

Kenya acquits Chinese, Taiwanese cybercrime suspects

NAIROBI, KENYA: Forty Chinese and Taiwanese nationals held in custody since December 2014 were acquitted of running a cybercrime cell from an upmarket Nairobi suburb on Friday and will be deported.



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The 35 Chinese and five Taiwanese were accused of running a hacking operation and mysterious "command centre" from upmarket houses in the Kenyan capital, and were denied bail for 18 months on the grounds they were a flight risk.

But magistrate Joyce Gondani ruled the prosecution had failed to prove the group was involved in running an unlicensed telecommunication system and was engaged in organised crime, charges they had denied.

Police raided the properties after investigating a house fire apparently caused by a computer that left one Chinese national dead. Police found people living in "military-style dormitories."

Several mobile phones, laptops, routers were found in the house.

According to local police at the time, the group was "preparing to raid the country's communication systems" and had

equipment capable of infiltrating bank accounts, Kenya's M-Pesa mobile banking system and ATM machines.

In April Kenya deported dozens of Taiwanese accused of fraud to China, where they were put on trial, causing a diplomatic spat between Beijing and Taipei.

Like most countries in the world, Kenya does not recognise Taiwan's claim to be a sovereign state separate from the People's Republic of China.

Source: AFP via I-Net Bridge

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