

## Beijing says 228 protests ‘despicable’

Written by Taipei Times

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A group of overseas Taiwanese yesterday display placards during a news conference in New York City to promote a series of activities marking the 70th anniversary of the 228 Incident.

**Photo: CNA**

China yesterday described 228 Incident protests as a ploy by Taiwanese independence forces to hijack commemorations of the 70th anniversary of the massacre.

The 228 Incident has become a rallying point for the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), which favors formal independence for the nation.

Then-president Chiang Kai-shek's (蔣介石) Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) troops put down rioting sparked on Feb. 27, 1947, by a dispute between tobacco monopoly agents and an illegal cigarette vendor in Taipei.

The number “228” refers to the day the slaughter began in earnest.

It led to nationwide protests against the KMT, which two years later took refuge in Taiwan after losing the Chinese Civil War against the Chinese Communist Party and imposed martial law until 1987.

An Fengshan (安鳳山), spokesman for China's Taiwan Affairs Office, said the 228 Incident was a “just action” by Taiwanese against a dictatorship and to fight for their basic rights.

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“It is part of the Chinese people’s liberation struggle,” An told a regular news briefing in Beijing. “For a long time, this incident has been used by certain Taiwanese independence forces for ulterior motives.”

“They have distorted historical fact, instigated contradictions based on provincial origin, tearing at Taiwan’s ethnic groups, creating antagonism in society,” An said. “I think the motives behind this are really despicable.”

An made the remarks after his announcement earlier this month that Chinese government departments are to hold events to commemorate the 228 Incident’s 70th anniversary this year.

An said that to his knowledge, such events would include a forum to be organized by China’s Taiwan Democratic Self-government League today.

Feb. 28 is a national holiday in Taiwan, marked by solemn ceremonies for those killed in the 228 Incident and affirmations from politicians for the nation’s vibrant democracy.

China is deeply suspicious of President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文), who was elected last year, suspecting that she and her party want to push for formal independence.

Tsai says she wants to maintain peaceful relations with China.

An yesterday also defended the deportation of Taiwanese involved in overseas telecom fraud cases to China as having won widespread international approval after Taiwan protested against Spain’s recent decision to deport about 200.

Asked about the Spanish case, An said the decision was taken in part because both the victims and evidence relating to the fraud were in China.

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“This course of action has received widespread approval from people from both sides of the Taiwan Strait and the international community,” he said.

The Spanish case is the latest involving Taiwanese abroad suspected of telecom fraud against China being rounded up with Chinese nationals and sent to China, angering Taipei.

The Spanish government on Friday last week said it had approved the extradition of 269 “Chinese citizens” as part of a year-long investigation into an Internet fraud ring operated from several Spanish cities, including Madrid and Barcelona.

Additional reporting by CNA

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