

An 8-point human rights agenda for President Tsai Ing-wen

Sunday 12 January 2020

Honourable President Tsai Ing-wen
Office of the President
No. 122, Section 1, Chongqing South Road
Zhongzheng District
Taipei City 10048, Taiwan

Paris, Taipei, January 12, 2020

Re: Congratulations on your re-election

Dear President Tsai,

On behalf of the three undersigned organisations, please accept our warm greetings and congratulations on your election yesterday to a second term in office.

We have been encouraged by your commitment to human rights and the rule of law during your first term in office and we are confident you will use your second term to continue your efforts to address some of the unresolved human rights issues in Taiwan.

In October 2019, we were honoured to have you as the keynote speaker during the opening ceremony of FIDH's 40th Congress in Taipei - the first ever to be held in Asia. During your speech, you said that "human rights is a journey of many small steps."

We agree with your statement, and this is why we respectfully call upon your administration to consider undertaking important steps in the field of human rights before the end of your second term in 2024. These steps include:

1. The granting of an amnesty to Mr. Chiou Ho-shun, who has been imprisoned for 31 years - including the past eight years on death row - and whose health has seriously deteriorated.
2. The establishment of an official moratorium on executions, the commutation of all death sentences, and the creation of a detailed timeline for the complete abolition of the death penalty.
3. The promotion and adoption of a refugee law to ensure that individuals seeking asylum in Taiwan receive legal status and protection in accordance with international human rights standards.
4. The amendment of the Labour Standards Act to ensure the rights of foreign migrant workers, including fishermen and in-house care givers, are guaranteed and protected.
5. The implementation of the recommendations made by the Independent Experts of the Review Committee in March 2013 and January 2017 with regard to civil and political rights and economic social and cultural rights in Taiwan.
6. The establishment of a Department of Human Rights under the executive branch, to ensure that all government policies are consistent with human rights standards.

7. The review and amendment of laws and decrees, including the Mining Act, the Wildlife Conservation Act, and the Controlling Guns, Ammunition, and Knives Act, the implementation of which has led to serious violations of the rights of Indigenous peoples.

8. The enactment of legislative reforms to ensure full equality for all lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) individuals, including eligibility to adopt, access to assisted reproductive technology, and the right to marry for transnational same-sex couples.

Respect, protection, and fulfilment of human rights are cornerstones in improving the living conditions for people in every democratic society. With your commitment and determination to address the aforementioned issues, you will create a legacy of making Taiwan a country with human rights standards to be emulated in the region and beyond.

We would be privileged to have an opportunity to discuss these issues with you and remain at your disposal to provide the necessary technical expertise to facilitate taking these crucial steps that make up Taiwan's human rights journey.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Your sincerely,

Alice Mogwe
President, FIDH - International Federation for Human Rights

Clarence Chou
Chairperson, Taiwan Association for Human Rights (TAHR)

Song-Lih Huang
Convenor, Covenants Watch