

**Joint resolution of APHR and CALD  
expressing alarm at increasing attacks on the  
political opposition in ASEAN**

We, the ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR) and the Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats (CALD), on the occasion of the 40<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) in Bangkok, Thailand on 25-30 August 2019:

Recognizing that AIPA, as a regional parliamentary organization in Southeast Asia, aims to encourage understanding, cooperation, and close relations among Members of Parliaments as well as Observer Member Parliaments and other parliamentary organizations;

Acknowledging that AIPA's aims and purposes include the promotion of "the principles of human rights, democracy, peace, security and prosperity in ASEAN";

Recalling AIPA Resolution 37GA/2016/POL/03 on Resolving Internal and External Challenges through Democratic Process and Achieving Peace through Consultation, Consensus and Negotiation adopted in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, in 2016;

Emphasizing the worsening state of democracy, human rights and the rule of law in the Asian region and worldwide, as documented in the Freedom House's *Freedom of the World*, The Economist Intelligence Unit's *Democracy Index*, Cato Institute/Fraser Institute/Friedrich Naumann Foundation's *Human Freedom Index* among others;

Acknowledging that one facet of this ongoing democratic recession, and the corresponding rise in authoritarianism and populism, is the continuing and intensifying repression of democratically elected political opposition;

Underscoring that in Southeast Asia, the number of cases where the political opposition is harassed and restricted solely for carrying out its legitimate work is intensifying, most evidently in countries like Cambodia and the Philippines;

Highlighting that in Cambodia, officials and members of the main opposition party, Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP), continue to face arbitrary arrest and detention, intimidation and harassment almost two years after the party's dissolution; its President, Kem Sokha, remains under house arrest; 118 CNRP officials have been banned from politics for five years, and eight of its leaders - including acting President Sam Rainsy - have been forced into exile after arrest warrants were issued against them for allegedly inciting to commit a felony and plotting treason;

Recognize that in the Philippines, several lawmakers who have opposed the President's campaign against illegal drugs and other key government policies, have faced politically-motivated criminal charges, harassment, threats and intimidation as

a result; most recently criminal cases - including of sedition - were filed against Leni Robredo, Philippine Vice President and Chair of the Liberal Party (LP) of the Philippines, incumbent opposition senators Leila de Lima and Ana Theresia Hontiveros, and other opposition leaders; and Senator Leila de Lima has been detained since February 2017 on fabricated “conspiracy to commit illegal drug trade” charges.

Do hereby agree to:

Request the AIPA under the leadership of H.E. Chuan Leekpai, in line with AIPA’s aim and purpose of promoting “the principles of human rights, democracy, peace, security and prosperity in ASEAN,” to raise the issue of the worsening state of democracy, human rights and the rule of law in Southeast Asia in the AIPA General Assembly, especially in relation to the attacks faced by the political opposition in Cambodia and the Philippines;

Urge AIPA, in light of AIPA Resolution 37GA/2016/POL/03, to work through all diplomatic channels to call on Southeast Asian governments and in particular the Cambodian and Philippine Governments to reverse their course vis-à-vis the political opposition by immediately releasing Kem Sokha and Leila de Lima, dropping all politically motivated charges against other opposition parliamentarians, members of civil society, human rights defenders, journalists and others, and respecting peoples’ right to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association;

Defend the right of all in ASEAN to have an alternative voice in Government and an opposition free from fear of reprisal that will strengthen the principle of checks and balances and provide a more inclusive decision-making in governance;

Uphold the importance of political opposition in the work of parliaments and in the effective functioning of multi-party democracy; and

Continue to work together and support each other, as defenders of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, to address the worsening political and human rights situation in the Asian region by protecting and strengthening democratic values, institutions and processes.

ADOPTED this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of August 2019.



**Charles Santiago**  
Chairperson, ASEAN Parliamentarians  
for Human Rights  
Member of Parliament, Malaysia



**Bi-Khim Hsiao**  
Chairperson, Council of Asian Liberals  
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