

## Rights activists rally against questioning

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Alliance of Referendum for Taiwan convener Tsay Ting-kuei speaks outside the Taipei District Prosecutors' Office yesterday in defense of National Taiwan University student Hung Chung-yen and several others who took part in a demonstration outside the Zhongzheng First Police Precinct headquarters on April 11 and who were summoned for questioning about the protest yesterday.

**Photo: Chien Lee-chung, Taipei Times**

Civic and human rights groups yesterday rallied outside the Taipei District Prosecutors' Office as several participants in the April 11 demonstration outside Zhongzheng First Police Precinct headquarters arrived for questioning.

Activists from the Judicial Reform Foundation, the Taiwan Association for Human Rights, the Restoration of Taiwan Social Justice, Taiwan Forever and the Taiwan Association of University Professors held placards and flags, and chanted slogans accusing the government of acting unconstitutionally.

They also said the Assembly and Parade Act (集會遊行法) was unconstitutional.

"I was not the 'main culprit' that night. The crowd had gathered on its own. I went there after seeing information on the Internet, and I actually helped to maintain order," National Taiwan University student Hung Chung-yen (洪仲丘) said after he left the prosecutors' office following questioning.

"I hope the prosecutors realize that peaceful assembly is a fundamental right of the people and refrain from prosecuting peaceful demonstrators," he said.

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Savungaz Valicinan, who said she was dragged into the precinct that night, said she had gotten upset when an officer lost his temper and slapped her.

“I was mad, and asked why he slapped me, and the next thing I knew I was being dragged into the building,” Savungaz said. “I asked the officers why they dragged me into the building, and a female officer told me: ‘You may leave now.’”

It did not make sense that nothing has happened to the police officer who slapped a peaceful demonstrator, she said.

“It is ironic that while I am preparing to sue the officer, I am now being sued by the police,” she said.

Judicial Reform Foundation deputy executive director Chen Yu-fan (陳玉凡) said that from the start of the Sunflower movement protests outside the Legislative Yuan to the demonstration outside precinct, there have been many instances of police officers abusing their power.

“So far, we have helped 200 demonstrators who are facing prosecution, and more than 70 people who have been questioned by the Taipei District Prosecutors’ Office, which has assigned four prosecutors to handle the cases,” Chen said. “I would like to know if the judicial system is making the same amount of effort in its handling of the abusive [police] officers.”

The demonstration by about 1,500 people on the evening of April 11 occurred after precinct chief Fang Yang-ning (方陽寧) ordered the forcible eviction of demonstrators — most of them mobilized by the Alliance of Referendum for Taiwan — outside the Legislative Yuan, despite his promise the previous night that he would not remove peaceful demonstrators by force.

Fang also announced that he would void the assembly and parade permission given to the alliance, and never approve a request for assembly and parade from the group again.

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The forcible eviction shocked the public.

Critics of Fang's actions said the right to assembly is protected by the Constitution, while the Assembly and Parade Act does not give the government the power to permanently revoke a group's or an individual's right to assembly.

Participants in the April 11 protest called on Fang to apologize and resign.

The demonstration ended — and many of its participants returned to the Legislative Yuan — after Fang apologized later that night and promised to turn in his resignation.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2014/09/29](#)