Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 9, 2021

The Honorable Merrick Garland
Attorney General of the United States
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Michael A. Hughes
Director
INTERPOL Washington
U.S. National Central Bureau
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Attorney General Garland, Secretary Blinken, and Director Hughes:

On March 18, 2016, President Barack Obama signed into law a bill (P.L. 114-139) aimed at enabling Taiwan to gain observer status in the International Criminal Police Organization, commonly known as Interpol. The legislation directed the Secretary of State to develop a strategy to obtain observer status for Taiwan and instructed Interpol Washington to request observer status for Taiwan in Interpol, and urge Interpol member states to support observer status as a mechanism of participation for Taiwan.

Additionally, on March 26, 2020, President Trump signed into law the TAIPEI Act (P.L. 116-135) which directed the Secretary of State to instruct representatives of the United States Government in international organizations "to use the voice, vote, and influence of the United States to advocate for Taiwan's membership or observer status" in international organizations. Lastly, the Taiwan Assurance Act was included in the Fiscal Year 2021 Appropriations (P.L. 116-260), which states that "It is the policy of the United States to advocate for Taiwan's meaningful participation in the United Nations… the International Criminal Police Organization, and other international bodies..."

The above-mentioned legislation clearly demonstrates Congressional intent to support strategies to gain meaningful Interpol participation, and ultimately membership, for Taiwan. Taiwan's lack of participation leaves a void in global crime-fighting efforts. Because Taiwan is not a member, it is denied access to Interpol's I-24/7 global police communications system, which provides real-time information on criminals and global criminal activities. Taiwan is forced to get second-hand information from friendly nations, including the United States, and is unable to effectively share information on criminals and suspicious activity with the international community.

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This is especially important as malign actors, including Belarus and the PRC, are using the organization's "red notices" alert system to harass political dissidents or individuals these governments see as a threat to their regime. Taiwan and its citizens, as it continues to stand against the harassment and posturing of the PRC, are at a heightened risk to be exploited and abused through this system. By participating in Interpol, Taiwan could work with the United States and other international allies in rooting out corruption and abuse of the Interpol system. We encourage you to work with your Interpol colleagues to secure Taiwan's participation in this year's General Assembly meeting, November 23-25, as an observer and ensure Taiwan is able to attend other relevant meetings, activities, and mechanisms under Interpol to combat terrorism, organized crimes, and cybercrime.

We note that Interpol maintains a wide array of "cooperation agreements" with partners as varied as the University of Southern Mississippi, the FBI, the Netherlands Forensic Institute, and the Naif Arab University for Security Sciences. We suggest that, as a starting point for securing full Interpol membership for Taiwan, the U.S. work with Taiwan, and other democratic friends and allies, to support the creation of a "cooperation agreement' between Taiwan's Criminal Investigation Bureau (CIB) and Interpol that would allow Taiwan to observe, participate in, and access Interpol's meetings and information systems.

We look forward to working with the administration to ensure the congressional intent of the substantial and recent legislative record regarding Taiwan's participation in Interpol is fulfilled.

Sincerely,

John Curtis

Gerry Connolly

Michael Guest

Albio Sires

Michael McCaul

Joaquin Castro

Mario Diaz-Balart

Brad Sherman

Steve Chabot

Tom Malinowski

Christopher H. Smith

Eddie Bernice Johnson

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