

Formosa Alliance enters political arena

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The Reverend Lo Jen-kuei, who was elected as the first chairperson of the Formosa Alliance party, speaks at a news conference in Taipei yesterday.

Photo: CNA

The pro-Taiwanese independence Formosa Alliance (喜樂島聯盟) yesterday started a new life as a political party and announced that it would take part in next year's presidential and legislative elections.

The alliance was established in April last year to campaign for a Taiwanese independence referendum.

At a news conference in Taipei announcing its reorganization into a political party, the Reverend Lo Jen-kuei (洛建國) said the purpose of the party is not to sow division in the pan-green camp, but is for people who are dissatisfied with the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and looking for "better options" in the elections on Jan. 11 next year.

The party plans to field at least 10 legislative candidates, Lo said, but added that it has not made any plans to nominate a presidential candidate.

Lo was elected chairman by alliance members, who also elected 15 executive members.

Lo appointed National Dong Hwa University professor Shih Cheng-feng (施成豐) as the party's deputy chairman.

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Lo said that being a party chairman had not been part of his life plan, but he decided to “go all-out” because of the ideals he shared with the late reverend Kao Chun-ming (高俊明) of the Presbyterian Church.

As one of the signatories of the Human Rights Declaration issued by the church in 1977, Kao, who passed away in February, believed that Taiwan’s future should be decided by all Taiwanese, Lo said.

“Taiwanese have expectations from us to make Taiwan a nation with statehood, human rights and dignity — a normalized country, and the party will not let them down,” Lo said.

Expressing concern that the DPP would not fare well in the elections, he said that if the pan-blue camp obtains a legislative majority, it would be “Taiwan’s greatest disaster yet.”

He called on people who “detest the DPP” and those who “truly love Taiwan” to vote for the Formosa Alliance, so that the party could provide checks and balances at the Legislative Yuan.

Asked if the party would support President Tsai Ing-wen’s (蔡英文) re-election bid if she ran on a joint ticket with former premier William Lai (賴清德), Lo said it would welcome a Tsai-Lai ticket if it could get them elected, as it would be beneficial for Taiwanese.

However, the Formosa Alliance would only lend its support to Tsai if her vision aligned with that of the party, he said, adding that if she continues to “oppress and limit those who truly care about Taiwan,” it might not back her.

Citing the DPP’s indifference toward a referendum last year that asked people if they agreed that the national team should compete at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics under the name “Taiwan” rather than “Chinese Taipei,” Shih dismissed the DPP as a “lousy agent” for Taiwanese independence that exploits the brand, but is not doing anything to achieve the goal.

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It was “outrageous” for the DPP to change the rules for its presidential primary and pass amendments to the Referendum Act (公投法) decoupling referendums from national elections, he added.

Separately, former premier Yu Shyi-kun of the DPP said pro-independence parties should act in the nation’s best interests and work toward making Taiwan a normalized country.

Taiwan’s fate hinges on next year’s presidential election and he hopes the Formosa Alliance will not act in a way that runs counter to its vision, he added.

Additional reporting by Huang Hsin-po and Peng Wan-hsin

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