



Position Paper

Asia Centre is strategically positioning itself to strengthen connections between international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) based in Taiwan and local civil society organisations (CSOs) in Southeast Asia.

Asia Centre is a civil society research institute in Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC). The Centre's core activities involve research, training, communications and advocacy initiatives, having its programmatic priorities on four key constitutional liberties as enshrined in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR): freedom of religion or belief (Article 18), freedom of expression (Article 19), freedom of association (Article 20) and the right to political participation (Article 21). It operates from its Research Hub and AI Hub in Bangkok (Thailand), Media Hub in Johor Bahru (Malaysia) and Training Hub in Phnom Penh (Cambodia).

The Centre recognises that Taiwan has been actively positioning itself as a hub for international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) in Asia, with significant efforts initiated during the previous administration and continuing under the current one. This has come in light of the growing attention of INGOs to the Asian region; but at the same time, their need to relocate from countries with increasing restrictions on civil space, where political environments have become less conducive. Taiwan's democratic values, strong rule of law, and favourable legal, tax, and administrative frameworks for NGOs have made it an attractive base for these organisations. As a result, several INGOs have established offices in Taiwan, expanded their staff, or moved their regional operations there after closing offices in other countries. Notable INGOs making this move include Article 19, European Values Center for Security Policy, Freedom House, Friedrich Naumann Foundation, International Republican Institute, National Democratic Institute, Reporters Without Borders, and Westminster Foundation for Democracy.

By serving as a liaison between these and other INGOs looking to establish a Taiwan office, and local CSOs in Southeast Asia, the Centre aims to foster meaningful partnerships and create opportunities for collaboration. The Centre's goal is to bridge the gap between international and local organisations, promoting cooperation in research, capacity-building, communications, and advocacy to advance shared goals in democracy and human rights.

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