

Lee, Chen voice support for new referendum law

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Former president Lee Teng-hui talks to reporters at the launch of the Formosa Alliance in Kaohsiung yesterday.

Photo: Chang Chung-yi, Taipei Times

Former president Lee Teng-hui (李登輝) yesterday urged Taiwanese to use a proposed referendum as an expression of Taiwan's sovereignty at the launch of the Formosa Alliance in Kaohsiung.

The deepest wish of Taiwanese has always been to be in charge of their own nation, Lee said, adding that due to the limitations imposed by the international situation, this wish has remained unfulfilled.

Now is the opportunity for all Taiwanese to abandon their prejudices and push for Taiwan's participation in the international community under the name "Taiwan," he said.

Yesterday's launch was attended by former premiers Chang Chun-hsiung (張俊雄) and Yu Shyi-kun (俞宜坤), former presidential advisers Peng Ming-min (彭明敏) and Wu Li-pei (吳麗培), late democracy activist Deng Nan-jung's (鄧南雄) daughter, Deng Chu-mei (鄧楚梅), as well as 3,000 supporters of the new alliance.

Members of opposition parties — including New Power Party Executive Chairman Huang Kuo-chang (黃國昌), Taiwan Solidarity Union Chairman Lau Yi-te (勞義德) and Social Democratic Party member Miao Po-ya (苗博雅) — were also in attendance.

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The Formosa Alliance was founded by Formosa TV (FTV) chairman Kuo Pei-hung (郭陪), former president Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁), Lee and other politicians who support Taiwanese independence.

At the event, the alliance reiterated its goal to push for an independence referendum on April 6 next year and elected Kuo as its convener.

“Taiwan does not belong to China; Taiwan only belongs to Taiwanese,” Kuo said.

The first step the alliance plans to take is urge the Democratic Progressive Party government to push for an amendment to the Referendum Act (公投法), which does not allow a referendum on independence, in the Legislative Yuan at the end of August, Kuo said.

The second step would be to host an independence referendum next year, he said, adding that the third step would be drafting a new constitution and striving for international approval of Taiwan’s admission into the UN under the name “Taiwan.”

Chen spoke to the audience in a prerecorded video, in which he said that Taiwan “must become a new and independent nation; Taiwan must enter the UN.”

As long as he is alive, he would exchange his unfreedom for the “permanent freedom of Taiwan,” Chen said.

In the face of China’s threat, a referendum is a strategy that could work, Deng Chu-mei said yesterday, as she commemorated the 29th anniversary of her father’s death.

A referendum would signal to the international community that Taiwanese are unwilling to be unified with China and unwilling to accept a “one country, two systems” framework, she said.

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