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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,  
AND TRANSPORTATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6125

WEBSITE: <https://commerce.senate.gov>

September 12, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C St NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

The Honorable Sean Duffy  
Secretary of Transportation  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Rubio and Secretary Duffy:

On September 23rd, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) will convene its 42nd General Assembly in Montreal to discuss the most urgent challenges facing the global aviation industry, including the safety, security, and efficiency of civilian international air travel. Ahead of the Assembly, the United States should lead the world in urging ICAO to allow Taiwan to participate with the full privileges of a Member State.

All 193 Member States, along with numerous international organizations, are invited to participate. Each Member State is entitled to one vote, and a simple majority determines passage and enactment of international law. In effect, the Assembly serves as the governing authority for global aviation safety and regulatory standards, making membership indispensable to preserving the highest levels of safety and security in international air travel.

Yet, noticeably absent from this important Assembly is Taiwan. Taiwan is not only a reliable ally of the United States but also a key hub for civilian air travel in East Asia and an essential partner in regional and global security. Excluding Taiwan from membership in ICAO undermines the value of setting international standards, as well as both international aviation safety and broader national security.

Taiwan's Taoyuan International Airport, located 25 miles west of Taipei, is one of the busiest and largest airports in Asia by passenger volume, regularly handling over 40 million passengers

and more than two million tons of freight.<sup>1</sup> Excluding Taiwan from attending or participating in ICAO's General Assembly dilutes the integrity of any standards adopted therein. International law is being shaped without a critical participant in its system, and a regional ally.

ICAO's systematic exclusion of Taiwan from meaningful participation has been a result of coercion by the government of the People's Republic of China and its Chinese Communist Party (CCP).<sup>2</sup> The CCP's pressure campaign to exclude Taiwan's participation in ICAO is no longer an underhanded tactic to deny Taiwan's sovereignty but rather could be a deliberate strategy to diminish its ability to protect itself from a future military invasion. At a time when the CCP is intensifying its aggression against Taiwan and openly preparing for the possibility of a full-scale invasion, the United States must stand firm in opposing this authoritarian campaign. Failure to do so jeopardizes national security interests and emboldens the CCP's march toward conflict.

The People's Republic of China flagrantly violates international law with near-daily incursions into Taiwan's Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ). Since 2024, Chinese military jets have engaged in intimidation tactics, directly threatening Taiwan's sovereignty and stability in the Indo-Pacific.<sup>3</sup> Such actions clearly contravene ICAO's own principles and the international rules governing safe airspace operations. Yet China faces no accountability within ICAO, due in large part to the silencing of Taiwan's voice on the international stage. Deprived of membership, Taiwan cannot advocate for its rights, its airspace, or the broader security of global aviation.

As the 42nd General Assembly approaches, the United States must take the lead in advocating for Taiwanese representation and inclusion as an official participant. ICAO extending an invitation of participation to Taiwan is crucial. Taiwan's rightful place at ICAO is not only a matter of fairness—it is an urgent necessity for the safety of international commercial aviation and the preservation of peace in the East Asia region.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Ted Cruz  
Chairman

Cc: Juan Carlos Salazar, Secretary General of the International Civil Aviation Organization

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew Strong, *Taiwan's Main Airport Expects Passenger Numbers to Reach 90% of Pre-COVID Levels*, TAIWAN NEWS (Nov. 20, 2024), <https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/news/5975426/>.

<sup>2</sup> Congressman Ted Yoho, *Addressing China's Coercion in the Taiwan Strait*, Remarks at the Project 2049 Institute ("Under the Radar: China's Coercive Air Power in the Taiwan Strait") (Feb. 14, 2018).

<sup>3</sup> Brian Hart, *China Escalates Cross-Strait Military Activity Under Taiwan President William Lai*, CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES (Feb. 14, 2025), <https://www.csis.org/analysis/china-escalates-cross-strait-military-activity-under-taiwan-president-william-lai>.