

Protesters storm HK office in Taipei in a display of solidarity

Written by Taipei Times

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Pro-democracy activists occupy the lobby of the Hong Kong Economic, Trade and Cultural Office in Taipei yesterday.

Photo: Lo Pei-der, Taipei Times

In a display of solidarity with ongoing pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong, demonstrators stormed the lobby of the Hong Kong representative office in Taipei late on Sunday night, occupying it until yesterday morning.

About 100 demonstrators, mostly students, dispersed at about 10am after a tense exchange with office director John Leung (梁國雄) and minor clashes with police.

Headed by Sunflower movement leaders Chen Wei-ting (陳偉庭) and Lin Fei-fan (林飛帆), the group protested against police brutality in Hong Kong and demanded that President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) halt all political and economic cross-strait negotiations.

Upon arriving at the building at about 11pm on Sunday, the students staged a sit-in in the lobby, while large banners with pro-democracy slogans were drawn on the ground outside. Throughout the night, demonstrators sang songs and chanted slogans in Mandarin, Taiwanese and Cantonese, with many taught on the spot by students from Hong Kong.

Academia Sinica researcher Huang Kuo-chang (黃國昌) arrived in a small truck owned by Taiwan March, an activist organization founded by Lin, Chen and others. Loudspeakers attached to the truck and a portable sound system were used to amplify the protest.

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Lau Ka-yee (劉嘉玲), a women's rights activist from Hong Kong, was among a number of speakers during the night.

Lau said it was heartbreaking for her to watch her compatriots face police brutality while she could not be there in person.

She warned Taiwanese to never underestimate the pace of Beijing's actions.

"Taiwanese often say that today's Hong Kong will be tomorrow's Taiwan. However, I think: 'Today's Hong Kong is today's Taiwan' is closer to the truth. People need to gain a sense of urgency," she said.

While speaking on stage at Liberty Square on Saturday night, Chen expressed his gratitude for support from Hong Kong during the Sunflower movement.

"After the March 24 crackdown at the Executive Yuan, our friends in Hong Kong held a rally outside the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Hong Kong in protest against the actions of the Ma administration," Chen said. "This time, with our friends in need, we should think of a way to show our support in return."

Leung made a brief appearance, saying he was unfamiliar with the situation in Hong Kong, as he was in Taiwan, a reply that was met with hisses from protesters.

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