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## Release



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### **True Friends come afar; Consolidate Friendship between Taiwan and Palau.**

### **Minister Tsai Ching-Hsiang and Vice President and Minister J. Uduch Sengebau Senior Signed Agreement on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters and MOU on Forensic Pathologists Cooperation.**

Taiwan and Palau have shared a firm diplomatic tie for more than 20 years. The two countries have collaborated closely in the field of aviation, public health, education, temp workers, immigration, anti-human trafficking, and law and coast guard enforcement. Today, on August 30, the Minister of Justice of the R.O.C., Tsai Ching-hsiang, welcomed Vice President and the Minister of Justice of Palau, J. Uduch Sengebau Senior and the delegation to virtually present in the Ministry of Justice, R.O.C. By the virtue of video conference, together and separately, they signed the “Agreement on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters between the Government of the Republic of China (Taiwan) and the Government of the Republic of

Palau” (TW-PW MLA Agreement) and the “Memorandum of Understanding on Forensic Pathologists Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of China (Taiwan) and the Government of the Republic of Palau” (TW-PW MOU), taking the friendship between Taiwan and Palau into a new level. Ambassador Larry Tseng of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was invited to attend the Signing Ceremony and witness the signing.

During the meeting of Vice President Sengebau and Minister Tsai, they talked about how Taiwan and Palau would collaborate in criminal justice, and also exchanged opinions on fighting the rampant cross-border gambling and tele fraud rings. They both recognized the importance of the conclusion of the MLA Agreement and Forensic Pathologists MOU, and believed they would become the solid foundation ensuring the thriving of the judicial cooperation between Taiwan and Palau.

The negotiation of the TW-PW Agreement and Forensic Pathologists MOU started from a discussion of assistance in forensic examination between Taiwan and Palau, in which the two countries recognized the importance of enhancing the effectiveness of judicial cooperation and making it more comprehensive. After two years’ efforts by the judiciaries and diplomats on both sides, with special thanks to the efforts from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Embassy of R.O.C. in Palau, Taiwan and Palau resolved differences and overcame the challenges brought by the pandemic, and finally reached the consensus.

After the MLA Agreement enters into force, Taiwan and Palau will be able to render assistance to each other in the process of criminal investigation, prosecution, criminal procedure and crime prevention. It covers: taking testimony/statements; providing documents; locating or identifying persons/items; serving documents; conducting searches and seizures; freezing or forfeiture of assets; and other assistance in compliance with the laws of both countries. It is worth mentioning that the Agreement allows the taking of evidence via video conference and that the requesting party can be present in interviews to pose questions if permitted. This means the authorities of Taiwan and Palau are able to work as a joint investigation team and combat transnational crimes more efficiently and effectively.

Furthermore, after the TW-PW Forensic Pathologists MOU enters into force, it will establish an official channel for the communication of the forensic pathologists from both countries. In respective cases, the Taiwanese forensic pathologists, upon request, could travel to Palau to assist in inspection of corpse, autopsies, and examining the cause of death, and to provide crucial assistance to Palau's prosecutors. In long term development, Article six of the MOU provides — "Parties will cooperate in training and exchange of personnel for cultivating expertise in the area of forensic pathology."—which connects the forensic pathologist and professionals in the two countries and allows Taiwan's advanced forensic pathology to contribute to the building of a better criminal system of Palau.

Led by Minister Tsai, the MOJ endeavors to explore more chances for judicial international cooperation. Following the signing of Treaties on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters and Transfer of Sentenced Persons with the Caribbean country Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in early August, the signings of TW-PW MLA Agreement and MOU are the second of its kind this month, symbolizing that the performance and ability of Taiwan in fighting the transnational crimes were well-recognized by its diplomatic allies and the world. Starting from today's signing of the Agreement and MOU, Taiwan would advance its cooperation with Palau and stand shoulder by shoulder to safeguard the two islands in paradise.



