

Press Release:

It's time for the UK to respect the Taiwanese people's right to self determination

For immediate release

The United Kingdom government has both a legal and a moral duty to respect the rights of the Taiwanese people to self-determination, says the [Taiwan Policy Centre](#) in a new report published today.

The report, entitled **Taiwan Respected: A roadmap to making room for Taiwanese self-determination** highlights the many precedents set in the UK and in wider international law, and outlines some simple recommendations that, if implemented, would help to bring the UK's policy towards Taiwan in line with international requirements.

This includes a proposed rephrasing of the UK's stance towards Taiwan that states that "the future of Taiwan is matter for the Taiwanese people alone to decide."

It further proposes that the UK Government should permit the Taipei Representative Office in the UK to be renamed as the 'Taiwan Representative Office' or 'Taiwanese Office' as is the case in many other countries.

This report builds on the recommendations in the Taiwan Policy Centre's previous report, **Ukraine Today, Taiwan Tomorrow?** in which we called for the UK to implement its own Taiwan Relations Act, to permit Ministerial visits in both directions, and to do much more to ensure the 23 million Taiwan people are represented at all international organisations.

*Commenting on the report, **Angus Brendan MacNeill MP**, who has written the foreword, said:*

"Self-determination is a fundamental right and one that the 23 million Taiwanese people are entitled to as much as anyone else.

"In light of recent events, it is the right moment for the UK Government to revisit its policy towards Taiwanese self-determination and this latest Taiwan Policy Centre report makes some very sensible and practical suggestions as to how this could be achieved.

"In particular, the suggested recalibration of the UK's policy towards the future of Taiwan is balanced and proportionate and makes a great deal of sense and I urge the new UK Government to adopt it."

Heather Wheeler MP, a former Minister for Asia at the FCDO added:

"Taiwan is a flourishing and vibrant democracy and the people of Taiwan rightly cherish their hard-won freedoms.

"I have seen this at first hand and absolutely agree with the Taiwan Policy Centre's arguments that UK policy should recognise their right to decide their own future.

"Self-determination is at the heart of the values that we hold dear here in the UK, and it is the government's stated policy to promote these around the world. That should apply in Taiwan

every bit as much as elsewhere and the suggestions made in this report would be an excellent place to start.”

Lord James Bethell, added:

“The Taiwan Policy Centre’s arguments over Taiwan’s right to self-determination are difficult to refute and their proposed amendments to the UK’s policy make a lot of sense.

“This paper reflects my own experiences of what the people of Taiwan really want. Some support independence, others prefer the status quo. But all want the right to decide their own future and that is the very least that we, and our allies, should offer them.”

Chief Executive of the Taiwan Policy Centre, David Spencer, added:

“The UK’s policy towards Taiwan has remained largely unchanged since 1950. Both Taiwan and the PRC have changed beyond all recognition in those 72 years, and it is high-time UK Government policy was updated to reflect that.

“The Integrated Review talked a lot about promoting shared values, but it made no specific mention of Taiwan. This was a missed opportunity and, as we have shown in this report, there are simple steps that the UK can take to respect Taiwan’s rights without fundamentally changing our diplomatic stance.

“As our research shows, international law and UN precedent would support such a move. It is time for UK policy towards Taiwan respect this and our report offers a sensible roadmap to how this could be achieved.”

END

Notes to Editors

A full copy of the Taiwan Policy Centre report, *Taiwan Respected: A roadmap to making room for Taiwanese self-determination* can be found on our website at:
<https://taiwanpolicycentre.com/wp-content/uploads/Taiwan-Respected-221027.pdf>

The full list of recommendations in the report can be found below in Appendix A.

About the Taiwan Policy Centre

The [Taiwan Policy Centre](https://taiwanpolicycentre.com) is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to boosting political, cultural, and trading relations between the UK and Taiwan.

We aim to increase the knowledge and understanding that policy-makers, the media, and the British public have about Taiwan through a combination of research, educational events, and outreach.

We further aim to highlight the threats and injustices that Taiwan faces at the hands of the Chinese Communist Party and lobby the UK Government to take a stronger and more proactive stand in support of Taiwan on the global stage.

Too often, media coverage and understanding of Taiwan is shaped by the language and claims of the Chinese Communist Party, a governing authority which does not, and never has, governed Taiwan.

The Taiwan Policy Centre aims to correct these misconceptions and ensure that the UK's policies towards Taiwan and media coverage of Taiwanese affairs are rooted in research and law.

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Appendix A - Conclusions and Recommendations:

1. The defence of Taiwan's right to self-determination is a moral, economic, and strategic good in its own right, not just for Taiwan but the wider world.
2. The UK Government should respect Taiwan's self-determination, and its right to that under international law.
3. The UK Government has always enjoyed the capacity to change its foreign policies as geopolitical situations evolve. The situation between the PRC and Taiwan has changed a lot in the last 30 years yet UK policy has not changed since 1950. It is time for the UK's policy towards Taiwan to be updated.
4. The UK needs a new Taiwan policy formulation to rebalance the relationship in a way that gives Taiwan and the UK space to develop closer ties. It's time for the UK to make room for Taiwan at the table.
5. The UK Government's current position on the status of Taiwan is that the future of Taiwan is "a matter for both sides of the Taiwan Strait to resolve amongst themselves". This stance does not respect the rights of the Taiwanese people to self-determination because it suggests that the people of the PRC should have a say in the future of Taiwan. This is disrespectful and contrary to international law.
6. The Taiwan Policy Centre has proposed that the UK's position towards Taiwan should be rephrased to say:

"The United Kingdom does not have formal diplomatic relations with Taiwan, but the Government maintains a strong unofficial relationship based on dynamic commercial, educational, and cultural ties.

“The United Kingdom recognises that Taiwan has a complex historical relationship with its neighbours, which has left a number of unresolved cultural, legal, and constitutional legacies.

“The United Kingdom respects the right of the Taiwanese people under international law to self-determination and believes that the future of Taiwan is matter for the Taiwanese people alone to decide without bribe, threat, or coercion from any other party.

“The United Kingdom will continue to engage with Taiwan on this basis and to work with our allies to promote Taiwan’s participation in international organisations.

7. The UK should implement its policy of respecting Taiwan’s self-determination across government and the public sector in a variety of ways, including following the lead of other nations in allowing the Taipei Representative Office in London and Edinburgh to be renamed as the ‘Taiwan Representative Office’ or ‘Taiwanese Office’.

This respect for Taiwan’s right to self-determination should also inform all policy and diplomatic decisions relating to Taiwan moving forward, alongside other political and diplomatic considerations.

8. The UK’s Government’s position on Taiwan’s self-determination should comply with international law and inform wider UK foreign policy.