

Police revoke ART public assembly ban

Written by Taipei Times

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Following the demonstration outside its office on Friday, the Zhongzheng First Police Precinct yesterday said it resolved after a meeting that the Alliance of Referendum for Taiwan (ART) would again be allowed to assemble on Jinan Road, as it has been doing for the past five years.

More than 1,000 people gathered outside the precinct office on Friday night to protest against Precinct Chief Fang Yang-ning (方陽寧) reneging on his pledge, made in the early hours of Friday morning, to not disperse protesters from the square outside the Legislative Yuan, the venue where the ART had organized talks during the occupation of Legislative Yuan and continued to do so after the Sunflower Movement's exit on Thursday.

The protesters, who assembled after a call on the Internet to "pass by" the precinct office on Friday evening, also demanded that the office retract its "unconstitutional order" on Wednesday that its approval of the ART's application to assemble on Jinan Road (one of the roads surrounding the Legislative Yuan) until Saturday be scrapped, saying the ART had violated the law several times and that "any of the organization's future requests to assemble will no longer be approved."

The protesters said the police had not only failed to make good on their promise, but also violated the law — by forcibly evicting the protesters — and the Constitution — by unilaterally denying a particular group its right to assemble.

The "passersby" demanding Fang to apologize and step down, has sparked disputes online even among those who support the Sunflower movement.

Taipei Mayor Hau Lung-bin (郝龍斌) and Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) Taipei mayoral aspirants Sean Lien (連戰) and Ting Shou-chung (丁守中) have all expressed support for Fang, with Hau saying that he would not accept Fang's resignation, which had been orally made at the protest site.

However, the precinct office yesterday issued a press release saying "since [the ART's] act of illegally occupying the plaza had ended, the group's assembly has now been [re-]sanctioned."

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The office said that although the organization had been continually applying for and receiving approval to assemble on Jinan Road since February 2009, “it nevertheless had illegally led the crowd to break into the legislature’s front plaza and tear down a plaque on March 18, obstructed police officers performing their duties on April 3 and again led the crowd to areas where assemblies and parades are not allowed [the presidential residence and the Executive Yuan] on April 6 and 7.”

“In view of the group constantly harming the social order and damaging public interests, the office has decided [on Wednesday] to revoke the approval for its assembly from April 9 to 19 in accordance with the Assembly and Parade Act (集會遊行法),” it said.

The office said that because the ART had reapplied for approval on Thursday and the police had “persuaded” the protesters to leave the legislature’s front plaza on Friday, thereby “rendering the illegal act of plaza occupation non-existent,” the group’s application to assemble on Jinan Road had been approved again.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2014/04/14](#)