

Group condemns detention by military police at Universiade closing ceremony

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From Ethnos to Nation member Chen Yu-chang, right, holds up a banner bearing the word “Taiwan” at a news conference in Taipei yesterday.

Photo: Huang Yao-cheng, Taipei Times

Members of the pro-Taiwanese independence group From Ethnos to Nation (FETN, 從民族到國家) yesterday said their right to freedom of expression was violated by law enforcement officials when one of their members was roughed up and arrested for displaying a banner bearing the word “Taiwan” at the Taipei Summer Universiade’s closing ceremony on Wednesday

Chen Yu-chang (陳俞璋), the FETN member who was arrested, accused the security personnel of overstepping their authority by roughing him up and forcefully taking him away from the closing ceremony to a police station, adding that he sustained minor injuries and bruises in the process.

“I had no problem passing through the security check and I entered the venue,” Chen told a news conference yesterday. “Later I took out the ‘Taiwan’ banner, but four security personnel clad in black swiftly came and grabbed the banner, and they grappled me. They roughed me up and held me down on the ground, saying I was under arrest, and carried me out of the venue to the police station.”

The men said they were military police officers only after arriving at the police station, Chen said, adding that they would not give the reasons for his detention and his forceful removal from the event.

Other FETN members said military police conducted an “illegal arrest” of a citizen without

giving a proper reason, and demanded an explanation from the Taipei City Government, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of National Defense as to who ordered military police to seize pro-Taiwanese identity flags and banners.

Showing a medical report obtained from a hospital, Chen said he sustained bruises, internal bleeding, swelling and other minor injuries on his arms and legs during the ordeal, adding that he was questioned and detained at Taipei City Sungshan District Police Precinct.

“I cannot understand why I was treated like a criminal just because I, as a Taiwanese citizen, wanted to cheer Taiwanese athletes,” Chen said. “Regrettably, this incident showed that a citizen of Taiwan has no dignity left in this nation. We are Taiwanese, but we are still being ruled by the Republic of China regime.”

Chen’s lawyer Lin Chien-hung (林建宏) requested the authorities to explain what offenses Chen had committed and what evidence they had to detain him.

“Our Constitution guarantees the freedom of expression and the protection of a citizen’s life and property from coming under threat. However, the military police did not identify themselves and did not follow the proper procedure to make an arrest, but went on to conduct an illegal arrest on Chen and put him under illegal detention.”

FETN members said they plan to press charges against the military police on offenses of physical assault to cause injury, illegal seizure of personal property, kidnapping and forced confinement.

Sungshan District Police Precinct Chief Huang Jung-chih (黃宗奇) said that Chen was carrying a “forbidden item” as deemed by the Universiade organizers, so he was taken to the police station.

“Officials from the event’s organizing committee deemed Chen’s banner to have borne a political slogan that was banned at the event. Therefore personnel from the military police unit from within our jurisdiction took him to the police precinct for questioning. During the process, he

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uttered offensive words and therefore he was charged with Offenses of Obstructing an Officer In Discharge of Duties (妨害公務), and the case was transferred to public prosecutors,” he said.

Chen denied he had used offensive words and said that he did not act in a violent manner.

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