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Thailand: The authorities have a duty to protect vulnerable groups

Amnesty International criticized the authorities in Thailand for failing to protect the rights of the rural and urban poor, migrant workers and tribal people in a major report launched today. The organization also reiterated calls on the Thai authorities to take immediate action to investigate the death of over 2000 people during an anti-drug campaign earlier in the year.

"Serious human rights violations and abuses that have been taking place in Thailand require serious attention by the authorities," said Amnesty International. "The authorities have an obligation to offer better protection to the vulnerable members of the society. They must also offer adequate redress for past human rights violations and abuses."

In its report "*Thailand: Grave Developments - Killings and Other Abuses*", Amnesty International states that nine months after the infamous "war on drugs" began in the country, no independent investigation is known to have been instituted into the deaths of 2,245 drug suspects who were killed during the three month campaign.

"The Thai authorities must take immediate action to investigate these deaths and to send a clear public message to the national police force, the military, and paramilitary groups, that extrajudicial executions by the security forces are not acceptable," said Amnesty International.

The new report documents the failure of the authorities to adequately investigate attacks on community leaders and groups involved in protests against infrastructure projects such as pipelines, dams, mineral separation plants or illegal logging activities. These people have been subjected to anonymous threats and intimidation, and the use of excessive force by the security forces.

The organization also reports the penalization by authorities of migrant workers calling for labour rights, including by deporting protestors. Investigations into abuses against these groups have been hampered by delays and the inadequacy of investigative methods on the part of law enforcement officials.

Important steps have been taken towards improving the human rights situation in the country in the last decade, including the promulgation of a new Constitution and accession to the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights. However, these principles are yet to be translated into action.

"The Thai authorities must take further measures to ensure that respect for human rights becomes a reality for all people in Thailand."

For the full text of the report, please go to:
"Thailand: Grave developments - killings and other abuses"
<http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engasa390082003>

For more information on related issues, please go to:
"Thailand: Extrajudicial killing is not the way to suppress drug trafficking"
<http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engasa390012003>

"Thailand: Death threats against a Human Rights Defender"
<http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engasa390022003>

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