

URGENT ACTION

ONGOING REPRESSION OF PEACEFUL PROTESTERS

Hundreds of human rights defenders continue to be detained, indicted, and prosecuted for peacefully exercising their human rights and participating in protests for reform. Authorities continue to use stringent bail conditions to excessively restrict activists right to freedom of peaceful assembly. With an increasing trend of excessive and indiscriminate force being used by police during protests, there are grave concerns for the safety of protestors.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha

Office of the Prime Minister
1 Nakhon Phathom Road, Dusit, Dusit District,
Bangkok 10300, Thailand
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Dear Prime Minister,

I write to express my grave concern at the ongoing crackdown on peaceful demonstrators in Thailand. Your government is arbitrarily detaining and penalising human rights defenders for peacefully protesting and expressing their opinions publicly and online. I am further concerned by the excessive and indiscriminate or unlawful force increasingly used by police to disperse protests.

I find it distressing to learn that prominent protest leaders **Anon Numpa, Jatupat 'Pai' Boonpattaraksa, Panupong 'Mike' Chadnok and Parit 'Penguin' Chiwarak**, have again been detained with their right to bail denied or revoked since 9 August 2021. Held in in poor conditions, I fear for their health and wellbeing as Jatupat and Parit have both already contracted COVID-19 while in detention. Further to my concern is the continued indictment of peaceful protesters, including **Panusaya 'Rung' Sithijirawattanakul**, who received further criminal charges related to her peaceful activism on 22 September.

Your government has targeted at least 1161 people, including 134 children, with criminal proceedings in relation to peaceful protest and peacefully exercising their human right to freedom of expression in the last year. Many are at risk of lengthy prison sentences of up to life imprisonment. Police have responded to protests with crowd control measures that have often violated protesters rights. They have responded with often indiscriminate and unlawful use of force to disperse protests, including firing tear gas, chemical laced water cannon, beatings, and rubber bullets

I urge your government ends this cycle of repression by upholding Thailand's international human rights obligations on peaceful assembly and freedom of expression, and ensuring police use the minimum of force proportionally.

Therefore, I call on you to:

- **Drop all criminal proceedings against persons targeted for peaceful exercise of their rights, and release those currently arbitrarily detained;**
- **Allow individuals to peacefully protest and express their opinions, and do not impose bail conditions on them that may arbitrarily restrict peaceful exercise of their rights;**
- **Investigate all reports of the excessive, indiscriminate or unlawful use of force by police when detaining individuals and in policing assemblies, hold anyone responsible to account and issue guidelines to police in line with international standards.**

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In an apparent bid to silence a peaceful, mainly youth-led, reform movement and related protests that began in 2020, the Thai government continues to crackdown on peaceful protesters. Following further protests about official handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, amid rising infection rates in the country, there have been increasing incidents of police using [excessive, unlawful and indiscriminate force](#) when policing demonstrations. Authorities are arbitrarily detaining and imposing [multiple unwarranted criminal charges, which may lead to terms of up to life imprisonment](#), against human rights defenders who are involved in peaceful protests or have made online comment for political, constitutional and educational reform. Authorities continue to arbitrarily detain defenders for prolonged periods, impose vaguely worded bail conditions which officials have used to excessively restrict their rights, and revoke their bail. Human rights violations against demonstrators are fuelling apparently unending further cycles of violations as officials respond with further judicial harassment to demonstrators who call for the release of protesters.

On 8 August authorities detained human rights lawyer **Anon Nampa** (36), as well as UFTD joint leader **Parit ‘Penguin’ Chiwarak** (23); **Panupong ‘Mike’ Chadnok** and **Pornsorn ‘Fah’ Weerathamjaree** who had taken part in a 3 August demonstration calling for the release of fellow activists. On 9 August authorities detained former prisoner of conscience **Jatupat ‘Pai’ Boonpatararaksa**. Authorities charged them with for violating COVID-19 related restrictions on public gatherings, among other charges, and denied them the right to bail. They further charged Anon Nampa with alleged offences against the monarchy in connection with his calls for reform at a demonstration on 3 August 2021. Authorities also revoked bail previously granted to Parit and Anon, alleging that Anon’s involvement in protests and Parit’s social media post violated their previous bail conditions which restricted them from damaging the monarchy and taking part in activities that create unrest.

On 15 September 2021 authorities granted **Parit ‘Penguin’ Chiwarak**, Panupong ‘Mike’ Chadnok, and Pornsorn ‘Fah’ Weerathamjee, and two others release on bail on the condition they wear electronic tagging devices. However, authorities did not release Parit, who remains in detention under earlier criminal charges of sedition, for which authorities had revoked his bail. On 23 September authorities again detained Panupong ‘Mike’ Chadnok, after filing further charges of alleged insult to the monarchy and computer crimes against him in relation to a November 2020 Facebook post. He is detained after authorities denied his request for bail.

Anon, Jatupat, Parit and Panupong were previously repeatedly detained since 2020, including most recently in early 2021, with their right to bail denied for 113, 47, 93, and 85 days respectively, under charges relating to their involvement in peaceful protests and their speeches or statements relating to the monarchy. During this time Parit carried out a hunger strike in protest of the court’s persistent and repeated denial of bail.

Authorities have filed further *lèse majesté* charges against protest security organizer Piyarat ‘Toto’ Chongthep in May 2021 and against singer Chaiamorn ‘Ammy’ Kaewwiboonpan and Pornsorn ‘Fah’ Weerathamjaree in June 2021, in relation to their protest outside a police station for the release of a detained activist. Wanwale ‘Tee’ Thammasattaya, and Siraphop ‘Kha Nun’ Phumphuengphut are also on bail.

While the majority of youth-led protests have been peaceful, in some a minority of protesters have committed unlawful acts, including the use of violence, which have recently escalated and been met with increased violence by authorities. Crowd control police have used crowd control measures that have often violated protesters rights. They have responded with often [indiscriminate and unlawful use of force](#) to disperse protests, including firing tear gas, chemical laced water cannon, beatings, and rubber bullets. Significant numbers of protesters have been minors.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English, Thai or your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 2 January 2022

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Panusaya ‘Rung’ Sithijirawattanakul (she/her), Jatupat ‘Pai’ Boonpatararaksa (he/him), Anon Numpa (he/him), Parit ‘Penguin’ Chiwarak (he/him), Panupong ‘Mike’ Chadnok (he/him)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa39/4159/2021/en/>