

Mayor's office confirms death threat

Written by Taipei Times

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Taipei Mayor Ko Wen-je (柯文哲) received a death threat in a telephone call on Friday last week, Taipei City government spokesman Sidney Lin (林錫山) said yesterday.

Media reports emerged on Wednesday night quoting Ko's chief of staff Tsai Pi-ju (蔡品旭) as saying that a caller had criticized remarks made by Ko and warned him to "be careful," because otherwise he would be "executed."

She said that she had informed Ko's security personnel, but had not reported the incident to the police to avoid creating unwanted publicity, which might encourage similar calls.

Tsai said that the mayor's office receives a complaint call every two or three days, and the mayor's schedule of public appearances would not change.

Lin called the incident an "individual case" which should not be "over-interpreted."

Although the mayor's security detail will not be increased as a result of the incident, the mayor has taken steps to reduce trips by himself in taxis or on the city's MRT system, with an escort present whenever possible, he said.

Photographs of Ko riding the subway without an escort earlier this month drew both praise and concern from netizens, with some expressing worry over his safety.

"I have always taken the MRT or my bicycle, but now I do not," Ko said in a media interview earlier this week.

He said supporters had warned him that he would be "knocked off" if he continued to go about without an escort, though he added that the loss of freedom left him feeling "imprisoned."

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Yesterday, in response, to questions from reporters, Ko said that he “was not concerned” about his safety and had not heard about the call.

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