

# Four Hong Kong Groups Protest against Thailand Military Coup

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## **We Condemn the Military Coup in Thailand!**

Restore Democracy and Human Rights in Thailand!

Two days after the announcement that martial law had been put in force was made on May 20<sup>th</sup>, a military junta, named the National Order Maintenance Council (NOMC), led a coup and subsequently installed itself as the government of Thailand.

Over the course of the six months of anti-government protests, twenty-eight people had been killed and more than eight-hundred injured. Hence, we are gravely concerned about the on-going human rights violations and the regression of democracy in Thailand. Furthermore, we strongly demand the Thailand military junta immediately release all detainees and stop the human rights violations.

General Prayuth Chan-ocha, the Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Thai Army, declared the coup in order to “restore peace”, and he was endorsed as the leader of the country by the King on May 25<sup>th</sup>. The military junta, however, dissolved the senate, implemented intensive media control, and arrested a great number of citizens who had participated in protests raising their voice against the military coup and the new regime.

These acts do not “restore peace” in any sense, but rather suspend the freedom of Thai citizens and impede democracy. In addition, it is not a democratic country if the King has the power to approve a coup that has abrogated constitutionalism with guns and knives.

The military junta has set out oppressing human rights defenders by issuing summons not only to the anti-junta politicians but also to human right defenders, journalists, and scholars. According to various media sources, approximately two hundreds summons have been issued so far, and roughly between one hundred and two hundreds arrests were made as a consequence. The wife and son of Mr. Somyot Prueksakasemsuk, a well-known pro-democracy activist who has so far served three years of an eleven year sentence after being convicted of Lèse Majesté, were also arrested on May 25<sup>th</sup>. His wife and son were released on the same day but being ordered not to participate in any political activities. The whereabouts of an unknown number of other detainees are still unknown as are the exact charges being brought against them. This is clearly a violation of Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Thailand is a State Party.

Moreover, the military junta made sure that they seized full control of the media at the time of the growing turmoil, thus limiting access to sincere and objective information to the public exactly when it is most necessary. For example, regular programming was cancelled in order for the military broadcast to be aired on radio and television, and the military junta established a special committee to control and monitor Social Network Service. This shows that the current regime not only hides truth by controlling the media but also blocks the free expression of the public.

In Hong Kong, the general public believe that freedom of speech is a basic human right, but today

we also feel that our right to freedom of expression is gradually threatened, we are fighting for a more democratic system of universal suffrage, in order to achieve the protection of basic human rights, including freedom of speech. Only a truly democratically elected government which is accountable to the people could achieve a fair and equitable and sustainable development of the society.

Therefore we strongly support the struggle of Thai citizens against the military junta, and we demand the following:

- The Thai military junta must immediately stop the arbitrary detention of all human rights defenders.
- The Thai military junta must abolish Lèse Majesté and immediately release all political detainees held under this charge, as well as other prisoners of conscience.
- The Thai military junta must guarantee the freedom of the media and allow the free expression of all citizens.
- The Thai military junta must assure the freedom of assembly and the right to protest.
- The sovereignty belongs to Thai citizens. The military junta must immediately transfer power to a democratic elected civil government.

5 June 2014

## **Left 21**

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*For more info see:*

<https://www.facebook.com/notes/international-solidarity-for-thailand/5-jun-2014-hong-kong-trade-unions-youth-and-ngos-protest-against-military-junta-/766365413395421>

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\* Mon, 06/09/2014 - 13:33 — wkf:

<http://www.worldlabour.org/eng/node/679>