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Further information on UA 101/91 (AI Index 39/08/91, 14 March 1991) - Prisoner of Conscience

THAILAND: Bandit Thammatrirat, aged 31

According to press and other reports, Bandit Thammatrirat has now been temporarily released on bail, but still faces possible trial and imprisonment.

According to information from Bandit Thammatrirat's lawyer and other sources, the leaflets he is accused of typing up and preparing to distribute by mail conveyed the contents of a statement issued on 28 February by 97 Thai academics commenting on the seizure of power by the military-dominated National Peace-Keeping Council (NPKC). In their statement the signatories declared: **"We, as Thai academics concerned about the future of our nation, deplore the political conflicts which led to the seizing of power by the NPKC and regret this interruption to the development of democracy in Thailand."** They declared their belief that **"parliamentary democracy within a constitutional monarchy is the most suitable and advantageous political system for Thailand in every respect."** They asked **"the NPKC to withdraw martial law as soon as possible"** and to **"re-establish an elective government"**. They expressed their concern that the NPKC's **"monopoly"** of power could lead **"easily to abuse of power"**, and urged it **"to limit or avoid completely the exercise of absolute power"** it has granted itself by virtue of Article 27 of the interim constitution it has announced. They also urged that the permanent constitution to be drafted under NPKC auspices contain **"democratic principles"**. They said these should include election of a parliament, establishment of an executive branch responsible to the elected parliament, and guarantees of **"the basic human rights of the people, including the freedom of speech and freedom of the press"**.

Based on its examination of this statement and all other information available to it about Bandit Thammatrirat's arrest, Amnesty International continues to be convinced that he was arrested for the peaceful exercise of the right to freedom of opinion and expression. It therefore is urging that his release be made unconditional and all legal proceedings against him be dropped.

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FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- welcoming reports that Bandit Thammatrirat has been released on bail, but urging that his release be made unconditional and all legal proceedings against him be dropped so that he will not face the danger of imprisonment for the peaceful exercise of the right to freedom of expression and opinion.

APPEALS TO:

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PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat or your section office if sending appeals after 2 May 1991.