

12 arrested after raid on centre

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and Cynthia Wan

TWELVE pro-democracy demonstrators were arrested after they stormed into the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre yesterday in an attempt to disrupt the first meeting of the Selection Committee.

But they were stopped by police before reaching the meeting, inaugurated earlier in the day by China's Foreign Minister Qian Qichen.

Outside the centre, there were scuffles between 40 demonstrators and massed police, which resulted in several injuries.

Twelve demonstrators plunged through a convention centre side door and were chased up escalators by police.

They managed to reach the sixth floor, one floor away from the meeting,

before nine of them were seized.

They were kept in a security room for half an hour before being taken to Wan Chai police station.

Three others were arrested later as they tried to break into the venue.

They said they wanted to present a letter to Mr Qian.

All 12 protesters were released on \$500 bail each.

The 11 men and one woman were arrested for "obstructing police in the course of executing their duties".

About 20 people protested outside the police station to demand the immediate release of their fellow demonstrators.

The protest subsided only when the 12 were released at about 7 pm.

Democratic Party legislator and lawyer Albert Ho Chun-yan said by law the non-uniformed police officers were required to state their reasons before they made an arrest.

Democratic Party member Andrew To Kwan-hang said they would consult lawyers over whether to take legal action against the "unlawful detention".