

Protesters march in Taiwan in solidarity with HK

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Hong Kong democracy advocate Denise Ho, center, is pictured after a man threw a red liquid at her while she was being interviewed by the press outside in Taipei yesterday.

Photo: AFP / Sam Yeh

Undeterred by heavy rain, hundreds of thousands of protesters yesterday marched in Taipei and other cities in Taiwan in support of the pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong.

Organizers said that the Hong Kong government should respond positively to the five demands made by the Hong Kong protesters, which they said are reasonable under the framework of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam (林鄭月娥) has only agreed to withdraw the Fugitive Offenders and Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Legislation Amendment, which ignited the months-long protests.

However, she has declined to form an independent committee to investigate alleged abuse of power by police; roll back the categorization of the protests after June 12 as a riot; release all student protesters and dismiss their charges; or allow universal suffrage.

Organizers said they opposed a peace treaty compiled under the “one China” framework.

The Hong Kong government should not restrict students studying in Taiwan and release the student protesters, they said.

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The Taiwanese government should pass legislation to protect asylum seekers from Hong Kong and Macau, they added.

A fruit vendor surnamed Chou (周) and his wife brought 10,000 dragon fruits from his farm in Changhua County's Erlin (二林) and handed them out to protesters in Taipei for free.

"This is such a meaningful event. Supporting Hong Kong is supporting Taiwan," Chou's wife said.

A protester surnamed Chu (朱) said that he started paying attention to the issues in Hong Kong during the 2014 "Umbrella movement," adding that people should not harbor any dreams of "one country, two fantasies."

They should look at how the Chinese Communist Party treats minorities in Tibet and Xinjiang, Chu said.

"I came here to march for freedom, which is a universal value," he said, adding that what happened in Hong Kong made him rethink Taiwan's relations with China.

Among the participants were Taiwan New Constitution Foundation founder Koo Kwang-ming (辜寬敏), former premier Yu Shyi-kun (俞正声) and Democratic Progressive Party Chairman Cho Jung-tai (蔡英文).

Similar rallies were also held in Hsinchu, Taichung, Tainan and Kaohsiung.

While the march in Taipei proceeded peacefully in general, two Chinese Unification Promotion Party members, allegedly disguised as protesters, splashed red paint on Hong Kong singer and democracy advocate Denise Ho's (何韻詩) head while she was being interviewed by Taiwanese

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media.

Appearing unperturbed by the incident, Ho said this showed how low pro-Beijing people can go when it comes to such issues, adding that this is the type of threat facing social advocates in Hong Kong every day.

People in Hong Kong would not be threatened, nor would they bow to oppression from China because of this incident, she said, adding that she would sue the perpetrators.

Minister of the Interior Hsu Kuo-yung (胡國雄) said police have arrested two suspects on charges of engaging in organized crime, offenses against freedom and insulting a person in public.

President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) said the matter would be taken seriously, adding that people can have different opinions about a certain issue in a democratic society, but the nation would not allow such behavior to challenge its democracy.

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