

Thailand after the military coup: Human Rights Situation Rapidly Deteriorating as Political Impasse Continues

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Thailand: Human Rights Situation Rapidly Deteriorating as Political Impasse Continues

The Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA), a regional human rights group with 47 member organisation across 16 countries in Asia, registers its deep concern at the rapidly deteriorating human rights situation in Thailand following the imposition of martial law since 20 May 2014 and subsequently a military coup on 22 May 2014. Increasing restrictions have been imposed on the exercise and enjoyment of basic rights and freedoms while violations continue unabated without any accountability or safeguard mechanisms put in place by the military government.

In a time of deep political turmoil and uncertainty, the restrictions on press freedom – through the initial silencing of TV stations and channels, sweeping restrictions on print, broadcast and online media, blocking of websites and threats to shut down social media – are particularly worrying as people are denied access to crucial information, critical analysis and the opportunity to discuss issues of national importance. This is further exacerbated by the recent summons and arrests of academics, journalists and other media practitioners who continued to report on or speak out against the coup and for alternative solution.

FORUM-ASIA calls for the rescinding of all restrictions that prevent the access of the public to timely and accurate reports and called on the authorities to allow the media to operate in an environment that is conducive for the discharging of their professional duty.

We are also disturbed by the arbitrary arrest and detention of persons, including politicians, political activists, academics, journalists and anti-coup peaceful protesters, by the military. To date, the whereabouts of a number of those detained have not been disclosed. They have also not been duly informed of the reasons for arrest or formally charged in court. This is in clear violation of Thailand's international legal obligations as a State party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which stipulates the strict and limited application of emergency powers. This is further compounded by the recent announcement by the military to subject violators of security laws and standing orders to court-martial proceedings.

FORUM-ASIA is further deeply concerned by the incidences of clashes and the use of excessive force between military personnel and civilians during anti-coup protests that have been held in various parts of Bangkok. We urge the National Council for Peace and Order for restraint and its soldiers to observe maximum tolerance in handling voices of dissent and protestors to maintain diligence to avoid further violations of rights.

Finally, FORUM-ASIA calls for the prompt re-establishment of the rule of law as well as respect and

protection of human rights in this turbulent period. We stress that these concerns must not be disregarded even as the country attempts to find a way out of the political impasse. We further emphasise that it is imperative for all actors involved to find, at the earliest, a democratic solution to the current political situation.

Released by the Executive Committee of FORUM-ASIA:

Mr. Henri Tiphagne, People's Watch, India (Chairperson)

Mr. Peter Jacob, National Commission for Justice and Peace, Pakistan

Mr. Adilur Rahman Khan, Odhikar, Bangladesh

Sister Crescencia L. Lucero, Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP), Philippines

Mr. Haris Azhar, The Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence (KontraS), Indonesia

Ms. Chalida Tajaroensuk, People's Empowerment Foundation, Thailand

Mr. Taeho Lee, People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD), South Korea

On behalf of the following member organisations of FORUM-ASIA:

Bangladesh

1. ASK - Ain O Salish Kendra
2. MLAA - Madaripur Legal Aid Association
3. Odhikar
4. RIC - Resource Integration Center

Burma

5. HREIB - Human Rights Education Institute of Burma

Cambodia

6. ADHOC - Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association
7. LICADHO - Cambodia League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights

India

8. ADHIKAR - Center for Social Action Documentation Research & Training
9. Dalit Foundation
10. FARR - Friends' Association for Rural Reconstruction
11. MASUM - Banglar Manabadhikar Suraksha Mancha
12. PW - People's Watch
13. PVCHR - People's Vigilance Committee on Human Rights
14. RDS-LRSA - Rural Development Society
15. SICHREM - South India Cell for Human Rights Education and Monitoring

Indonesia

16. AJI - The Alliance of Independent Journalists Indonesia

17. HRWG – Indonesia’s NGO Coalition for International Human Rights Advocacy – Human Rights Working Group
18. IMPARSIAL – Inisiatif Masyarakat Partisipatif untuk Transisi Berkeadilan
19. KontraS – The Federation of Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence
20. PBHI – Indonesian Legal Aid and Human Rights Association
21. SAMIN – Yayasan Sekretariat Anak Merdeka Indonesia
22. YLBHI – Indonesia Legal Aid Foundation

Malaysia

23. ERA Consumer – Education and Research Association for Consumers
24. SUARAM – Suara Rakyat Malaysia

Mongolia

25. CHRD – Center for Human Rights and Development
26. GI – Globe International

Nepal

27. CSRC – Community Self Reliance Centre
28. INSEC – Informal Sector Service Center
29. WWS – Women’s Welfare Society

Pakistan

30. B4A – Bytes for All (ICTs for development, democracy and social justice)
31. HRCPP – Human Rights Commission of Pakistan
32. NCJP – National Commission for Justice and Peace
33. PODA – Potohar Organization for Development Advocacy
34. SPARC – Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child

Philippines

35. PAHRA – Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates
36. PLRC – PILIPINA Legal Resources Center
37. TFDP – Task Force Detainees of the Philippines
38. Tanggol-Kalikasan – Public Interest Environmental Law Office

Singapore

39. Think Centre

South Korea

40. KHIS – Korean House for International Solidarity

41. PSPD – People’s Solidarity for Participatory Democrac

Sri Lanka

42. INFORM Human Rights Documentation Centre

43. LST – Law and Society Trust

Taiwan

44. TAHR – Taiwan Association for Human Rights

Thailand

45. People’s Empowerment Foundation

Timor Leste

46. HAK Association – Perkumpulan Hukum, Hak Asasi dan Keadilan (Law, Basic Rights, and Justice Foundation)

47. JSMP – Judicial System Monitoring Programme