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Human Rights Now

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Secretary General, Kazuko Ito

For Immediate release

HRN urges the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) of Thailand to immediately stop committing human rights violations

1. Human Rights Now (HRN), a Tokyo-based international human rights NGO, expresses its grave concern over the human rights situation in Thailand. Thai citizens' basic rights and freedoms have been severely restricted by the suspension of the Constitution and a number of orders as well as announcements issued by the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO), established by the Thai military immediately upon its seizure of power by force on the 22nd May, 2014.

Restrictions have been placed on freedom of expression as all media outlets have been censored, broadcasting through selected TV and radio channels has been suspended², and information critical of the NCPO has been prohibited³. Moreover, "political gathering or assembly of more than 5 persons are [sic] prohibited. Violation of this order is punishable by imprisonment not exceeding one year, or a fine not exceeding 20,000 baht, or both." as Announcement No.7/2557 states⁴.

Another grave concern is arbitrary arrest and detention. On 13th June, UN independent experts noted that the military summoned "more than 440 individuals, including political leaders, academics, journalists and activists to army bases. Many remain in detention without access to family or lawyer. Some are held incommunicado in unknown locations and may be at risk of torture or ill-treatment."⁵ According to some reliable sources, the total number could be over 600, if one includes both those who have been summoned and those who have been arrested. Further, summonses outside of Bangkok are not being published, making it difficult to assess the real number of individuals being

²<http://www.mfa.go.th/main/en/media-center/3756/46188-Announcement-of-the-National-Peace-and-Order-Maint.html>

³<http://www.mfa.go.th/main/en/media-center/3756/46187-Announcement-of-the-National-Peace-and-Order-Maint.html>

⁴<http://www.mfa.go.th/main/en/media-center/3756/46180-Announcement-of-the-National-Peace-and-Order-Maint.html>

⁵<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=14696&LangID=E>

summoned and detained.

2. The UN High Commissioner of Human Rights Navi Pillay condemned the Thai military immediately after the coup d'état saying that "the implementation of any emergency measures must comply with international human rights standards. The right to life and the prohibition against torture cannot be breached, regardless of the circumstances"⁶. She also emphasized the importance of ensuring freedom of expression and freedom of assembly in resolving complicated political matters through dialogue. The actions taken by the NCPO so far are clearly contrary to its obligation to fully respect and ensure the enjoyment of human rights and freedoms protected by international human rights law, especially the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Thailand is a State Party. National security must not be used as an excuse to oppress the legitimate exercise of people's basic rights and freedoms.

3. Hence, HRN urges the NCPO to;

- Immediately withdraw orders and announcements which severely restrict Thai citizens' basic human rights and freedoms, such as freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and right to information, right to legal aid, and right to fair trial;
- Immediately release those who have been arbitrarily arrested and/or detained; and
- Restore the rule of law and ensure that the Thai people enjoy the full protection of their human rights and freedoms as guaranteed by the ICCPR and other international human rights treaties that Thailand has ratified.

Human Rights Now ~Protecting Human Rights for All~

Human Rights Now is a Tokyo based international human rights NGO comprising a body of experienced legal professionals dedicated to protecting and promoting human rights around the world, with a special focus on Asia. The activity includes monitoring/ fact-finding of human rights, human rights education and advocacy work. Human Rights Now has special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council since August 2012.

⁶<http://www.ohchr.org/SP/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=14633&LangID=E>