

**26 March 2014**

**President Ma Ying-jeou**

Office of the President, Republic of China (Taiwan)  
No. 122, Sec. 1, Chongqing S. Rd.,  
Zhongzheng District, Taipei City 10048, Taiwan

## **Taiwan: Stop Violent Crackdown against Peaceful Protestors**

Your Excellency,

We, the undersigned civil society organisations, write to you to express our grave concern over the violent dispersal of peaceful protestors on 24 March 2014 at the government headquarters in opposition of the Taiwanese government's Cross-Straits Service Trade Agreement (CSSTA) with China.

We express particular concern over the Taiwanese police's deployment of water cannons and use of violence, including in forcibly dragging and manhandling protestors out of the government headquarters building where they were protesting on 23 and 24 March 2014. We have also received reports that peaceful and unarmed protestors, as well as journalists, have been beaten by the police during the crackdown, resulting in scores injured. We deplore the heavy-handed action of the police in dispersing the protestors as well as the arrests of dozens of protestors.

It must be reminded that the right to freedom of peaceful assembly is internationally-recognised and Constitutionally-guaranteed. We stress that the peaceful protestors – at the Parliament since 17 March 2014 and at the government headquarters on 23 and 24 March 2014 – have merely been exercising their basic rights in legitimately expressing concern over the potential impacts of the CSSTA, which has been discussed in a non-transparent manner, as demonstrated by the limited nature of public hearings, the rescinding of the stipulated clause-by-clause review of the agreement, as well as the haste with which the agreement was submitted for a final vote in the Parliament.

We therefore urge your government to refrain from any further violent crackdown on all ongoing and future peaceful assemblies, including the continuing protests against the CSSTA at the Parliament. While we appreciate that all those arrested at the government headquarters on 24 March 2014 have been reportedly released, we urge your government not to press charges against individuals in relation to their engagements in any form of peaceful protest against the CSSTA.

We thank you for your attention and consideration.

**Signed by:**

1. Amindo Global Foundation, Indonesia
2. Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)
3. Banglar Manabdhikar Suraksha Mancha (MASUM), India
4. Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Torture (KontraS), Indonesia
5. Community Self Reliance Centre (CSRC), Nepal
6. Human Rights Ambassador for Salem-News.com, UK
7. Globe International, Mongolia

8. Imparsial, Indonesia
9. Informal Sector Service Centre (INSEC), Nepal
10. Korean House for International Solidarity (KHIS), South Korea
11. Law and Society Trust (LST), Sri Lanka
12. May 18 Foundation, South Korea
13. National Commission for Justice and Peace (NCJP), Pakistan
14. Odhikar, Bangladesh
15. People's Empowerment Foundation (PEF), Thailand
16. People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD), South Korea
17. People's Watch, India
18. Perhimpunan Bantuan Hukum dan HAM (PBHI), Indonesia
19. Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (PAHRA), the Philippines
20. Programme Against Custodial Torture & Impunity (PACTI), India
21. Suara Rakyat Malaysia (SUARAM), Malaysia
22. Taiwan Association for Human Rights (TAHR), Taiwan
23. Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP), the Philippines
24. Think Centre, Singapore
25. Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Indonesia (YLBHI), Indonesia