

Thailand: People occupy major intersection to perform anti-coup drill

Monday 30 November 2020, by [PRACHATAI](#) (Date first published: 28 November 2020).

After a failed attempt in 2014, Thais tried again in 2020 as Lat Phrao intersection was occupied on the evening of 27 November for a 'practice anti-coup drill'.

The gathering took place under heavy rumours of a coup d'état. The site of the previous protest on 25 November was switched to the Siam Commercial Bank Headquarters from the Crown Property Bureau due to the dramatically heavy security measures by the police and suspicious movements of military personnel.



Protesters setting up the blockade at the beginning of the protest.

Despite repeated denials from Prime Minister Gen Prayut Chan-o-cha, Deputy Prime Minister Gen Prawit Wongsuwan and Gen Narongpan Jitkaewthae, the Royal Thai Army Commander-in-Chief, people in a country that has seen 13 successful coups from 24 attempts remained sceptical and took to the streets to participate in the drill.

As people started to gather at around 16.45, protesters were seen blowing up rubber ducks and unicorns. Those who helped received a special cloth bag with the People's Party Plaque logo.



Protesters inflating the inflatables.

At 18.26, inflatable ducks, unicorns and aliens were marched into the protest site. The speaker said that the inflatables represent the soldiers in the anti-coup drill. The main strategies for resisting a coup attempt were explained.

1. Stage resistance wherever and whenever possible, by strikes, school strikes or other activities.

2. Obstruct military operations as much as possible by, for example, blocking roads with empty vehicles or occupying streets.

3. Express the will to resist the coup and the illegitimate attempt to destroy the constitution and democracy.

The inflatables were moved in one direction then another to imitate incoming soldiers. Wherever they go, the people will have to pay close attention and strongly express their rejection symbolically.

Panussaya Sitthijirawattanakul, one of the pro-democracy leading figures, urged people to come out and resist if a coup happens, as an unsuccessful coup will then become a rebellion. The people have a legitimate right to peacefully express their views including opinions about the monarchy.

Anon Nampa, a human rights lawyer and a prominent monarchy reform speaker, said that resistance against a coup is common sense, just as having someone elected is regular while having someone appointed is not.

He said that all people will take a leading role in coup resistance as vocational students can dismantle tanks and arts students can splash colour onto them. People from Isaan and southern Thailand can smear soldiers with fermented fish sauce. All people will resist the coup with whatever they have.

At 22.35, Jatupat Boonpattaraksa and Atthapol Buapat, activists from Khon Kaen, underlined the demands for the PM's resignation, constitution amendments with people's participation and monarchy reform. The protest then dispersed.

Jatupat urged people to resist a coup wherever they are by strikes, parking cars to block roads and expressing their rejection of the coup to show the coup makers that the country is not the same.

"In 2014, the coup happened. If people had come out en masse, Prayut would not be able to stay. From now on, if it happens one day, we must come out to resist, to object as a confirmation that there are people that do not want dictatorship.

"Come out to raise the 3-finger salute. Come out to do anything to show that there are people that do not agree with coups that use force to solve political problems," said Jatupat.

Atthapol underlined the pro-democracy protests' 3 demands: resignation of Gen Prayut, establishment of a people-elected Constitutional Drafting Committee and reform of the monarchy in order to co-exist with the people under the constitution.

Prachatai



Systematic Resistance to a Coup (from 2014)

The idea of an anti-coup drill echoes what was published on the Green Light Thailand Facebook page in January 2014, before the Prayut-led coup took place in May, featuring a Systematic Resistance to a Coup Handbook

The handbook [1] suggests means to resist a coup, divided into 3 parts:

1. Defend

- Distribute the handbook to those close to you.
- Try to have the information in the handbook broadcast in local media and pro-democracy websites.
- Disseminate democratic principles and the disadvantages of coups to the state officials and soldiers that you know.

2. Resist

Immediately after the coup:

- Leave vehicles or obstacles on the streets to obstruct troop movements.
- Occupy the streets. If there is a crackdown, return home or to your office and return when the crackdown ends. Do not make yourself a target like setting up a stage.
- Do not follow any announcements or orders. Do not cooperate with the coup junta at all.
- Show friendship to soldiers and invite them to join your side.
- Create symbols of the resistance like black ribbons, flags or stickers and put them everywhere. If they are removed, replace them.
- Make sound and video recordings of suppression against the people and troop movements. Keep the originals and publish them widely, both domestically and internationally, via social media like Facebook and Twitter.
- Stage a 1-week strike to express dissent.

Long-term resistance:

- Do not pay taxes or public utility fees.
- Withdraw all money from the banks
- Compose letters from the people calling for the courts not to endorse the coup junta.
- Stage weekly symbolic events to show rejection of the coup.

- Resist capitalists that support the coup by shaming and protesting against their businesses.

3. Restore

Once the coup is over, watch out for opportunities to restore order:

- Rally for elections as soon as possible
 - Call for the arrest and prosecution of those who staged the coup.
 - Return to work and daily life and help state officials repair damage as far as you can.
 - Do not follow or believe rumours that go against the democratic system of government and the law.
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P.S.

- Prachatai. Submitted on Sat, 28 Nov 2020 - 11:31 PM:

<https://prachatai.com/english/node/8938>

Footnotes

[1] http://upic.me/show/49033197?fbclid=IwAR3p0MJGtLL6K-6QJgNo_2bWw08i-W41IBtsg-SDpBoDC8K6OBPREIRPQgc