

Taipei presses Beijing for answers on Taiwanese missing after HK protest

Written by Taipei Times

Friday, 30 August 2019 04:17 -



Mainland Affairs Council Deputy Minister Chiu Chui-cheng speaks at a news conference in Taipei yesterday.

Photo: Chung Li-hua, Taipei Times

Taiwan yesterday urged China to provide information on the whereabouts of a Taiwanese activist who went missing after joining pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong this month.

Morrison Lee (李卓人) traveled to Hong Kong for a vacation on Aug. 18 and attended one of the anti-extradition bill protests, Fangliao Township (方寮) Mayor Archer Chen (陳國治) told Bloomberg News.

Lee serves as an unpaid adviser to the Pingtung County township, Chen said.

Lee was scheduled to travel to Shenzhen, China, for business two days later.

Lee's family said that they have not heard from him since he entered China, Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) Deputy Minister Chiu Chui-cheng (邱國治) told a news briefing in Taipei yesterday.

Taiwan has asked Chinese and Hong Kong authorities to help look for Lee, but the Chinese authorities have not responded, Chiu said earlier in the day.

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Beijing is required by bilateral agreements to inform Taipei if a Taiwanese is detained in China, but the government had not received any communication so far, he said.

Travelers to Hong Kong should keep a close eye on local reports regarding demonstrations and try to avoid protest areas, the council said, adding that it has posted a chart of planned protests in the territory on its Web site, which would be continuously updated.

It also warned that travelers going from Hong Kong into mainland China could face more stringent security and luggage checks by Chinese customs officers, as media reports have said that officers are demanding to see the contents of cellphones and laptops.

The council's branch office in Hong Kong has established a task force to provide round-the-clock service, and any citizen encountering problems in Hong Kong — or their immediate relatives — should call the emergency number 852-6143-9012, the council said.

Citizens in China requiring assistance or their relatives should contact the Straits Exchange Foundation at its 24-hour emergency line (02) 2533-9995, it added.

Separately, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) spokeswoman Joanne Ou (歐陽) said that the government would receive visiting Hong Kongers without contravening the Act Governing Hong Kong and Macau Affairs (香港、澳門關係條例).

The government continues to support the territory's residents in their pursuit of democracy and freedom, but it would not intervene in the matter, Ou said in a statement, reiterating comments she made at a news conference on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, the Tourism Bureau has told all authorities that maintaining travelers' rights is a priority when handling any disputes with travel agencies regarding refunds due to cancellations of tours or travel plans as a result of the Hong Kong protests.

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Source: [Taipei Times - 2019/08/30](#)