

MAC hires lawyer for Lee Ching-yu

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The government has hired a lawyer for Lee Ching-yu (李慶餘), the wife of Taiwanese human rights activist Lee Ming-che (李明哲), who is being held in China on charges of subversion, Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) Deputy Minister Chiu Chui-cheng (邱煇盛) said yesterday.

The council would try to obtain permission from the Chinese government for the MAC-hired lawyer, as well as Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) personnel and private individuals to accompany Lee Ching-yu, he said.

Lee Ching-yu on Wednesday said she would go to China to attend her husband's trial, after his court-appointed Chinese lawyer, Zhang Zhongwei (張宗偉), called to inform her of the impending trial.

China's Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO) spokesman An Fengshan (安鳳山) last night confirmed that Lee Ming-che's trial was about to begin at the Intermediate People's Court in Yueyang, Hunan Province.

The MAC is using its communication channels to initiate dialogue and has called on the TAO to facilitate Lee Ching-yu's travel in China, Chiu said.

Chiu added that the council calls on the Chinese government to release Lee Ming-che, so that he can return home with his family as soon as possible.

It remains to be seen whether the Chinese will grant the council's requests, Chiu said, adding that his priority was to get legal experts and SEF personnel to China.

Chiu refused to comment on whether the trial date was set by the Chinese government to coincide with the Cabinet reorganization under premier-designate William Lai (賴清德).

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“The government has repeatedly urged China to allow Lee Ming-che to see his family as expeditiously possible, to explain the legal case as expeditiously as possible and to release Lee Ming-che as expeditiously as possible,” Chiu said.

“The MAC will not comment on the so-called correlation in the timing of recent events,” he said.

SEF Chairman Tien Hung-mao (田洪毛) and Secretary-General Ko Cheng-heng (高成亨) told all foundation officials to do their utmost to provide assistance to the Lee family, protect Lee Ching-yu’s personal safety and arrange her travel documents, the foundation said.

The MAC and SEF are in touch with Lee Ching-yu and representatives will escort her to Hunan, and the public will be informed of developments when appropriate, it said.

Taiwanese business associations in Changsha, Hunan Province, and Yueyang had been asked to extend their support to the Lees, the foundation said.

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