

Uighur advocate cancels trip on political concerns

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World Uyghur Congress president Rebiya Kadeer has canceled plans to visit Taiwan due to the intervention of “specific individuals,” the Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU) said yesterday.

Kadeer told TSU Chairman Liu I-te (劉力泰), when they met in Tokyo on Monday to discuss the planned visit, that “it is not the optimal time to visit Taiwan” and she should not undertake the visit “until further consideration,” the TSU said.

Kadeer’s decision was based on concern about potential political repercussions in Taiwan of such a visit, but she still expressed willingness to visit, the TSU said.

Kadeer last month released a video announcing that she had accepted the TSU’s invitation to visit and she reiterated her willingness to visit at a meeting with leaders of Japan-based and Taiwan-based Uighur associations in Tokyo on Saturday last week.

The TSU members were told that, just prior to their meeting with Kadeer on Monday, some “specific individuals” had met with Kadeer and dissuaded her from visiting Taiwan.

The TSU did not reveal the identity of the individuals or their affiliation, but the party criticized them, saying they prevented a world-renowned human rights advocate from visiting.

“Saying that it is not the best timing for Kadeer to visit Taiwan is simply absurd,” Liu said.

With the election of President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文), the growing public aversion to Chinese aggression and US President Donald Trump’s approach with China, “it is the best time for Kadeer to visit Taiwan,” Liu said.

“Taiwan should not limit itself out of fear of China’s ire,” Liu said. “Tsai should counter Chinese pressure with fearless determination and concrete action.”

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The party spent two months organizing Kadeer's trip — which was to begin at the end of next month — and was ready to help gain government approval for a visa for her.

“It would be the pride of Taiwanese to have Kadeer, a Nobel Peace Prize nominee, to visit Taiwan, while the Chinese Communist Party would be most delighted to see the cancelation,” TSU Department of Organization director Chang Chao-lin (張朝麟) said.

The TSU said it understood Kadeer's decision and would continue its efforts to invite her and others campaigning against Chinese aggression to Taiwan to make the nation a basis of resistance against China.

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