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Activists detained, petitions removed

By DANIEL KWAN

SHANGHAI customs authorities yesterday confiscated the signatures and letters carried by four local activists who went to the city to petition for the release of two Hongkong residents.

The four petitioners were interrogated by officials at Hongqiao Airport for more than an hour and were unable to contact the British Consulate.

One of the four petitioners, Mr Vicky Li Lok, said last night two of them had been questioned by officials who intercepted them after they had passed through immigration control.

"After we passed through, a group of customs officers confronted us and we were taken into separate rooms," he said.

Mr Leung Kai-bun was detained alone by the officers for 35 minutes.

"They checked all our luggage and took away all our petition material," Mr Li said.

"We were given a receipt saying that they had been confiscated for investigation purposes.

"We explained to them why we were there but they said they had not received any instructions concerning our petition."

According to Mr Li, a customs officer who identified himself as Mr Zeng said travellers were only allowed to carry their personal belongings.

"We will contact the customs department tomorrow morning and demand the return of the petitions."

The other two who went to Shanghai are Mr Wong Hung-shing and Father Franco Mella.

The petitions were collected from 30 local organisations and four district board members.

They demanded that mainland authorities release Yiu Yung-chin and Lau Shan-ching, both of whom were arrested on "counter-revolutionary charges".

Yiu was arrested in Shanghai last June and Lau was sentenced to 10 years' jail in Guangzhou in 1983.

Mr Li said: "When Mr Lau was tried, his family in Hongkong was not informed. We feared the same may happen to Yiu, who is just a 20-year-old student."

The four district board members who signed the petitions were Mr Leung Yiu-chung, Mr Tsui Pak-lam, the Reverend Fung Chi-wood and Mr Wai Hing-cheung.