

# [***Thailand's former leader Thaksin Shinawatra freed after six months in detention***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BC1-S9C1-JBSS-S118-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

(CNN) &#8212; Thailand's former Prime Minister [*Thaksin Shinawatra*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/13/asia/thailand-thaksin-shinawatra-granted-parole-intl-hnk/index.html) was released from detention on Sunday, having served six months in prison following his return to the kingdom after more than 15 years in self-imposed exile.

Thaksin, who served as prime minister from 2001 until he was ousted in a military coup in 2006, [*returned to Thailand*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/08/21/asia/thaksin-shinawatra-return-thailand-parliament-vote-intl-hnk/index.html) in August and was sentenced to eight years in prison for conflict of interest, abuse of power and corruption during his time in power.

His jail sentence was later reduced to one year after he submitted a request for a royal pardon. The 74-year-old was among 930 inmates granted parole earlier this month on the grounds of age or illness.

He had previously been transferred to a hospital due to tightness in his chest, high blood pressure and low oxygen levels, according to the Thai Corrections Department.

Throughout his time in power, Thaksin was hugely popular with Thailand's rural and working class but his policies were anathema to the rich elites and conservatives who accused him of being a dangerous and corrupt populist.

During his physical absence in the country, he retained an outsized influence on Thai ***politics*** and has remained at the center of the country's tumultuous and often violent political landscape.

His release from prison reintroduces a towering and divisive figure to [*Thailand*](https://www.cnn.com/specials/asia/thailand-topics) at a tense political time.

Some experts believe Thaksin may have struck a deal with the country's powerful conservative and royalist establishment for his return - given his court convictions and the charges against him - in exchange for a reduced jail term, lenient treatment, or a possible pardon.

Wearing a neck collar and arm sling, the former prime minister was seen leaving the Police General Hospital in Bangkok on Sunday in a black van alongside his daughters, Paetongtarn Shinawatra and Pintongta Shinawatra.

He returned to his residence in Bangkok where a handwritten banner had been hung on the gate welcoming him home.

By Kocha Olarn, Alex Stambaugh and Heather Chen, CNN

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