



CALD Statement No. 13, S. 2020

**CALD condemns in strongest terms China-backed framework
that targets Hong Kong opposition legislators**

Last 11 November 2020, China put another nail in the coffin of Hong Kong's autonomy.

On that day, the Standing Committee of National People's Congress of mainland China passed a resolution that denies Hong Kong lawmakers their legislative seats for "promoting Hong Kong independence and threatening national security."

Immediately after the adoption of the resolution, four opposition legislators were disqualified namely Alvin Yeung Ngok-kiu, Kwok Ka-ki, and Dennis Knok from Civic Party, and Kenneth Leung from the Professionals Guild. These four lawmakers were also previously disqualified from contesting the September 2020 Legislative Council elections, which have since been postponed, for calling foreign governments to sanction Beijing and Hong Kong for the imposition of the highly controversial national security law.

The disqualification of these lawmakers led to the mass resignation of all remaining fifteen pro-democracy legislators on 12 November, as they believe that the adoption of the resolution, and the subsequent disqualification of the four opposition legislators, are flagrant violations of the Basic Law, Hong Kong's mini-constitution which guarantees its autonomy, at least until 2047.

The Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats (CALD) considers the imposition of the resolution as the death knell to Hong Kong's autonomy.

For decades, the presence of opposition legislators, who have been regularly elected despite the systemic constraints that put them at a severe disadvantage, provided the necessary checks-and-balance to the powers of the Hong Kong administration and its allied lawmakers. These pro-democracy legislators have bravely faced and endured the challenges of being a minority in the legislative chamber to ensure that pieces of legislation are thoroughly discussed and debated, that different perspectives are taken into account, and that China cannot just impose what it wants on the territory.

With the expulsion and resignation of all opposition legislators in Hong Kong, the territory became just a shell of its former self. Rule of law, judicial independence and civil rights, which used to be Hong Kong's cherished principles, are now all subsumed under China's all-encompassing control and power.

It is said that, "Dissent is the highest form of patriotism." In this regard, the expulsion of opposition lawmakers in Hong Kong for being "unpatriotic" is not only ironic. It also goes against the very fabric of a free Hong Kong society.

For the Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats:

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Chairperson

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