

Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin
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Dear Prime Minister,

I am deeply concerned that the Thai government has targeted human rights defender Anon Nampa, aged 39 years, with more than a dozen criminal proceedings and is arbitrarily detaining him in Bangkok Remand Prison for exercising his right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly in public demonstrations. On 26 September 2023 he received a sentence of four years' imprisonment and a fine of 20,000 baht (USD551), and also a second sentence of two months' imprisonment and fine on 2 October 2023, all for speaking and participating in peaceful public assemblies in October and November 2020.

I am alarmed that since 2020 the Thai government has pursued unwarranted criminal proceedings against Anon Nampa and at least another 1,927 persons, including 286 children, in a wide-ranging crackdown on their exercise of their rights. He is among 280 persons – including children - who your government has started criminal proceedings against under Article 112 of the Criminal Code, governing lèse-majesté, which allows for up to 15 years' imprisonment. As a human rights lawyer, Anon has defended many of the individuals, including children, facing unwarranted charges related to their peaceful protests. The Thai government's moves to stifle his and their peaceful exercise of their rights undermine your stated commitment to the advancement of human rights in Thailand and abroad.

I am further concerned that the Court of Appeals has denied Anon Nampa his right to temporary release on bail, and that he was previously arbitrarily detained with bail for nearly a year between 2020 and 2022.

Thailand's international human rights commitments oblige the Thai government to effectively respect, protect and fulfil the human rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. The UN Human Rights Committee, other UN human rights experts and UN member states at Thailand's Universal Periodic Review have expressed concern about the restrictions the Thai government has imposed on the exercise of the rights to freedom of assembly and expression. UN experts have recommended the Thai government refrain from imposing detention on individuals who are exercising their rights and who do not present a serious risk to national security or public safety. These experts and other governments have called on Thailand to bring laws into conformity with your international human rights obligations. States at Thailand's Universal Periodic Review have also urged that Thailand refrain from the prosecution of peaceful protesters.

Therefore, I urge you to:

- Immediately and unconditionally release, as well as drop all convictions and criminal proceedings against human rights defender Anon Nampa and all other people, including children, who have been targeted simply for exercising their human rights;**
- Pending the dropping of convictions and charges, allow Anon Nampa and other activists their right to temporary release on bail and ensure that conditions of bail do not arbitrarily restrict the peaceful exercise of their rights;**
- Amend or repeal laws which have been used to restrict rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly to ensure that Thailand complies with its international human rights obligations.**

Yours sincerely,