

Oslo court rules against Taiwanese in nationality suit

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A group of Taiwanese living in Norway lost a lawsuit filed last year against the Norwegian government, accusing it of improperly changing their nationality from “Taiwanese” to “Chinese” on their residency permits.

A district court in Oslo on Tuesday last week ruled that the Norwegian government abides by the “one China” policy and so does not diplomatically recognize Taiwan.

The authorities’ decision to change the nationality of Taiwanese residing in the country to Chinese was in line with the government’s policy, so the lawsuit was without merit, the court said.

The lawsuit was filed by three Taiwanese on Aug. 29 last year and named the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration, the Immigration Appeals Board and the Oslo Police District as defendants.

One of the three Taiwanese plaintiffs, a lawyer who only identified himself as Joseph, said that Norwegian authorities first changed the nationality on their residency permits to Chinese in 2010, prompting him to launch a movement to urge the Norwegian government to change the policy.

Despite repeated protests, the Norwegian government failed to respond, which made many Taiwanese residents and students in the country angry, so they decided to file the lawsuit, Joseph said.

Although the ruling was widely expected, they have decided to appeal, he said.

As the judge did not give the plaintiffs the chance to express themselves in court, their right to a fair trial was violated, he added.

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The other two plaintiffs are a Taiwanese married to a Norwegian citizen and a Taiwanese post doctoral candidate.

Joseph has said that if they lost the lawsuit, they would file an appeal all the way to the European Court of Human Rights to ensure that the world hears the voice of the Taiwanese people.

Joseph initiated an online fundraising campaign in the second half of last year to raise funds for the lawsuit. To date, they have raised about NT\$3.5 million (US\$117,442), he said.

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