

**Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha**

Office of the Prime Minister  
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Fax: 66 2 282 5131

Dear Prime Minister,

I write to express my grave concern about the escalating crackdown on students and other activists in your country, who have been expressing their opinions on political and constitutional reforms through peaceful protest and social media. I find it distressing that, despite your government having publicly acknowledged that the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly are the foundation of society, those who have peacefully exercised these rights in recent months continue to be harassed.

It is alarming to learn that at least 220 persons, including six children, face criminal proceedings. They would face up to decades or even life imprisonment if prosecuted and convicted. Among these are high school students **Benjamaporn 'Ploy' Nivas**,<sup>16</sup> (Free Youth and student union leader **Panusaya 'Rung' Sittijirawattanakul**; pro-democracy activist **Tattep 'Ford' Ruangprapaikitseree**, and legal expert and former prisoner of conscience **Jatupat 'Pai' Boonpattaraksa**.

As you will be aware, the United Nations Human Rights Committee and other experts have recommended on several occasions that Thailand amend or repeal the very laws it is now using as tools to suppress the expression of critical and dissenting opinions and peaceful protests, and that Thailand end related prosecutions.

I therefore urge you to change your government's approach to protecting the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and expression in order to genuinely enable people to exercise them, including by allowing criticisms of authorities, in line with Thailand's obligations under international human rights law and the constitution.

**Specifically, I call on you to:**

- **Immediately and unconditionally drop all criminal proceedings against protesters and others charged solely for exercising their rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and expression;**
- **Cease all other measures, including harassment, aimed at dissuading public participation in peaceful gatherings or silencing voices critical of the government and social issues;**
- **Amend or repeal legislation in order to ensure it conforms with Thailand's international human rights obligations on freedom of peaceful assembly and expression, and to train state officials to carry out their duties confirming to Thailand's obligation to respect, protect and fulfil the peaceful exercise of the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and expression.**

Yours sincerely,