

URGENT ACTION

PROTESTERS ARRESTED ON MILITARY COUP ANNIVERSARY

15 activists face criminal proceedings and up to seven years' imprisonment for taking part in a peaceful pro-democracy protest on 22 May 2018 in Bangkok. Charges against them include sedition and violating a repressive ban on peaceful political assembly.

Rangsiman Rome, Sirawit Serithiwat, Piyarat Chongthep, Nikorn, Wiset, Nattha Mahattana, Anon Numpa, Ekkachai Hongkangwan, Chonthicha Jaengrew, Chokchai Paiboonratchata, Kiri Khanthong, Putthaising Pimchan, Wiroj Trong-ngamrak and two others face criminal proceedings under between nine and eleven separate charges, including sedition, for their role in a peaceful protest on 22 May 2018. If prosecuted and found guilty of the charges, they could face up to seven years imprisonment. Calling for Thailand's general election to be held in November 2018, the group took part in a peaceful demonstration in central Bangkok on the anniversary of the military takeover of power.

Demonstrators planned to march from Thammasat University to Government House.

In the days before the protest, in an apparent bid to prevent the protest taking place, authorities had taken extensive measures to harass and intimidate participants, including detaining a couple who rented out sound systems in a military camp.

On 22 May police blocked demonstrators with a barrier to prevent them reaching the main road as well as broadcast a soap opera theme song from loudspeakers while protest leaders made speeches. Authorities arrested five individuals who started to march in the direction of Government House, and then detained ten other leaders and participants in the protest.

The 15 individuals face a series of charges, including sedition, violating an official ban on "political" gatherings of five or more persons, and violations of the Road Traffic Act and Public Assembly Act 2015, which excessively restricts peaceful public assembly. They are due to appear in court on 11 July 2018.

1) TAKE ACTION

Write a letter, send an email, call, fax or tweet:

- Drop all criminal proceedings against the 15 activists in relation to their exercise of the human right to peaceful assembly;
- Repeal or else amend all laws and edicts which arbitrarily restrict the right to peaceful assembly, including NCPO Order 3/2015 and the Public Assembly Act and allow individuals to exercise their rights without intimidation or harassment in accordance with Thailand's obligations under international human rights law

Contact these two officials by 5 July, 2018:

Prime Minister

Gen. Prayut Chan-O-Cha

Government House

Pitsanulok Road, Dusit

Bangkok 10300, Thailand

Fax: +66 2282 5131

Email: prforeign@gmail.com

Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

Ambassador Pisan Manawapat,

Royal Embassy of Thailand

1024 Wisconsin Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20007

Phone: 202 944 3600 | Fax: 1 202 944 3611

Contact form: <http://thaiembdc.org/contact/>

Twitter: [@ThaiEmbDC](https://twitter.com/ThaiEmbDC)

Salutation: Dear Ambassador

2) LET US KNOW YOU TOOK ACTION

[Click here](#) to let us know if you took action on this case! *This is Urgent Action 106.18*

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Four years after Thailand's military declared martial law and took power in a coup, ruling military authorities are continuing to violate a wide range of human rights, including through a crackdown on those peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly. Individuals who have spoken out against the coup or circulated material that the authorities deemed offensive to the monarchy face arbitrary detention and prosecution under executive orders and laws passed by the military government, as well as previously enacted legislation that subjects the exercise of these rights to restrictions not permitted under international human rights law

In the name of protecting security and the monarchy, authorities have targeted for prosecution perceived political opponents and those who criticise or whom it perceives as criticizing their political project. They are increasingly using Article 116 of the Penal Code criminalising sedition to target growing numbers of individuals that the authorities perceive as dissenters, including individuals exercising their professional duties to protect or report on peaceful opponents, and are criminalizing a widening range of activities that constitute peaceful exercise of human rights. Despite an initial official undertaking that restrictions would be temporary, authorities have showed no sign of lifting them.

The ruling military government, the NCPO, continues to restrict freedom of expression arbitrarily and sweepingly as it implements a political roadmap to elections, which were mooted for 2018 but now many be delayed until early 2019. Thai authorities continue to arbitrarily detain prosecute and imprison individuals, prevent or censor meetings and public events, and otherwise suppress peaceful dissent. Uniformed and plain-clothes officers have visited individuals to warn them not to peacefully demonstrate. Since the 2014 coup university staff have received orders from the army and Education Ministry to monitor student activities that criticized military authorities and to forbid or severely restrict student engagement in political activities. Nationwide, university lecturers and rectors have been "visited" by armed troops and instructed to ensure that no political activities take place in their universities.

Name: Rangsiman Rome (m), Sirawit Serithiwat (m), Piyarat Chongthep, Nikorn (last name withheld), Wiset (last name withheld), Nattha Mahattana (f), Anon Numpa (m), Ekkachai Hongkangwan (m), Chonthicha Jaengrew (f), Chokchai Paiboonratchata m), Kiri Khanthong (m), Putthaising Pimchan, Wiroj Trong-ngamrak (m) and two others
Gender m/f: both

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