

Hong Kong students in Kaohsiung collect helmets

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Second-hand helmets donated to help protect protesters in Hong Kong are collected in Taipei's Xinyi District on Sunday by a group of Hong Kong students studying in Kaohsiung. A similar drive was held in Kaohsiung on Saturday.

Photo courtesy of Hong Kong Outlanders

A group of Hong Kongers studying in Kaohsiung on Saturday launched a helmet donation drive in support of anti-extradition bill protesters back home, and more than doubled their target of collecting 500 helmets within an hour, one of the organizers said yesterday.

Fooyin University senior Ariel Lam (林蔚然) said they wanted to do something after the protests in Hong Kong turned violent last week.

The protesters face a shortage of supplies, so she and her friends decided to collect second-hand helmets to offer protesters on the front lines better protection, Lam said.

Helmets are important because people clad in white shirts and police officers have hit protesters on the head, she said.

By the time the group had finished setting up their collection point in Kaohsiung at 4:30pm on Saturday, many people were already waiting in line to donate, she said.

They began accepting helmets at about 5pm and by 6pm they had 500 helmets, and by the time they closed the drive at 7:30pm they had collected more than 1,000, many of which were new, she said.

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They also collected more than NT\$100,000, which would go toward supporting the anti-extradition bill protests, she said.

Lam said she was touched by the enthusiasm of people in Kaohsiung and she had not expected so many people to donate.

They want to thank Kaohsiung residents for their generosity and support, as well as the Taiwan Statebuilding Party, formerly known as the Radical Wings, the New Power Party and other parties for helping promote Saturday's event, she said.

A second drive was held on Sunday in Taipei's Xinyi District (信義), with the aim of collecting 300 helmets.

The organizers are now looking for a way to send the helmets to Hong Kong, but they did not want to discuss the details to protect their peers, Lam said.

She hopes all Taiwanese can take in what is happening in Hong Kong, she said.

While some Taiwanese might question why Taiwan is at risk of ending up like Hong Kong, she hopes that when voting in next year's presidential election, Taiwanese would not believe in Beijing's "one country, two systems" arrangement or a pro-Beijing candidate, she added.

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