepen negative perceptions in Taiwan about China, he said.

The government stands fast in its commitment to crack down on criminal behavior, and believes that international cooperation and mutual legal assistance systems would go a long way toward securing the rights of the victims, Huang said.

In related news, Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) Minister Katharine Chang (張善政) yesterday afternoon told lawmakers that the council has notified its Chinese counterpart — the Taiwan Affairs Office — of the government's stance, which is that the Taiwanese should be sent to Taiwan for judicial procedures.

“However, the [Chinese authorities] have not responded to our calls,” Chang said.

Additional reporting by Alison Hsiao and AFP

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