

27 - 29 March 2026

Singapore , Singapore

# **A Study on The Necessity of Police Intervention in Acts of Self-Help**

**Po-Hsun Ko**

*Institute of China and Asia  
Pacific Studies, National Sun Yat  
sen University, Taiwan*

## **Abstract**

Article 151 of the Civil Code provides for what is known as “self-help.” It states: “A person who, in order to protect his own rights, imposes restraint upon, seizes, or damages another’s liberty or property shall not be liable for damages. However, this shall apply only when it is impossible to obtain timely assistance from a court or other competent authority, and when the right could not be exercised, or its exercise would be rendered significantly difficult, without such action.” The question then arises: may a private individual who wishes to assert the right of self-help request assistance from the police authorities? In other words, do the police have a legal obligation or basis to provide such assistance? This paper argues that, from the perspective of the police function as a means of safeguarding human rights and preventing harm, the police are entrusted with the protection of private rights only under strictly limited conditions and only when authorized by law. Only where judicial protection cannot be obtained in time, and where the exercise of one’s rights would be impossible or considerably more difficult without police assistance, do the police bear a duty—pursuant to law—to act in protection of private law rights.

**Keywords:** Principle Of Private Autonomy; Self-Help; Protection of Private Rights; Police Duties; Police Intervention