New Power Party (NPP) Secretary-General Chen Hui-min, left, is accompanied by NPP Legislator Hsu Yung-ming, center, and Mainland Affairs Council official Huang Ting-hui, right, at a news conference at the Legislative Yuan in Taipei yesterday.
Photo: Chien Jung-fong, Taipei Times

Hong Kong Legislative Council members are considering amending the territory's extradition laws to define Taiwan as part of China, the New Power Party (NPP) said yesterday.

If such amendments were passed, China would treat Taiwan as part of its jurisdiction and "more than 2 million Taiwanese who work and study in Hong Kong could face the same fate as Lee Ming-che (□□□)," NPP Legislator Hsu Yung-ming (□□□) said.

Lee, a Taiwanese democracy advocate, was arrested in March 2017 when entering China from Macau, and eight months later was sentenced to five years in prison for "subversion of state power."

The changes would not only raise the travel risk to Hong Kong, but also lead to greater self-censorship, he said.

The Hong Kong Security Bureau on Friday last week advised the council to amend the Fugitive Offenders Ordinance and the Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters Ordinance, saying that it is necessary to include "other parts of the People's Republic of China" to the areas in which the two laws can be applied to allow criminals to be delivered from Hong Kong to Taiwan, Hsu said.

While the proposal has received the support of many pro-China members of the council, when asked about the matter, Minister of Justice Tsai Ching-hsiang (□□□) only said that it has not yet happened and promised to look into it, Hsu said.

Although the proposal is still being discussed, as it concerns the nation's sovereignty, the Taiwanese government should express its stance on the issue and support a proposal from pro-democracy councilors to only deal with bilateral agreements on extradition between Taiwan and Hong Kong, he said.

The Ministry of Justice would ensure that cross-strait judicial cooperation is handled in an "equal, reciprocal and respectful manner," and would reject any request that fails to meet those requirements, ministry official Liu Yi-chun (□□□) said.

In this particular case, the ministry cannot comment on the proposed amendments, because no draft bills have yet been revealed, she said.

The Mainland Affairs Council is aware of the proposals and hopes that the Hong Kong government would deal with the matter with caution and consider the interests of both sides, agency official Huang Ting-hui (□□□) said.

"The government will not accept anything aimed at undermining the nation's sovereignty," he added.

Source: Taipei Times - 2019/02/22