

Rights groups criticize Kenya for deportations

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The Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday said that a report published by an international human rights organization expressing concerns over the deportations of Taiwanese fraud suspects to China is expected to exert pressure on the parties concerned.

At a news conference in Taipei yesterday morning, Department of West Asian and African Affairs Director-General Antonio Chen (陳安東) said since the deportation of 45 Taiwanese citizens to Beijing earlier last month, his colleagues on the front line have endeavored to seek assistance.

“Now the case has gained the attention of two human rights groups — Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch — whose [Human Rights Watch] China director Sophie Richardson published a report on the incident on April 24,” Chen said.

In the report, *Ending Extra-legal Deportations to China*, Richardson voiced doubt that the 45 Taiwanese, some of them acquitted by Kenyan courts, would receive a fair trial in China.

“Soon after Kenyan courts acquitted the suspects, the Taiwanese — and perhaps the mainlanders [sic] — were put on planes and sent to China. Images of the hooded and shackled Taiwanese in transit, as well as the subsequent broadcast of some of their ‘confessions,’ offer little reassurance that they will enjoy any semblance of a fair trial,” Richardson wrote.

Richardson went on to draw attention to two critical legal issues that she said have been overlooked in the ensuing diplomatic storm sparked by the case.

“The first: that there was a Kenyan court order blocking the deportation of the Taiwanese from the country. Why Kenyan officials ignored that order remains unclear,” Richardson said.

The second issue is Nairobi’s failure to comply with international human rights laws and provide the Taiwanese with an opportunity to contest their deportations, Richardson said, adding that the Taiwanese might have raised legal objections to their extradition to China or

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expressed fears about mistreatment there.

Richardson concluded the report by urging nations pressured by China to ensure the enforcement of the law and to respect the rights of those facing extradition.

“We expect this report to exert some sort of pressure on the Kenyan government. Hopefully, it could lead to respect for the rights of five Taiwanese citizens still awaiting a court ruling on their alleged involvement in telecom fraud in Nairobi,” Chen said.

Chen added that the Kenyan case has apparently left a blot on China’s human rights record.

Turning to the situation of 39 Taiwanese serving a two-year prison term for telecom fraud in Egypt, who are set to be released in October, Chen said the ministry has managed to establish contact with the Egyptian authorities and has taken some “preventative measures.”

“We are going to do everything we can to safeguard the nation’s sovereignty. Our priority is to ensure the return of these citizens to Taiwan, but Chinese pressure is still a decisive factor in the final outcome,” Chen said.

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