

URGENT ACTION

CRIMINALIZATION OF PEACEFUL PROTESTERS

Peaceful protesters in Thailand are at risk of arrest and up to eight years' imprisonment as authorities seek to silence calls for authorities not to delay promised elections.

Authorities have cracked down on individuals, including student activists and supporters of the political opposition, who were at a peaceful pro-democracy protest on 27 January 2018 where around 100 individuals gathered on a walkway outside the MBK Centre, a central Bangkok shopping centre. Criminal proceedings against 39 individuals who were present at the protest, including alleged observers have been initiated by authorities.

All 39 individuals face criminal proceedings under charges allowing for up to one year's imprisonment for violating two laws that excessively restrict the right to peaceful assembly – a ban by executive order of gatherings of five or more persons for “political” purposes, and a prohibition of public gatherings within 150 metres of a royal palace under the Public Assembly Act (2015).

Nine individuals, including student anti-coup activist **Rangsiman Rome**, lawyer **Anon Nampa**, political and opposition activists **Ekkachai Hongkangvan**, **Sirawith Seritiwat** and **Sombath Boonngamanong**, also face charges of sedition, allowing for up to seven years' imprisonment for their alleged part in the organization of the peaceful assembly. Members of the group already face multiple charges for exercising their right to freedom of expression after military authorities took power in a coup in May 2014.

Please write immediately in Thai or your own language urging the authorities to:

- Immediately end all criminal proceedings against 39 individuals who have been charged in connection to a peaceful assembly and not penalise others who may have participated on 27 January outside the MBK Centre in Bangkok;
- Uphold and protect the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association and lift restrictions they have imposed on the peaceful exercise of these rights;
- Stop targeting individuals with criminal proceedings for the peaceful exercise of their rights, and to amend legislation to conform to international law and standards or repeal legislation used to penalise them, including the Head of National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) Order 3/2015; Public Assembly Act (2015) and Article 116 of the Penal Code on sedition.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 28 MARCH 2018 TO:

Prime Minister

Gen. Prayut Chan-O-Cha

Head of ISOC

Government House

Pitsanulok Road, Dusit

Bangkok 10300, Thailand

Fax: +66 2282 5131

Email: prforeign@gmail.com

Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

Commissioner General of

Royal Thai Police

Pol. Gen Chakthip Chaijinda

Royal Thai Police Headquarters,

Rama 1 Road, Pathum Wan,

Bangkok 10330, Thailand

Fax: +66 2251 4739

**Salutation: Dear Commissioner
General**

And copies to:

Minister of Justice

Suwaphan Tanyuvardhana

Ministry of Justice Government Centre

Building A Chaengwattana Road

Bangkok 10210, Thailand

Fax: +66 2953 0503

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

His Excellency MR PISANU SUVANAJATA, Royal Thai Embassy, 29-30 Queen's Gate, London, SW7 5JB, Tel 020 7225 5500 or 020 789 2944, Fax 020 7823 9695, email rtelondon@thaiembassyuk.org.uk and csinfo@thaiembassyuk.org.uk www.thaiembassyuk.org.uk, Salutation: Your Excellency

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Three-and-a-half years after Thailand's military declared martial law and took power in a coup, ruling military authorities are continuing to crack down on and heavily restrict the human rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly.

Individuals who have spoken out against the coup or circulated material that the authorities deemed offensive to the monarchy face arbitrary detention and prosecution under executive orders and laws passed by the military government, as well as existing legislation that subjects exercise of these rights to restrictions not permitted under international human rights law

In the name of protecting security and the monarchy, authorities have targeted perceived political opponents and critics who it perceives as criticizing their political project with prosecution. They are increasingly using Article 116 of the Penal Code governing sedition to target growing numbers of individuals that the authorities perceive as dissenters, including individuals exercising their professional duties to protect or report on peaceful opponents, and are criminalizing a widening range of activities that constitute peaceful exercise of human rights.

Despite an initial official undertaking that restrictions would be temporary, authorities have showed no sign of lifting them. The ruling military government, the NCPO, continues to restrict freedom of expression arbitrarily and sweepingly as it implements a political roadmap to elections, which were mooted for 2018 but now many be delayed until early 2019.

Name: Anon Nampa (m), Rangsiman Rome (m), Sirawith Seritiwat (m) Ekkachai Hongkangvan (m), Sombath Boonngamanong (m) and others (both) charged in connection to a peaceful assembly at the MBK Centre

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