

# URGENT ACTION

## PEACEFUL ACTIVISTS ARRESTED, FACING CHARGES

**Five activists were arrested on 20-21 January, one of whom reports being abducted and ill-treated by military officials before being taken to a police station. They, along with six other activists, face 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.**

At 10.30 pm on 20 January, eight masked men wearing military uniforms arrived at Thammasat University, in the capital, Bangkok, in two vehicles with no visible number plates, and forced student **Sirawith Seritiwat** into one of the vehicles. He has since told reporters that his face was covered and he was driven to an unknown location where he was hit, kicked, had a sharp object pressed into his back and verbally abused, after he refused to obey orders to squat on the grass. In the early hours of 21 January, officials from the 2nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Battalion, handed him over to Nimit Mai Police Station, in Bangkok. He was then taken to Thonburi Railway Police Station, also in Bangkok, where he was formally arrested at 4 am on 21 January.

Sirawith Serithiwat is part of a group of six activists that had an outstanding order for their arrest, as they had not reported to Thonburi Railway Police Station, Bangkok, after being summoned on 22 December 2015 to face charges of participating in an illegal political gathering.

Student **Chonticha Jaeng-rew** and activists **Korakoch Saengyenpan**, **Abhisit Sapphapan** and **Chanoknan Ruamsap** were also arrested on 21 January. The Bangkok Military Court charged them with violating an official ban on "political" gatherings of more than five persons, and released them from custody. **Thanet Anantawong** is believed to have left Thailand.

The six activists, together with **Kititach Sumanop**, **Wisarut Anupoonkarn**, **Kornanok Kamda**, **Wijit Hanhaboon** and lawyer **Anon Numpa**, are facing 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. They are among a group of 37 activists who were detained for several hours on 7 December, when they were on their way to Rajabhakti Park, Prachuab Khiri Khan Province, with the intention to highlight allegations of military and official corruption in the construction of the park.

### Please write immediately in Thai or your own language:

- Urging authorities to drop all charges laid against the activists (naming them) for illegal assembly after they peacefully called for an inquiry into allegations of official corruption;
- Urging authorities to institute a prompt, impartial, independent and effective investigation into the abduction and ill-treatment of Sirawith Seritiwat;
- Calling on them to repeal NCPO Order 3/2015 penalizing "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 penalize those legitimately exercising these rights, including by "liking" or sharing materials online.

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 4 MARCH 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:

Fax      Email      Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 7/16. Further information:  
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ASA39/3195/2016/en/>

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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 were released, having signed restrictive conditions. 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 have harassed activists and their relatives.

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 sweeping restrictions on the peaceful exercise of rights, in particular the suppression of peaceful protest. Members of both groups have exercised their right to peaceful assembly t carried 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 that Order, 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 protest. 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.

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

Gender m/f: both

Further information on UA: 7/16 Index: ASA 39/3289/2016 Issue Date: 22 January 2016