

PRESS STATEMENT

Solidarity with Somyot Pruksakasemsuk

Monday 13 February 2012, by [CHOO Chon Kai](#), [PSM \(Malaysia\)](#) (Date first published: 13 February 2012).

Note : Comrade Choo Chon Kai of the Socialist Party of Malaysia (PSM) is currently in Thailand to monitor the hearing of Somyot Pruksakasemsuk.

Today, I represent Socialist Party of Malaysia (PSM) here to express our solidarity with labour activist Somyot Pruksakasemsuk, who has been imprisoned without bail since 30 April 2011 and faced charges under lèse-majesté law.

We are deeply concern over the continuous imprisonment, transferring of prison and bail request being denied numerous times.

Somyot is known for his tirelessly work in the workers movement and the establishment of democratic trade unionism in Thailand. In 2007 he became Editor of the Voice of Taksin magazine (now called Red Power), a political publication opposed to military coup. Somyot is the chair of Union of Democratic Labour Alliance and the leader of 24th June democracy group which was formed in the aftermath of military coup September 2006.

Somyot was arrested on 30 April 2011 by the Department of Special Investigation (DSI) by which he was accused for violation of section 112. Somyot's arrest came only five days after the launch of a petition for a parliamentary review to revoke Section 112 of the Criminal Code, which Somyot claims contradicts democratic and human rights principles. According to a document produced by the public-prosecutor, Somyot is also alleged to have allowed two articles that make negative references to the monarchy to be published in his magazine.

There have been hearing dates for the Prosecutor's witnesses on 21 November 2011, 19 December 2011 and 16 January 2012 in different provinces and today is in Songkla province. These will be followed by dates for the Defendant's witnesses in Bangkok Criminal Court untuk May 2012.

We are concerned that the hearings for the Prosecutor's witnesses which being held outside Bangkok in different provinces have put tremendous burden on Somyot and his attorneys as well as participation of trial observers, diplomatic corps, and journalists. We are worried because the moving from prison to prison has threatened Somyot's health and security.

We are also concerned that Somyot's application for bail continues to be denied. The authority has yet to provide any adequate justification for the prolonged detention of Somyot. We are in view such measure has severely violated one's fundamental rights.

We are alarmed by the escalating misuse of the lèse-majesté law to silence social activists and dissidents in the years following the military coup in 2006. We believe the continuous abuses of the

lèse-majesté laws are political motivated and detrimental to rebuild democracy in Thailand. Such laws have to be reviewed in accordance to international human rights standards.

We are here to call on the authorities in Thailand to:

1. Immediately drop all charges against Somyot Prueksakasemsuk and release him unconditionally;
2. Immediately drop all charges against political activists, journalists and any other individuals based on the lèse-majesté laws and pardon all who are serving sentences under these laws;
3. Restore freedom of expression and opinion in Thailand for the benefit to rebuild and enhance democracy in Thailand.

Free Somyot NOW!

Restore freedom and democracy in Thailand NOW!

Released by,

Choo Chon Kai
International Bureau
Socialist Party of Malaysia / Parti Sosialis Malaysia (PSM)
