

Lee Ching-yu to go to China for sentencing

Written by Taipei Times

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Lee Ching-yu (李靜瑜) is scheduled to fly to Hunan, China, this afternoon, where her husband, Taiwanese human rights advocate Lee Ming-che (李明哲), is expected to be sentenced tomorrow after being convicted of “subverting state power.”

The Mainland Affairs Council yesterday issued a statement saying that Lee Ching-yu was booked on China Southern Airlines Flight CCZ3018 from Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport to Changsha Huanghua International Airport in Hunan, departing at 3:50pm.

She would be accompanied by two Straits Exchange Foundation officials and two friends, the council said, adding that she was the only family member to express an interest in traveling to China for the verdict.

The council said it contacted Beijing to ask that the group be allowed smooth entry into China, their personal safety be secured, and that Lee Ching-yu should be able to visit her husband on humanitarian grounds.

Lee Ming-che, a staff member of Taipei's Wenshan Community College and Covenants Watch volunteer, was detained after entering China on March 19.

China's Taiwan Affairs Office on March 29 acknowledged that he had been detained, but it was not until May that Beijing said it had arrested him on charges of subverting state power.

He was put on trial at the Yueyang City Intermediate People's Court in Hunan Province on Sept. 11 and the Chinese government released videos showing Lee pleading guilty to “subversion of state power” and intentionally disseminating information attacking the Chinese Communist Party.

Lee Ching-yu was allowed to attend the trial, and later was able to visit her husband for the first time since his detention.

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Taiwan Association for Human Rights secretary-general Chiu Ee-ling (邱毅) yesterday said the coalition of non-governmental groups working to win Lee Ming-che's release had not known about the date of the ruling until recently, so none of its members had time to apply for a visa to accompany Lee Ching-yu to China.

Lee Ching-yu will not hold a news conference before her departure and would not comment too much on his case until after she sees her husband again, Chiu said.

She held several news conferences in Taipei since her husband was detained and also spoke at a Capitol Hill hearing in May held by the US Congressional-Executive Commission on China, which later labeled him a political prisoner.

"The rescue coalition and Lee Ching-yu are convinced that what Lee Ming-che did was not against the law," Chiou said.

The heavier the sentence he receives, the more uncivilized China will appear to the rest of the world, she said.

Additional reporting by CNA and staff writer

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