

Premier urges Lee Ming-che's swift release by China

Written by Taipei Times

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Premier William Lai (賴清德) yesterday called on the Chinese authorities to quickly release human rights advocate Lee Ming-che (李明哲) and said he has ordered agencies to prioritize work to facilitate his return to Taiwan.

“Lee works at a non-profit organization as a human rights advocate. There is no way he could subvert the Chinese government,” Lai said. “I felt sorry for Lee being forced to confess at a trial in a manner nobody could accept.”

Lee on Monday pleaded guilty to a charge of “subversion of state power” at a hearing at the Yueyang City Intermediate People’s Court in Hunan Province.

He admitted to intentionally disseminating information attacking the Chinese Communist Party.

After Lee spoke, the court said it would announce Lee’s sentence at a future date.

Judicial Reform Foundation executive director Kao Jung-chih (高俊志) late on Monday said the court proceedings were scripted, and everybody, from the judge and prosecutors to the lawyers and defendant, were “staring at scripts, reading,” indicating that “everything was prearranged.”

Kao said that the timing of the proceedings was deliberately set for Monday to stop Lee’s wife, Lee Ching-yu (李靜瑜), from traveling to Geneva, Switzerland, on Sept. 10 and reporting on her husband’s case at a meeting of the UN working group on arbitrary detention and enforced disappearances.

The proceedings disqualified Lee Ming-che as a victim of enforced disappearance, which international law treats as a crime against humanity, Kao said.

Lee Ming-che, a staff member at Wenshan Community College in Taipei and a former

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Democratic Progressive Party worker, was detained by Chinese authorities after entering China via Macau on March 19.

The Chinese government in May said that he had been arrested on the charge of subverting state power.

Additional reporting by Lauly Li

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