

Taiwan, AIT cooperate on dissident

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Chinese dissident Wang Rui is seen talking at a news conference in an undated photograph from the Epoch Times.

Photo: Internet screen grab

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs helped communicate between the National Immigration Agency (NIA) and the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) in the case of a Chinese dissident seeking political asylum in the US, an official said yesterday.

Radio Free Asia (RFA) reported on Friday last week that Chinese dissident Wang Rui (王瑞) had arrived in the US seeking asylum after spending four years in Taiwan, while agencies from Taiwan and the US worked on his case.

Department of North American Affairs Director-General Remus Chen (陳仁甫) told a news conference yesterday that the ministry played a supporting role in the matter by helping the NIA work with the AIT on the case.

Neither the NIA nor AIT responded to questions for more information.

Wang arrived in Taiwan in August 2014 on a package tour, but planned to seek asylum.

However, he decided in September 2015 to try to go to the US because Taiwan does not have a refugee law.

He was part of a group of five Chinese, including his girlfriend Yang Luo Yini (楊若伊), who reportedly planned to sail to Guam or the Mariana Islands to seek political asylum.

Su Qianlong (蘇乾龍), Lu Ning (盧寧) and Shi Jian (施健) reportedly bought a small sailboat in China's Shandong Province and sailed to a beach in Taoyuan's Dayuan District (大園), landing on Sept. 10, 2015, to pick up Wang and Yang Luo, who had arrived the preceding June. The couple were staying at an apartment in Taipei.

The five set off for Guam, but reportedly lost their way several times over the course of 30 days and were finally rescued by Taiwanese authorities, according to a report by RFA at the time.

"They're lucky to be alive, in such big waves and such high winds, you have no idea," one rescue team member told RFA after the five were detained and their heavily damaged boat impounded.

Officials initially suspected the five of spying, but Taiwanese human rights groups said they were Chinese dissidents fleeing persecution and called on the government to grant them political asylum.

Yang Luo was deported to China by immigration authorities on Sept. 25, 2015, while Taoyuan prosecutors charged the four men with violating the Immigration Act (移民法) and acting as accomplices to criminal activities.

Wang told RFA that all five had been targeted by Chinese authorities for their human rights and political activism, including being held in detention and placed under surveillance by state security police.

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