

Truck crashes into Presidential Office

Written by Taipei Times

Sunday, 26 January 2014 08:14 -



Workers yesterday tow away a truck that was driven through security obstacles and up the stairs of the main entrance of the Presidential Office earlier in the day in what police say was an intentional act.

Photo: Chen En-hui, Taipei Times

A driver rammed a large truck into the main gate of the Presidential Office yesterday morning, in what police have initially determined was an intentional act.

Chiehshou Police Station Chief Tsai Han-cheng (蔡漢成) said the driver has been identified as Chang Ter-cheng (張德成).

The incident — the most serious security breach to occur at the Presidential Office in years — took place at 5:05am when Chang drove a 35-tonne truck into the office, ramming through three layers of protective barriers and speeding up a flight of stairs before being stopped by a bulletproof door leading to the office's main building, police said.

Security personnel had slammed shut the bulletproof door in seconds when they saw the vehicle heading toward the building, they added.

President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) was not in the building at the time of the incident, as he is on a state visit to Sao Tome and Principe.

The impact from the crash knocked Chang unconscious and he was taken to a nearby hospital for treatment, police said, adding that no one else had been injured and the truck had been towed away from the scene.

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Tsai said the 41-year-old suffered contusions to the back of his head, a collapsed lung and fractures in his hands and legs.

He was conscious after receiving treatment, but has so far refused to answer questions, the police chief added.

Tsai said that Chang's mother told the authorities that her son does not have a political preference and seldom talked about politics.

She then said that her son had written a note on a mirror in his room yesterday morning asking her to take care of herself and his children, and saying that as for "my own business, I will resolve that myself."

Chang's mother told the police that her son had recently divorced his second wife and was being sued by his ex-wife's brother for allegedly causing her bodily harm.

The vehicle that Chang was driven belonged to a transportation company in Taipei where he started working six months ago.

According to the company's owner, surnamed Lin (林), Chang drove the truck from the firm's premises at 4am on an assignment to carry construction waste from Taoyuan County's Gueishan Township (龜山鄉) to Keelung City.

Lin was quoted as telling the police that Chang had a good work record and that he did not talk a lot with his colleagues.

The Taipei District Prosecutors' Office yesterday morning sent officials to examine the scene.

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The prosecutors' office said that Chang could face charges of interfering with public functions, in addition to charges of destruction, abandonment and damaging property.

Additional reporting by CNA and AFP

Source: [Taipei Times - 2014/01/26](#)