



## **CALD Statement No. 12, S. 2020**

### **CALD expresses alarm over arrests of Hong Kong legislators and activists**

The Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats (CALD) is alarmed by the arrest of four legislators from the Hong Kong's pan-democratic camp today, 1 November 2020. The legislators were identified as Wu Chi-wai, Andrew Wan Siu-kin and Helena Wong Pik-wan from the Democratic Party, and Fernando Cheung Chiu-hung from the Labour Party.

Apart from the four legislators, a number of opposition activists have also been arrested, and the police warned that more arrests could follow.

The arrests were in relation to a commotion in Hong Kong's Legislative Council (LegCo) on 8 May 2020, when pro-establishment leader Starry Lee took control of a key committee in the legislature. Those arrested were charged with contempt and interference with LegCo officers.

CALD considers these arrests as nothing but attempts to further intimidate and silence the political opposition and democracy activists in Hong Kong. That these arrests came after more than 30 people were arrested under the Beijing-imposed national security law shows that democratic space for the exercise of fundamental rights, particularly expression of contrary political views and political dissent, is being constricted to the point that Hong Kong's cherished rule of law and judicial independence appear to just be figments of imagination.

CALD strongly believes that political stability results from respecting the fundamental rights of everyone, including the right to petition for redress of grievances and the right to dissent. A society that restricts these rights due to the mistaken belief that stability flows from the absence of opposition is sowing the seeds for further political instability and societal fragmentation.

That is exactly what is happening in Hong Kong at the moment. The arrests of these pan-democrat legislators and democracy activists can just exacerbate the already volatile political situation in the territory. In this regard, CALD implores the Hong Kong administration to immediately release and drop the charges against those arrested, and to cease from committing further actions that threaten or harass the political opposition and activists. Furthermore, the authorities can also open a dialogue with the opposition LegCo members and democracy activists as a way to ease the tension and facilitate a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

For the Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats:

**Senator Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan**  
Chairperson

1 November 2020