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Alliance considers action over Tung's refusal to send petitions

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By Carmen Cheung

THE Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China is considering taking further action to compel Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa to relay its petitions to Beijing.

Alliance standing committee member Cheung Man-kwong said the group would discuss the matter in next week's regular meeting.

The alliance had earlier learnt that the Chief Executive's Office had not sent its petitions to the mainland government.

Before the handover, the group submitted petitions to the Xinhua News Agency — which represented Beijing in the then British territory — and asked it to forward them to the Chinese leadership.

In particular, it petitioned for the release of Chinese dissidents jailed on the main-

land and called on Beijing to redress the 1989 Tiananmen crackdown.

But since Hong Kong returned to Chinese sovereignty on 1 July, the alliance has been submitting its petitions to the Chief Executive's Office.

A spokesman for the political organisation claimed it did not know until Tuesday that the leader's staff had not sent any of the petitions to Beijing.

Alliance members came to know about this only after a spokesman for the Chief Executive said his office could not relay their plea for the release of student leader Wang Dan as it had been deemed a "political demand".

Mr Cheung accused the Chief Executive's Office of censoring the public's opinions. He also criticised Mr Tung for shirking his responsibilities.

"The Chief Executive is the representative of Hong Kong people, he represents us to communicate with the central government," Mr Cheung said.

"So it is his duty to send Hong Kong people's message to the central government, no matter if it is a political message and no matter whether Mr Tung himself agrees with the message or not."

Mr Cheung finally urged the Chief Executive's Office to send its latest petitions to the central government immediately.

But a spokeswoman reiterated last night the office would not send any "political message" to Beijing.

"Any decision made by the SAR government is to conform with the overall long-term interests of Hong Kong," the spokeswoman said.