

Pro-democracy supporters targeted, say protesters detained by Beijing

Activists claim China blacklist

CATHERINE NG, SAUW YIM
and NO KWAI-YAN

Eight protesters detained in Beijing by armed police claimed last night that China had compiled a blacklist of pro-democracy supporters.

The group, including five Legislative Councillors, flew to Beijing to hand a 60,000-name petition opposing the establishment of the provisional legislature to senior Chinese officials.

But soon after the plane touched down, 15 uniformed and plainclothes security officials were on board checking all passengers against a lengthy list of names.

The group, members of the United Front Against the Provisional Legislature, were questioned for two hours and had their home visit permits confiscated before being forced to return to Hong Kong.

On their arrival at Kai Tak last night, where they were given a heroic welcome by supporters, the group accused Beijing of compiling a blacklist of local activists.

A spokesman for the group, Andrew Cheng Kar-foo, said: "The *gongan* [public security officers] were holding a list, which we regard as a blacklist, to identify us.

"It was in three A4-size pages long, double sided, and had an estimated 200 names on it. All were pro-democracy camp people."

He said they saw the names of Democrat legislators Lau Chin-shek and Cheung Man-kwong; Urban Councillors Lai Hok-lim and Lee Kwok-leung; and Central and Western District Board chairman Yuen Bun-keung.

Journalists on the plane claimed to have spotted the names of legislator Elizabeth Wong Chien Chien and Democrats Szeto Wah and Josephine Chan Shu-ying.

Mr Cheng said: "Today marks 365 days before the handover. It also marks the complete shattering of the dream of democracy, 'Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong' and a high degree of autonomy."

John Tse Wing-ling, another Democratic legislator, lashed out at Chinese pledges in the Basic Law.

"One country, two systems - don't believe it. It's a big lie," he said.

Colleague Tsang Kin-shing broke down in tears as he was greeted at Kai Tak by his young son.

Other members of the group were Yum Sin-ling, Lo Chiu-fai, Lam Sum-shing, former legislator Fung Chi-wood and unionist Leung Yiu-chung.

Xinhua (the New China News Agency) denied the blacklist claims. It said security staff in Beijing confiscated the group's travel documents and ordered them back to Hong Kong because they infringed immigration laws.

Local Xinhua officials accused the group of putting on a political show. Vice-Director Qin Wenjun (秦文俊) said claims of a blacklist were "nonsense".

"We informed them not to go and they still insisted on going. They are responsible," he said.

Another Vice-Director, Zhang Junsheng (張浚生), said they were not allowed into Beijing because of national security reasons.

"Don't believe that China's safety will only be affected by people with guns," he said. "They stirred up things and tried to petition Beijing with journalists in tow. How could we allow them to make a forcible entry after they were told many times not to go?"

The coalition met last night and decided to stage a protest at Xinhua's headquarters today.

They will also ask Solicitor-General Daniel Fung for help in regaining their travel documents. He believed the detainees could take legal action in mainland courts.

In London, Chief Secretary Anson Chan Fang On-sang was surprised that people travelling on valid PRC-issued documents were not been permitted to enter China.

Speaking shortly after a 40-minute meeting with the Prime Minister, John Major, she said Hong Kong had raised the matter with the British embassy in Beijing and would also discuss it with Xinhua.