



# Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats

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19 April 2023

## **H.E. William Lai**

Vice President of Taiwan

Chairperson, Democratic Progressive Party

Taipei, Taiwan

Your Excellency:

Warmest greetings from your liberal family in the Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats (CALD).

These past few weeks have been especially challenging for us, Asian democracy fighters, given the People's Republic of China's (PRC) conduct of military exercises in the Taiwan Strait and its imposition of sanctions on some democratic organizations and officials, including CALD and Taiwan's representative to the US and former CALD Chairperson/Secretary General, Bi-khim Hsiao.

CALD has been sanctioned, in particular, for working with the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) in "promoting Taiwan independence under the guise of academic and research exchanges." As a result of the sanctions, CALD officials are barred from entering PRC, Hong Kong and Macau. Relevant organizations and individuals in mainland China and its administrative regions are also prevented from cooperating with CALD. As a result, the remaining CALD individual member from Hong Kong, Emily Lau, resigned immediately after the sanctions were announced. Hong Kong legislators Martin Lee and Sin Chung-kai, who also used to be CALD individual members, resigned earlier in April 2021 as the charges against them also made mention of their affiliation with CALD.

We are writing to let you and our DPP colleagues know that CALD is undaunted by the sanctions imposed on us by the PRC. As an alliance of liberal and democratic political parties, we continue to recognize the DPP as an integral part of the CALD family and an important force in deepening and strengthening democracy in Taiwan and in the region. Together with the DPP, CALD will continue to serve as a platform for the promotion of liberalism and safeguarding of fundamental freedoms in the Asian region and beyond.

As Chairperson of CALD, I will also ensure that we remain committed to the promotion and further strengthening of the principles that define and bind us -- human rights, rule of law,

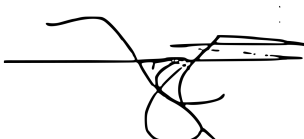
freedom, and democracy. No amount of sanctions or threats can stop us from realizing our mission of building a more democratic and progressive Asian region where freedom reigns.

Over the years, Taiwan and the DPP have been CALD's reliable and trusted partner in pursuing this mission. More importantly, you have served as a model and inspiration of what other Asian countries could achieve when democratic principles and values are deeply ingrained in governance and society. Taiwan is a beacon of democracy in a region which is still in the process of getting its democratic bearings. It is for this reason that we welcome your statement "to strengthen democratic Taiwan... so the world can see Taiwan's value, and embrace Taiwan."

We believe that Taiwan and CALD can play important roles in keeping democracy and peace in the region. We are pleased that our partnership remains strong despite the threats from undemocratic and illiberal forces.

Finally, on behalf of the CALD Executive Committee, please allow me to extend our invitation to CALD's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations in Taipei on 8-11 September 2023. We also wish you all the best in the upcoming 2024 elections as DPP's presidential candidate. We trust that your victory will bring forth a more democratic and peaceful future for the Taiwanese people.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Francis Pangilinan', written over a horizontal line.

**Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan**  
CALD Chairperson  
Senator, Republic of the Philippines (2013-2022)