

More groups join Double Ten anti-government rallies

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Taiwan Nation Alliance convener Yao Chia-wen, center, tells a press conference in Taipei yesterday that his group plans to join other civic groups to stage a protest rally against President Ma Ying-jeou on Double Ten National Day tomorrow.

Photo: Lo Pei-der, Taipei Times

Taiwan Nation Alliance convener Yao Chia-wen (姚嘉文) yesterday said that members of the alliance's pro-localization groups will take part in a major rally against President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) to be staged by activist group Citizen 1985 on Double Ten National Day tomorrow.

"The alliance has three demands: that Ma step down to take responsibility for causing political turmoil; that the Special Investigation Division [SID] of the Supreme Prosecutors' Office be abolished for colluding with the president in conducting illegal wiretapping; and that the cross-strait service trade pact be blocked," Yao said.

The first two demands referred to a wiretapping scandal involving Ma, the SID and Prosecutor-General Huang Shih-ming (黃世明) that has snowballed into a political storm.

Ma's critics have accused him of breaching constitutional information confidentiality regulations by discussing with Huang in person and via telephone details of the SID's wiretap-based investigation into alleged improper lobbying on behalf of Legislative Speaker Wang Jin-pyng (王金平) before the case was concluded on Sept. 5.

The rally is to begin with a flag-raising ceremony at 10:10am in front of the Legislative Yuan, during which a specially designed flag will be hoisted in place of the national flag to signify the awakening of citizens' power.

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The Citizen 1985 is to call on the government to reinforce direct democracy by lowering the referendum threshold; rationalize the recall mechanism by lowering the threshold to recall elected officials; let people's voices be heard by lowering the threshold for a party to receive public subsidies and be awarded a legislator-at-large seat; and say no to back-room deals by renegotiating the cross-strait agreement with China.

Taiwan Society president Chang Yen-hsien (張炎憲) said the service trade deal and the cross-strait negotiations on setting up representative offices were parts of Ma's ploy to use the "one China" framework to wrap up Taiwan as a gift to China.

"We must work together to block the agreement to protect the people of Taiwan," Chang said.

Taiwan Friends Association president Huang Kun-hu (黃昆虎) said lawmakers should abolish agencies like the SID that were established by an autocratic government for the purpose of cementing its power.

Huang also warned of the potential negative impact that cross-strait treaty could have on the nation's underprivileged minorities.

Separately yesterday, representatives from several environmentalists groups in Taipei said they are planning to stage an anti-nuclear rally in front of the legislature tomorrow morning to demand the government halt the construction of the Fourth Nuclear Power Plant in New Taipei City's (新北市) Gongliao District (公寮).

"Only when we become a nuclear-free nation will we dare to celebrate National Day, because with nuclear power plants in operation, we are afraid of national disasters," Green Party Taiwan member Pan Han-shen (潘翰聲) said.

The radioactive waste produced by the nation's operating nuclear power plants is a serious problem for Taiwan, said Kuo Ching-lin (郭景林), chief executive of the Northern Coast Anti-Nuclear Action Alliance.

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Kuo said that since the nation is unable to find a permanent depository site for the waste, many Taiwanese are worried that they will have to always live under the threat of radiation leakage accidents.

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