



### **CALD Statement No. 3 S. 2019**

#### **CALD expresses its solidarity with the Hong Kong people in their continuing fight to preserve their freedom and the rule of law**

The Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats (CALD) expresses its strong support to the Hong Kong people as they continue their fight against the extradition bill that would allow suspected criminals to be sent to mainland China for trial.

The bill has been widely criticized because of the difficulty of ensuring basic judicial protections in the other jurisdiction, which allegedly practices arbitrary detention, forced confessions, one-sided trials, and even torture.

The determination and resolve of the Hong Kong people in resisting the passage of the extradition bill, as seen in two successive protest mobilizations on June 9 and June 16 where over a million demonstrators participated, demonstrated to the world how valuable the rule of law and fundamental freedoms are to Hong Kong.

For the Hong Kong people, the passage of the bill would be a death knell for the “one country, two systems”, which guarantees Hong Kong’s high degree of autonomy based on the rule of law and on the freedoms associated with an open society. These characteristics, it must be emphasized, are what made Hong Kong the international commercial and trading hub and a legal powerhouse it is today. The bill has the potential to not only damage Hong Kong’s international reputation - it is an existential threat to its people’s way of life.

Given what’s at stake, the Hong Kong’s Chief Executive’s announcement on June 15 that deliberations on the extradition bill would be suspended indefinitely is not enough. The only course of action that would satisfy the Hong Kong people is for the bill to be withdrawn.

The shelving of the bill, nonetheless, is a triumph for the people of Hong Kong who courageously went to the streets in order to make their voices heard. CALD is deeply inspired by their determination and courage of conviction to prevent the erosion of the territory’s legal autonomy. At a time when liberal and democratic values are under siege everywhere, the Hong Kong people reminded us and the world that these values are still worth fighting for.

CALD, however, is concerned that these recent peaceful exercises of freedom of expression and of assembly, particularly the June 12 protest, led to violent clashes with the police. As tear gas and rubber bullets were used against unarmed protesters, CALD calls for an independent and impartial probe of the incident for possible excessive use of force. The demonstrators who were arrested and detained should also be released immediately with no fear of being prosecuted. It also urges the authorities to observe maximum tolerance in all future peaceful demonstrations and assemblies.

CALD extends its gratitude to the international community for speaking out on the fundamental threats and dangers that Hong Kong is facing as seen in the attempt to pass an extradition bill. International pressure, without a doubt, contributed to the

government's decision to temporarily suspend the bill's deliberations. It urges the international community to continuously monitor the political situation in Hong Kong, and to remain vigilant of possible reversals or setbacks in the future.

CALD calls on mainland China and Hong Kong to uphold the "one country, two systems", and to preserve Hong Kong's fundamental freedoms and the rule of law as enshrined in the Basic Law and in the Bill of Rights Ordinance. It also urges the Hong Kong government to listen to the demands of its people and to work closely and inclusively with them in order to address the growing concern about protecting Hong Kong's autonomy.

For the Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats:

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Bi-khim Hsiao". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**Bi-khim Hsiao, MP**  
Chairperson  
Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats

17 June 2019