



TAIWAN FOUNDATION
for DEMOCRACY

財團法人臺灣民主基金會

Press Release

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Karen Human Rights Group Received 2013 Asia Democracy and Human Rights Award

Taiwan Foundation for Democracy held the annual award ceremony of Asian Democracy and Human Rights Award on December 10th at Far East Plaza Hotel Taipei; and the laureate of this year's award goes to the Thailand-based Karen Human Rights Group. KHRG (Karen Human Rights Group) is a grass root non-governmental organization that actively operates in southeastern Myanmar. It was established in December 1992 by Mr. Kevin Heppner, a Canadian teacher who began to document human rights violations suffered by Karen civilians after military junta bombed and destroyed the village where he lived. Not only does KHRG record human rights violations, but it also provides affected communities with documentation, resistance and advocacy skills.

President Ma Ying-jeou was invited to offer the award sculpture to Saw Albert, Field Director of Karen Human Rights Group; and the Legislative Yuan Speaker Wang Jin-pyng, also the Chairman of Taiwan Foundation for Democracy, provided the award grant of 100,000 US Dollars to Saw Albert, validating the remarkable performance of Karen Human Rights Group.

During his speech, President Ma illustrated his admiration to the outstanding accomplishments of Karen Human Rights Group. KHRG has focused on the human rights violation issues of Myanmar Military Government for many years, reflecting the difficulties that newly rising democratic countries have faced in democratic transformation. During the process of democratization, Taiwan has suffered incident of 228 and

white terror cases. However, the administrations admitted their mistakes, redressed the grievance and made the rehabilitation work in humility. Also, Taiwan's Legislative Yuan has put the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) into practices as the common laws in order to improve our human rights. In the Case of army corporal Hung Chung-chiu, the administration has passed amendments to the Code of Court Martial Procedure and established a new grievances committee to handle applications for new investigations and retrials of past cases of suspected military injustice. Finally, President Ma said broadening cross-strait interactions and deepening rule of law are the main tasks that cannot be overemphasized.

Later on, Speaker Wang Jin-Pyng, the Chairman of Taiwan Foundation for Democracy, also stated that since the establishment of Asia Democracy and Human Rights Award in 2006, through open nominations and two stages of reviewing process, each year TFD has awarded individuals or organizations that have demonstrated long-term commitment and outstanding leadership in advancing democracy or human rights through peaceful means. KHRG was chosen as the winner of the 2013 Asia Democracy and Human Rights Award. Taiwan Foundation for Democracy is delighted to honor KHRG in recognition of their efforts in promoting and protecting human rights.

Saw Albert, Field Director of Karen Human Rights Group, expressed their humility and appreciation to accept this year's Award on behalf of KHRG. It shows the fact that achievements of this organization has actually been highly recognized. Mr. Albert also said the Award belongs to all of the staffs of KHRG, symbolizing the efforts made by Myanmar human right activists have been acknowledged.

Powerful grassroots organizations such as Karen Human Rights Group through their promotion of democracy and human rights have the capacity to push the country closer towards democracy. KHRG will also

continue to serve as a watchdog for those affected by armed conflicts.

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