

China using Lee Ming-che case as warning to foreign NGOs: activist



Shanghai, Sept. 13 (CNA) China is using Taiwanese human rights activist Lee Ming-che's (李明哲) case as a warning to all foreign NGOs operating within the country, a prominent leader of the Chinese democracy movement said on Wednesday.

Speaking to CNA during a telephone interview on Wednesday, Wang Dan (王丹), a leader of the Chinese democracy movement and one of the student leaders of the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests who now lives in Washington, said that China is making an example of Lee Ming-che to warn foreign NGOs operating in China to abide by its regulations.

Wang noted that the Chinese government has ramped up its regulation of foreign NGOs in recent years and will continue to do so, given that it is trying to control the influence outside NGOs have in the country.

Notable examples of tighter government scrutiny of foreign NGOs include a charity law and a foreign NGO law, which were promulgated in mid 2016 and early 2017 respectively, introduced extensive registration and reporting requirements.

Chen Yu-huan (陳育環), who has operated his own NGO in China for five years, says that Beijing has adopted a more regulated and standardized approach.

The government will not tolerate unchecked growth and development beyond its control, he continued.

Foreign NGOs are having a hard time coping with China's new NGO law, which gives the police a wide range of powers to question foreign NGO workers, inspect their offices, review documents and even confiscate premises and assets, according to international media reports.

Even the charity law, which seems like a benign law to ensure the proper use of charitable donations, could be used by the government to "tame" charitable groups in China, Wang Hsin-hsien (王信軒), a professor at National Chengchi University's Graduate Institute of East Asian Studies, pointed out.

China's Taiwan Affairs Office spokesman An Fengshan (安鳳山) made a statement on Wednesday, saying that individuals in China must obey the laws of the country and any violation will be prosecuted in accordance with the law.

(By Chen Chia-lun and Kuan-lin Liu)

Enditem/AW