

URGENT ACTION

PEACEFUL ACTIVISTS FACE IMPRISONMENT

Eleven activists are facing trial in a military court and up to six months in prison and/or a fine for taking part in peaceful activities to highlight allegations of official corruption. Six of them face imminent arrest after failing to report to the police.

The Bangkok Military Court issued a warrant on 13 January for the arrest of students **Sirawith Seritiwat** and **Chonticha Jaeng-rew**, activists **Thanet Anantawong**, **Korakoch Saengyenpan**, **Abhisit Sapphapan**, and **Chanoknan Ruamsap**. The order for their arrest follows their failure to report to Thonburi Railway Police Station, Bangkok, after being summoned on 22 December 2015 to face charges of participating in an illegal political gathering. They and five other activists may also face up to six months' imprisonment and/or a fine of up to 10,000 baht (US\$276) following what would be an unfair trial in a military court.

Activists **Kititach Suman**, **Wisarut Anupoonkarn**, **Koranok Kamda**, **Wijit Hanhaboon** and lawyer **Anon Numpa** were also summoned on 22 December on the same charges and have reported to Thonburi Railway Police Station.

These 11 activists are among a group of 37 who were detained for several hours on 7 December, after authorities intercepted a train they were traveling on to Rajabhakti Park, Prachuab Khiri Khan Province. They had planned to visit the park, which was opened to commemorate the Thai monarchy, to highlight allegations of military and official corruption in its construction.

Authorities are cracking down on activists in order to suppress protests and the online circulation of materials alleging official corruption in connection with Rajabhakti Park. The park opened in September 2015 and was built at an estimated cost of one billion Thai baht (US \$28 million). Activists have been held in incommunicado detention and those sharing materials online on corruption allegations have been charged with treason and under the *lèse majesté* law (which punishes insults or threats to the Thai King, Queen, Prince Regent and Heir Apparent). They have also threatened scores of people with detention for pressing "like" or sharing Facebook posts on the subject, and are engaging in surveillance and harassing activists and their relatives.

Please write immediately in Thai or your own language:

- Urging authorities not to arrest the 11 activists (naming them) and to drop any charges laid against them for peacefully calling for an inquiry into allegations of official corruption;
- Calling on them to repeal NCPO Order 3/2015 penalising "political" assembly of five or more persons;
- Urging them to allow the peaceful exercise of the rights to freedom of assembly and freedom of expression, and not to penalise those legitimately exercising these rights, including by "liking" or sharing materials online.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 24 FEBRUARY 2016 TO:

General Prayut Chan-ocha

Government House
Pitsanulok Road, Dusit
Bangkok 10300, Thailand
Fax: +66 2282 5131

Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Don Pramudwinai
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Sri Ayudhya Road
Bangkok 10400, Thailand
Fax: +66 2643 5320 / +66 2643 5314
Email: minister@mfa.go.th

Salutation: Dear Minister

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The individuals summoned are among 37 activists who were briefly detained on 7 December as they travelled by train to Rajabhakti Park and were later released on the same day – some having signed restrictive conditions to their release.

Those who were detained on 7 December include members of Resistant Citizen and New Democracy Movement, protest movements that have sprung up after a military coup in 2014 in reaction to the subsequent stringent restrictions on the peaceful exercise of rights and suppression of peaceful protest. Members of both groups have exercised their right to peaceful public assembly to carry out small symbolic protests, despite authorities outlawing “political” meetings of more than five persons under Martial Law and National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) Order 3/2015. Under NCPO Order 3/2015 those infringing official orders, national security laws and the *lèse majesté* law face prosecution in an unfair trial in a military court. Dozens have been sentenced for exercising their right to peaceful assembly.

Sirawith Seritiwat of the Democracy Studies Group, Anon Numpa of Resistant Citizen, and Chonticha Jaeng-rew from the New Democracy Movement have been previously arrested and charged during 2014 and 2015 for peaceful assembly. Chonticha Jaeng-rew was detained after a protest on the 22 May anniversary of the coup in 2015 and she sustained injuries to her spine after individuals in civilian clothes and police carried out unprovoked physical attacks on students. Authorities detained Kititach Suman while he read “1984” by George Orwell and ate a sandwich outside the Siam Paragon shopping centre in Bangkok on 22 June 2014. He was also detained after activists planned to distribute free tickets to Mockingjay, the third film in the Hunger Games trilogy, whose three finger salute has been used in Thailand as a symbol of resistance to the military take-over of power.

Authorities are also taking other measures to suppress discussion or circulation of materials related to allegations of official corruption at Rajabhakti Park. The Deputy Chief of the Royal Thai Police has publicly stated that it is a crime to “like” or share Facebook posts that authorities consider to contain “illegal material”. Officials held Thanet Anantawong and factory worker Thanakorn Siripaiboon (who was also detained in connection with “liking” an online image of the King’s dog) for six days, in incommunicado detention after they both shared an infographic on allegations of corruption at Rajabhakti Park.

Name: Anon Numpa (m), Sirawith Seritiwat (m), Chonticha Jaeng-rew (f), Chanoknan Ruamsap (f), Thanet Anantawong (m), Kititach Suman (m), Wisarut Anupoonkarn (m), Abhisit Sapphaphan (m), Korakoch Saengyenpan (m), Koranok Kamda (m) and Wijit Hanhaboon (m).

Gender m/f: Both

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