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# 13 nationals repatriated by Taiwan

TAIWAN has repatriated 13 Chinese nationals who claimed to be pro-democracy activists, reversing an earlier decision to grant them political asylum, a government spokesman said yesterday.

The mainlanders were deported earlier this month after further government investigation showed they did not participate in last year's pro-democracy movement, Mr Liu Peng-chun, the deputy director and spokesman for the Exit and Entry Bureau, said.

"We had to send them back to the mainland because their true identities did not meet our policy," he said. Mr Liu claimed the group fled China because of criminal activity, business trouble or family problems, not because of political reasons.

The 13 were put on fishing boats bound for China, which is how Taiwan typically deports illegal immigrants from the mainland.

Officials acknowledged they did not know whether the repatriated people would

be persecuted but expressed hope their lives would not be in danger.

Among the repatriated were 11 men and a woman who arrived in December through South Korea after leaving a port north of Shanghai. They were the largest group permitted to settle in Taiwan since the crushing of the pro-democracy movement in Beijing in June.

The other asylum seeker was a 27-year-old woman who arrived on October 17, last year.

Yang Yahung, under the pseudonym Jing Jing, claiming she was wanted by authorities for having taken part in the pro-democracy movement.

But follow-up investigations revealed that Ms Yang, a journalist with the *Chinese Village Management Daily* in central China, did not join anti-government activities and was not wanted by Chinese authorities as she had claimed.

Ms Yang's husband, Mr Lin Chuan-liang, also from the mainland, works in Hongkong for a Chinese en-

gineering firm and a hotel, Mr Liu said.

Mr Lin visited his wife in Taiwan in late December but was unwilling to take her to Hongkong, forcing security officials to send her to the waters off China's southeastern coast in a fishing boat several days ago, Mr Liu said.

The couple's parents are high-ranking officials in the Chinese Government, he added.

The 12 mainlanders repatriated who sailed to South Korea in November have also been sent back after officials learned they had fabricated their participation in the pro-democracy movement, he said.

Investigations revealed that they had either committed crimes, failed in business or disputed with family members on the mainland, Mr Liu said.

Taiwanese authorities routinely send illegal Chinese immigrants back into the open seas in fishing boats after supplying them with provisions.

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