Hong Kong police end 12-day siege on school campus

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People attend a lunchtime flash mob rally in Hong Kong's Cheung Sha Wan district yesterday. **Photo: AFP**

Hong Kong police yesterday ended their blockade of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University campus after surrounding it for 12 days to try to arrest pro-democracy protesters holed up inside.

Police removed a stash of nearly 4,000 gasoline bombs left behind by protesters, who fought pitched battles about two weeks ago with riot officers on surrounding streets.

About 100 officers first entered the campus on Thursday to collect materials and remove dangerous items.

A police statement said that over two days, they seized 3,989 gasoline bombs, 1,339 explosive items, 601 bottles of corrosive liquids and 573 weapons.

No protesters were found.

One masked man told reporters that the night before police entered the campus about 20 people were still hiding to avoid arrest.

They were the holdouts from perhaps 1,100 people who had retreated inside after the battles

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with police.

A few escaped the cordon, but police said that they arrested 810 people and recorded the details of 300 minors who could later face charges.

Another 567 people were arrested in the vicinity of the university, police said.

A university official estimated that it would take five to six months to repair the damage to the campus.

During an official visit to Thailand, Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam (　　　) said that Hong Kong is undergoing a difficult period, but that the fundamentals of the territory, including its strengths under the "one country, two systems" framework, remain strong.

"I and my government are listening to our people with a view to resolving some deep-seated problems in Hong Kong through dialogue," she said. "I have every confidence that Hong Kong can bounce back, as we always do."

Hundreds of people yesterday chanted pro-democracy slogans at lunchtime rallies across Hong Kong. Some carried posters featuring US President Donald Trump. Other posters told Lam that "it's time to step down."

The latest protests followed a large rally on Thursday night to thank the US — on the country's Thanksgiving Day holiday — after Trump signed into law legislation supporting the protesters.

Chanting: "Fight for freedom, stand with Hong Kong," thousands of people waved US flags and urged other countries to join the US in supporting human rights in Hong Kong.

  Source: Taipei Times - 2019/11/30