

EXTERNAL

AI Index: ASA 39/04/96

30 January 1996

Further information on EXTRA 115/95 (ASA 39/04/95, 29 September 1995) and follow-up (ASA 39/05/95, 17 October) - Fear of imminent execution

THAILAND Prommas Leamsai (m), aged 38

Amnesty International is gravely concerned that the Thai authorities have conducted the first execution in the country since 1987. On 28 January a firing squad killed Prommas Leamsai by machine gun at Bangkwang Maximum Security Prison in Bangkok, the capital.

Prommas Leamsai was reportedly convicted of murdering a policeman in the 1980's, and his sentence was upheld by three separate courts. The execution took place in great secrecy, and according to a Ministry of Interior statement, Prommas was considered to be beyond rehabilitation. The statement also indicated that he was killed to set an example to other criminals.

Over 100 people are currently on death row in Thailand. In September 1995 the Ministry of Interior threatened to execute on 8 October an unnamed prisoner convicted of multiple murders, but the execution never took place. The death penalty in Thailand is mandatory for premeditated murder; the murder of an official on government business; production or trafficking of heroin, and regicide. It is optional for rape, robbery, kidnapping, arson and bombing if death results, insurrection, treason, airline hijacking and espionage, and possession of more than 100 grams of heroin.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English or in your own language:

- expressing deep regret that the Thai authorities have carried out the first execution in almost nine years;
- seeking assurances that this execution will not set a precedent for other executions of prisoners now on death row;
- expressing sympathy for the victims of violent crime, but stressing that the death penalty has never been shown to be an effective deterrent to such crime;
- explaining your opposition to the death penalty as a violation of the right to life and the right not to be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- calling on the Royal Thai Government to consider abolishing the death penalty as a punishment.

APPEALS TO:

Banharn Silapa-archa, Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior
Office of the Prime Minister
Government House, Nakhorn Pathom Road
Bangkok 10300, Thailand

Telegrams: Prime Minister Banharn Silapa-archa, Bangkok, Thailand

Faxes: + 66 2 280 1443

Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

COPIES TO:

Dr. Kanit na Nakorn
The Attorney General

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Office of the Attorney General
Rajadabhisek Road
Bangkok, Thailand

and to diplomatic representatives of the Kingdom of Thailand accredited to
your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.