

Groups mark massacre with warning

Written by Taipei Times

Thursday, 04 June 2020 04:22 -



National Tsing Hua University associate professor on sociology Chen Ming-chi, front row second left, Democratic Progressive Party Legislator Fan Yun, front row center, New School for Democracy chairman Tseng Chien-yuan, front row second right, New Power Party Legislator Chen Jiau-hua, front row right, and others participate in an online forum organized yesterday by the New School for Democracy to discuss China's expanding totalitarianism in Hong Kong.

Photo: Liao Chen-huei, Taipei Times

Human rights advocates yesterday cautioned the global community against China's expanding totalitarianism in Hong Kong and elsewhere, as they marked the 31st anniversary of the Tiananmen Square Massacre.

The New School for Democracy held a forum attended by lawmakers, academics and human rights advocates.

The school had invited Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) members to the forum, but they said they could not comply with the schedule, school chairman Tseng Chien-yuan (曾建元) said.

For the first time, Hong Kongers are this year banned from holding the annual June 4 Tiananmen vigil in Victoria Park, Democratic Progressive Party Legislator Fan Yun (范雲) said, adding that it used to be the most significant event marking the massacre's anniversary among ethnic Chinese.

Whether the Hong Kong government banned the event to prevent mass gatherings amid the COVID-19 pandemic or for political reasons, "refusing to forget" and letting the perpetrators know "we remember" is important, she said.

As a "global citizen" that hopes to rejoin the global community, Taiwan should demonstrate its democratic values by expressing support for Hong Kongers and remembering the massacre, as Taiwan might not maintain its democracy and freedoms if Chinese totalitarianism continues to expand, she said.

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Remembering the massacre and its victims is “a war between remembrance and oblivion,” said National Tsing Hua University associate professor of sociology Chen Ming-chi (陳明池), who resigned as deputy minister of the Mainland Affairs Council on May 20.

Remembering the massacre in Taiwan is meaningful, as it protects Taiwan’s democracy and resists China’s expanding totalitarianism, he said.

While Beijing hopes that people will forget the atrocity, Taiwanese should continue to remind people that tanks ran over democracy activists, students and citizens in the massacre, Chen said.

The Chinese Communist Party is now extending its violence to Hong Kong, he said, adding that this could also happen in other parts of the world.

Taiwan should act as “an ark of democracy” to connect like-minded partners, Chen said.

“We respect Chinese people who aspire for democracy and freedom. We have not forgotten them,” he said.

As seen during the COVID-19 pandemic, countries that have chosen to side with China to gain benefits would get their just deserts, Taiwan Association for Human Rights secretary-general Shih Yi-hsiang (施宜生) said, urging other countries to be vigilant regarding the uncontrollable risk of China’s expanding influence.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2020/06/04](#)