

# Thailand: The junta's 2015 draft constitution should be opposed!

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## **Backward, anti-democratic and infantile: The junta's 2015 draft constitution**

The junta's new draft constitution is a pathetic, backward, anti-democratic and infantile document.

Just like the rantings of generalissimo Prayut, it is full of tub-thumping and shouting about the "duties" and "responsibilities" of Thai people to grovel to "Nation, Religion and King". It is infantile in this because it is written by conservative idiots who think that by bullying the population into conforming to elite beliefs they can actually change peoples' attitudes.

The infantilism gets worse when we get to Part 2 of the constitution, which is headed; "Good Political Leaders and Good Representatives". It doesn't take much brain power to guess what the junta's definition of "good" might be. High up on the list is loyalty to "Nation, Religion and King" and not being corrupt...blah blah blah. The whole thing sounds like some moral tale designed for a bad kindergarten.

Worse still, the constitution sets out a new unelected committee called the "National Morals Forum". This appointed bunch of junta loyalists will have unlimited powers to weed out "unsuitable" politicians, making sure they do not stand for elections, and it will have the power to veto policies and start impeachment processes. This "National Morals Forum" is similar to the "fatherland or patriotic committees" in Vietnam today and in Indonesia under Suharto, which selected suitable politicians for the people to "choose".

It should be stated that those who were involved with the cold-blooded murder of pro-democracy demonstrators in 2010 and those who staged military coups to overthrow elected governments and destroy constitutions, are not deemed to be "bad" people at all. It is these "good" state criminals and military gangster who propose in the constitution that the state "educate" the public in democratic principles.

The constitution is highly undemocratic because it gives power to the "National Morals Forum". But added to this is the fact that article 172 allows for a non-MP to become Prime Minister. In 1992 many democracy activists sacrificed their lives on the streets of Bangkok to uphold the principle that the Prime Minister must be an elected member of parliament.

The Senate will be totally unelected. Just under half will be "elected" in a sham election where there will be a "choice" of 10 "suitable" candidates per province, selected by the elites, for the people to choose. The candidate with most votes will become the senator. The rest of the senate will be self-appointed by pro-military elite interest groups.

The lower house of parliament will be elected by a complicated method involving the tinkering about with the numbers of constituency and party list MPs. Large popular parties like TRT or Pua Thai will be discriminated against by reducing the number of their party list MPs if they win "too many" constituencies. Small, unpopular, parties, such as the Democrat Party, will be given extra party list

MPs. The hope is that governments will be weak and less stable and forced to rely on coalitions.

Politicians who have suffered bans on their political activity, almost exclusively from Pua Thai and TRT, will be barred from all elections under section 15 of article 111.

Governments and politicians who design pro-poor policies which are deemed to be “not in the interest of the nation” can be punished and removed from office under article 205. Article 30 also allows governments to use the excuse that “there is no money” in order to flout the constitutional rights of the people to access state education, health and other benefits.

Some people have become excited by the fact that the constitution allows for the possibility that Thailand could have a woman as the royal head of state. In fact this has been in the constitution since 2007 and only becomes one possible choice if the King dies and has not appointed a successor. This is not the case today as the Crown Prince is the King’s appointed successor.

This is possibly the worst constitution that has ever been drafted in Thailand. It should be opposed.

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