

Statement of the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand
on
Concerns over political protests with reported human rights violations
and denunciation of all forms of violence

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Having monitored the political protests by adhering to the principles of impartiality, independence and the protection of human rights of all sides without discrimination, the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand (NHRCT) calls on all sides to use peaceful means in their efforts to solve the problem, bearing in mind kindness toward one another and respect for the value of human being and the rights of one another.

The political protests have constantly led to a number of acts that may constitute human rights violations. The manner in which political protestors called on mass media operators, especially various radio and television stations, to cooperate in presenting news reports may be considered as threatening the rights and freedom to impart information while the government has not made serious efforts to present a well-rounded news coverage. There are also reports on the use of violence by security guards of the People's Democratic Reform Committee (PDRC) against ordinary people as well as on violent attacks on PDRC security guards by unknown groups during nighttime. War weapons have been reportedly used in a series of violent incidents and terrorist attacks, resulting in a number of deaths and injuries, and there is a tendency toward more violence. In addition, there are many individual cases of violation of a person's right and freedom in one's private life, honour and reputation.

The NHRCT has been continuously concerned with the above political situation and calls on all concerned parties to bear in mind and exercise caution to avoid taking any provocative actions or those that might violate the rights of others, and avoid confrontation, any form of violence or any unlawful acts that affect the rights of others, with a view to preventing undesirable loss and damage among the Thai people. In this regard, the NHRCT puts forward guidelines for action as follows:

1. Protesters rallying at radio and television stations must not threaten or carry out acts that may be deemed to threaten media professionals in the fulfillment of their responsibilities and respect the right and freedom to impart information for the interest of the public in a well-rounded manner. All parties should allow media persons to present factual and unbiased information independently and impartially without the use of abusive language that would further aggravate the existing conflict. The codes of ethics for media professionals must be observed to avoid their being exploited by any party.

2. Protest organizers or protest leaders must regulate the performance of their security guards with regard to the conduct of search on individuals. The search must be carried out without violence, use of force, firearms or imitation firearms, which are unlawful. This can create more hatred and greater tension in the already distrustful society and could lead to an increase in violent incidents.

3. The NHRCT condemns all forms of violence that have taken place so far, especially the use of war weapons, including grenades and grenade launchers, and the use of firearms against individuals, groups of persons and in communities, which are considered to be a serious violation of human rights unacceptable to Thai society and the international community. The NHRCT requests those who have conspired in violent incidents by resorting to terrorist acts in order to take other persons' lives and instigate disorder and their supporters to end their actions immediately.

4. After many violent incidents, state authorities have not yet been able to bring perpetrators to justice in a timely manner. The NHRCT, therefore, urges state officials with responsibilities to maintain law and order to strictly perform their duties with the commitment to promptly conduct an investigation and prosecute those who commit wrongful acts in order to gain public trust. Meanwhile, protection should be provided to the general public to ensure their safety and security.

5. The NHRCT calls on all sectors of society to monitor the situation and condemns all forms of violence. It also calls on all parties to avoid confrontation and refrain from instigating hatred which would lead to violence and adversely affect the country in every aspect.

The NHRCT will monitor the situation closely and earnestly hopes that the protestors and the people residing near the protest areas will respect the right of one another so as to bring peace to society and the country. It does hope that all parties will recognize the importance of respecting the right of one another and make an effort to avoid using violence. The NHRCT will accelerate the investigation of human rights violations in accordance with its mandate and report its findings to the public and all concerned parties in due course.

National Human Rights Commission of Thailand
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