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Dear Prime Minister,

I write to express my concern that your government is pursuing measures to punish children for exercising their rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

Since widespread protests started in 2020, the Thai government has started criminal proceedings against at least 284 children for peacefully protesting or expressing their opinions. Authorities have targeted and intimidated them and others who have peacefully demonstrated with harassment, surveillance. I am concerned your actions may have a wider chilling effect on children's ability to enjoy their right to protest. The situations of "Yok", Thanakorn 'Petch' Phiraban, Chan Tonnaphet and "Sand" are emblematic of the hundreds of children penalized for exercising their right to freedom of peaceful assembly.

In late 2022 Thanakorn received a sentence to 18 months and three years' detention for lèse-majesté, after they spoke at two protests when 17 years old, as well as a suspended two-year sentence. They face additional charges under the Emergency Decree, as do "Sand", a 17- year-old activist, and Chan. Authorities started criminal proceedings against "Sand" for taking part in a peaceful demonstration in 2021. Chan, an Indigenous land rights activist, is under investigation after voicing her community's concerns about access to their land at a rally in 2022. "Yok", aged 15, was detained between 29 March and 18 May 2023 and may face up to 15 years' imprisonment, including under Article 112 of the Criminal Code, Thailand's lèse majesté law, for peacefully protesting in October 2022.

Thailand has international obligations, including under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, to respect, protect and ensure children's rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, so they can exercise them without fear of reprisals. These rights are important for children to be able to campaign for human rights and other issues affecting them.

Therefore, I call on you to:

- Release all children detained simply for exercising their rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly;
- Drop all criminal proceedings, quash convictions, and end harassment and intimidation of children, targeted simply for exercising their human rights;
- Respect, protect and fulfil the rights of children to freedom of peaceful assembly and expression; and
- Amend or repeal legislation which is incompatible with international standards relating to the exercise of these rights.

Yours sincerely,