

Democracy at 4 am

Morning without YOU is a dwindled dawn.

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At 4am on March 19th, 2014, 400 students occupied the Legislative Yuan in Taiwan to protest the Service Trade Agreement with China. The Agreement raises national security implications and poses major risks to Taiwan's economy. Over 10,000 students have joined the protests in peaceful sit-ins, galvanized by strong opposition to the government's secret negotiations and handling of the Agreement. The Agreement was rushed through the Legislature without an item-by-item review as originally envisaged in an inter-party agreement. The "anti-black box protests" rejects the government's lack of transparency and responsiveness to the people's concerns. The occupation of the Legislative Yuan has become a people's movement to wrest power back to the people. Professors, musicians, lawyers, doctors and tens of thousands of people from all walks of life have joined the protests in support.

After the President and ruling party failed to respond, the students expanded their protest at 4am on March 24th. The authorities sent police to remove the peaceful protesters with batons, riot shields, belts and water cannons, beating them into submission. Police brutality resulted in multiple injuries to the protesters, who only had their bodies to shield themselves. The media, too, were removed from the scene.

One single Agreement has plunged Taiwan's democracy back into the darkest hour of the night. All protesters and supporters of Taiwan's democracy are unified in their resolve not to rest and not to give way. We will safeguard the bedrock of Taiwan's democracy – that the government must be transparent and responsive to the people's interests.

Taiwan needs your attention and support. Today, we ask you to join us, and hundreds of thousands of supporters from over 50 cities, in support of basic democratic values.

We invite you to www.4am.tw. See the event firsthand through citizens' eyes. Support us by leaving a message for us with a photo of you and a sunflower. 4am may appear to be a dark hour, but we believe that as more people awaken to the truth, the sunrise of democracy will not be far away.

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