

HK office opens as Tsai laments law

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President Tsai Ing-wen yesterday expresses her disappointment regarding China's passage of a national security law for Hong Kong at Chunghwa Telecom Co's news conference in Taipei for the launch of its 5G services.

Photo: CNA

The Taiwan-Hong Kong Services and Exchanges Office today officially opens in Hong Kong, where it is to provide humanitarian assistance to Hong Kongers, after Beijing yesterday passed a controversial national security law for the territory.

President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) expressed dismay over China's passage of the law, saying that Beijing has broken its pledge to allow Hong Kong to maintain a high degree of autonomy for at least 50 years following its handover from the UK.

"I feel extremely disappointed [about the law's passage], which means China did not keep its promise to Hong Kong," Tsai said in Taipei.

Beijing's "broken promise" also showed that the "one country, two systems" model for Hong Kong and Macau, which the Chinese government has also proposed for Taiwan, is not feasible for the nation, she said.

Tsai said she hoped that people in Hong Kong could continue to fight to maintain their freedoms, democracy and human rights after the law is implemented.

She again pledged that Taiwan would help Hong Kongers, citing the launch of the office to help those who want to come to Taiwan.

The office is to provide one-stop services for Hong Kongers who wish to study, do business, invest or seek asylum in Taiwan.

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Although the office is new, the laws and guidelines related to the services provided are no more accommodating to people from Hong Kong than they were in the past.

The national security law is widely seen as an effort by the Chinese government to take full control of Hong Kong after a year of pro-democracy protests there.

In the Sino-British Joint Declaration signed by Britain and China in 1984, Beijing promised Hong Kong “a high degree of autonomy” for at least 50 years after China regained control of the territory in 1997.

“One country, two systems” refers to a constitutional principle formulated by then-Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping (鄧小平) in the early 1980s, who suggested that there would be only “one China,” but distinct Chinese regions, such as Hong Kong and Macau, could retain their own economic and administrative systems.

Meanwhile, Taipei Deputy Mayor Tsai Ping-kun (蔡正元) said that the city already has the resources to assist Hong Kongers wanting to work, study or live in Taipei.

The city has services in place to help new immigrants, and has now established an office specifically to assist newcomers from Hong Kong, he said, adding that Taipei has seen an influx of people from Hong Kong in the past few years.

In 2018, 4,148 people moved from Hong Kong to Taipei, and last year that number rose to 5,898, he said, adding that in the first four months of this year alone the figure was 2,383.

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