

NEW CRIMES

China bans "Taiwan" and "independence" word combination

WORLD

16_07_2024

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On July 4, Rights group Human Rights Watch (HRW) **reported** on recent judiciary guidelines in mainland China **criminalizing** crimes of secession by Taiwanese “separatists” and greenlighting “the use of trials in absentia and even the death penalty

for anyone asserting Taiwan's independence”.

Strikingly, the recent guidelines outlaw anything linked to Taiwanese independence, including “establishing a ‘Taiwan Independence’ separatist organization,” “promoting Taiwan’s entrance into international organizations,” and contradicting Communist China’s narrative of Taiwan “in fields such as education, culture, history, or news media.” Other offenses include “conduct seeking to separate Taiwan from China” and “otherwise actively participat[ing]” in Taiwanese “separatist organizations.” Moreover, these guidelines do not distinguish between Taiwanese and foreign nationals. Importantly, the guidelines threaten the death penalty for “crimes” deemed to be “especially serious or ... vile.”

HRW then stated that “these new guidelines are likely to have a further chilling effect on the approximately 150,000 Taiwanese nationals living in China, for whom self-censorship is routine”.

According to German-based news outlet DW News, China’s new guidelines list five “accurate identification of crimes,” which entail “attempting to alter Taiwan's legal status as part of China” and “advocating for Taiwan's participation in international organizations limited to sovereign states”. Notably, DW News pointed out that the final item on the list of guidelines vaguely portrayed the offense as “other acts aimed at separating Taiwan from China”.

The guidelines stated that punishments for “splitting the state” may include capital punishment if the crime leads to “particularly grave harm” to the state and the people or “if the circumstances are particularly serious”.

In remarks cited by DW News and Chinese state broadcaster CCTV, Chinese Defense Minister Dong Jun (*photo above*) warned at the recent Shangri-La Dialogue security conference in Singapore that those attempting to separate Taiwan from China would be “crushed and bring about their own downfall”.

In the same speech, Dong pledged that the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) would act “resolutely and forcefully” to stop “Taiwan independence”.

Additionally, the minister slammed Taiwan's ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) for embracing “separatism” while allegedly jeopardizing the island's Chinese identity. “Those separatists recently made fanatical statements that show their betrayal of the Chinese nation and their ancestors. They will be nailed to the pillar of shame in history,” Dong decried.

Furthermore, Dong castigated foreign powers for “emboldening Taiwan separatists” and imperiling the “One China” principle with “salami slicing tactics”, in

comments that many perceived were aimed at the United States (US). These actions, including selling arms to Taiwan and **keeping official contacts with it**, were meant to use Taiwan to contain China, Dong alleged.

In turn, Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council reacted to Dong's statements by declaring that it regretted his “provocative and irrational” words and maintaining that the People’s Republic of China under the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) had never ruled Taiwan, DW News **reported**.

Also, the council slammed China for frequently threatening force against Taiwan at international venues, threats it **claimed** violated the United Nations charter. “It is an objective fact that the two sides of the Taiwan Strait are not subordinate to each other, and that is also the status quo in the strait,” the council said.

To boot, Taiwan's new president Lai Ching-te declared that China “has no right to punish” Taiwanese people for their beliefs after China unveiled its new judiciary guidelines that threatened to penalize supporters of Taiwanese independence with capital punishment. In statements **quoted** by DW News, Lai reiterated that “democracy is not a crime; autocracy is the real evil”. “China has no right to punish the people of Taiwan just because of what they advocate. China has no right to pursue **cross-border prosecution** of Taiwanese people,” the Taiwanese leader asserted.

Previously, Beijing lambasted Lai as a “**dangerous separatist**” who would bring “**war and decline**” to the region.

What is more, former Taiwanese legislator Chen Jiau-hua, already singled out by Beijing as one of the “stubborn separatists,” told DW News that she remained undaunted by Beijing’s new guidelines. Rather, the CCP’s new measures merely made her grow “even more resentful” towards China, DW News **reported**. “I think Taiwanese people shouldn't be afraid and threatened by these guidelines. Nor should they surrender to an authoritarian regime,” Chen posited.