

Japanese group first of planned visits

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British Member of Parliament Tom Tugendhat speaks to the media at a Conservative Party leadership campaign event at Biggin Hill Airport in Westerham, Britain, on July 30.

Photo: Reuters

Lawmakers from Japan, Canada, Germany and the UK are planning trips to Taiwan in the next few months to show support amid heightened Chinese intimidation following US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taipei earlier this month.

Next to visit from Monday to Wednesday next week is a delegation from Japan's parliament, Kyodo News reported on Tuesday.

The group is to be led by Japanese Representative Keiji Furuya, chair of the Japan-ROC Diet Members' Consultative Council and a member of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, Kyodo News reported, quoting multiple sources.

They are expected to meet with President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) and defense officials to discuss improving defense systems in cooperation with the US, as well as enhanced Chinese military drills staged last week, it reported.

They are also expected to discuss sending a council delegation to attend Double Ten National Day celebrations on Oct. 10 and holding trilateral strategic dialogue with US lawmakers, it said.

Furuya previously visited Taiwan in September 2020 to attend the funeral of former president Lee Teng-hui (李登輝).



President Tsai meets Keiji Furuya, Chairman of Japan-ROC Diet Members' Consultative on January 17, 2020.

Photo courtesy of Office of the President.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Tuesday welcomed the announced visit by the council, which sent a delegation annually until the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020.

Emphasizing the trip as a return to normalcy as border controls are eased, ministry spokeswoman Joanne Ou (歐安) told the Central News Agency that arrangements are still being made and details would be made public when ready.

Canadian lawmakers are planning a trip to Taiwan in October for what the delegation's leader called a "necessary" visit.

The group of eight from the Canadian House of Commons Standing Committee on International Trade is to be led by the group's chair, Judy Sgro of the Liberal Party, Canadian Broadcasting Corp (CBC) reported on Tuesday.

"The trade committee is very anxious to go and to visit Taiwan and see what opportunities there are for deeper trade relations between our two countries," CBC quoted Sgro as saying.

Sgro, who chairs the Canada-Taiwan Parliamentary Friendship Group, said that planning for the trip began last spring, but is still contingent on COVID-19 protocols.

"We need to protect other countries that have fought for their freedom and for their democracy," she said. "So, yes, you know, I'm trying to be diplomatic in my comments, but clearly I'm proud that Canada is standing up to China as well, and I think that pushback is very important."

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The group, which had 89 members from both parliamentary chambers as of last year, previously sent a delegation to Taiwan in 2014.

Two separate delegations from Germany's Bundestag are expected in October.

Six lawmakers of the Germany-Taiwan Parliamentary Friendship Group are planning a visit during the first week of October, German lawmaker Holger Becker told visiting Taiwanese officials on Monday last week.

At the end of October, the Bundestag's Committee on Human Rights is to send a delegation of eight lawmakers from six political parties to Taiwan as part of a larger Asia tour, German news agency DPA reported.

The committee had reportedly planned a visit in 2020 that was canceled due to the pandemic.

Earlier this month, the *Guardian* reported that the UK House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee is to send a delegation in November or early December.

If he is still chair of the committee after elections next month, British Member of Parliament Tom Tugendhat is expected to lead the trip, which was postponed from early this year after a member tested positive for COVID-19, it said.

Additional reporting by Lu Yi-hsuan

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