

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: ASA 39/05/92

Distr: UA/SC

21 May 1992

Further information on EXTRA 51/92 (ASA 39\03\92, 18 May 1992) and follow-up ASA 39/04/92, 19 May 1992 - Legal Concern/Prisoner of Conscience

THAILAND: Chamlong SRIMUANG, Member of Parliament and others arrested or killed during protest demonstrations

including: Prateep Ungsongtham Hata (female)

Prinya Tewanaruemitkul

Jittravadi Vorachai (female)

~~Veng Tojirakarn~~

Dr Sant Hatirat

Somsak Kosaisuk

Siriluk Srimuang (female)

Prime Minister General Suchinda Kraprayoon announced on 20 May 1992 that all prisoners arrested in the last three days during the anti-government demonstrations would be released. Prisoner of conscience Chamlong Srimuang, who led demonstrations against the Prime Minister and who was arrested on 18 May, was released immediately. Approximately 3,000 further imprisoned demonstrators, including prisoners of conscience, were reported to have been released on 21 May. Amnesty International is currently seeking confirmation that all of the prisoners have indeed been released, and that their release is unconditional.

No investigation has been announced into the apparent extrajudicial execution of unarmed demonstrators by the military. The number of people killed in firing on demonstrators in recent days is not known. At least 40 people have died from gunshot wounds in hospitals in Bangkok (excluding military hospitals, which have given no figures), and many more are believed to have died on the street. Their bodies were removed by the military. On 20 May the Prime Minister acknowledged only that 40 people had been killed in total, and 600 injured. Amnesty International believes the true figure to be higher.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The release of prisoners was announced after King Bhumibol Adulyadej intervened in the growing crisis. A state of emergency was declared on 18 May. Anti-government demonstrations had continued in Bangkok and on 19 May spread to several other areas, including Songkhla, Phuket, Surat Thani, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Chiang Mai, Nakhon Tarchasima and Si Sa Ket provinces. A curfew was imposed in Bangkok from 9pm to 4am. On 20 May, unconfirmed reports circulated in Bangkok that troops from the north and northeast of the country were moving towards the capital to stage a coup. That evening, the King gave an audience - which was broadcast on state television - to the Prime Minister, Chamlong Srimuang and Prem Tinsulanonda, former prime minister

from 1980 to 1988 and now an adviser to the King. The King urged the Prime Minister and Chamlong Srimuang to negotiate a settlement and ordered the Prime Minister to accede to the people's demands for democracy. The Prime Minister later agreed to support constitutional changes demanded by the opposition, which include the requirement that the Prime Minister be an elected member of the House of Representatives. Such an amendment would disqualify the present Prime Minister from the post. He also said that the prisoners would be released. The state of emergency has not yet been lifted.

Page 2 of 2FU EXTRA 51/92

Some three thousand people were reported to have marched through Bangkok streets on 21 March in mourning for those who died during the demonstrations. Some displayed the mark of the *garuda* on their hands, symbol of the Thai royal family which is stamped on the hands of all prisoners.

Many of the prisoners had been held at the Bang Khen Police School, where witnesses reported seeing them beaten by police commandos. Some had been transferred to Lard Yao prison. On 19 May, several prisoners were released from the police school, apparently on bail. An air force officer is reported to have read a list of 102 names of people who had been released. Reporters say only ten were seen to leave the compound, however, and that each individual had to sign a blank piece of paper before leaving.

Amnesty International now understands that not all of those named above had been arrested, but that warrants of arrest had been issued for them.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters

- welcoming the news that prisoners detained during recent demonstrations in Bangkok have been released, and seeking confirmation that their release is unconditional;

- urging the authorities to hold full, independent and impartial inquiries into the apparent extrajudicial execution of demonstrators caused by military firing; to bring to justice any personnel responsible; and to grant compensation to the victims' relatives;

- urging the authorities to ensure that in future, security forces' personnel are clearly instructed that the use of lethal force will not be tolerated, except in life-threatening situations.

APPEALS TO:

General Suchinda Khraprayun
Prime Minister and Minister of Defence
Office of the Prime Minister
Government House
Nakhorn Pathom Road
Bangkok 10300
THAILAND

Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

Telegrams: General Khraprayun, Bangkok, Thailand
Telexes: 84791 INFODEP TH (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
Faxes: + 66 2 280 1443; + 66 2 281 4450

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej
The Grand Palace
Na Phra Lan Road
Bangkok 10200
THAILAND

Salutation: Your Majesty

and to diplomatic representatives of Thailand in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 2 July 1992.