

Critique of Thailand's preliminary Election results 24 March 2019

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Although the results of the election on March 24, 2019 are still not officially confirmed by Thailand's military-appointed Election Commission, the Association of Thai Democrats Without Borders would like to offer the following preliminary analysis, opinions and comments on the numbers for elected political parties and the general election situation.

1. The election results are most unexpected. The pro-democracy Pheu Thai Party, which has won all Thai elections in the last 20 years, has gained only 137 MPs, while the Palang Pracharat Party backed by the junta got 117 seats. The old Democrat Party, previously the champion of Bangkok and the South, was severely defeated and now have no seats in Bangkok and only half their previous seats in the south. This could be seen as punishment by the public for the party's previous cooperation with the junta and their role in usurping democracy by a military coup. The biggest genuine winner in the election is the recently formed (approx. 1 year ago) progressive Future Forward Party who are set to win 80 MPs in their first election.

2. This was the first Thai election in 8 years, 5 of which were under military dictatorship. The election was not free and fair and was held under the undemocratic 2017 military-composed Constitution. Obviously the Army supports the Palang Pracharat Party which was set up to prolong military rule under the guise of a democratic election. The military used their control on power to intimidate and harass the democratic parties and handpicked their own Election Commission (EC). The EC have proved at best very incompetent and at worst complicit in corruption and vote buying (in several districts) by pro-junta parties. This election result does not truly reflect the will of the people and more importantly this result benefits the parties supporting military dictatorship and their ambition of prolonging authoritarian rule.

Gen. Prayut Chan-ocha, coup d'état leader-in-chief, will be the next prime minister. (The 2017 military constitution ensures this by giving the 250-member military-appointed senate a formal role in selecting the PM) and his regime will be authoritarian and regressive. The military will continue to control politics in Thailand under the guise of democracy.

3. People and institutions who love and support democracy should protest this election result and support the majority Thai democratic parties in forming the next Thai government. All democratic Thai movements will continue to struggle for democracy, justice and the well-being of the Thai people.

4. The Association still would like to request the international community to pay attention to the formation of the elected government according to the principles of democracy.

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P.S.

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