

Office of the Permanent Secretary, Prime Minister Office

Government House, 1 Pissanulok Road

Dusit, Bangkok 10300, Thailand

Subject: Murder of Mr. Chai Bunthonglek in Klong Sai Pattana, Suranthhani Province, Thailand

His Excellency General Prayuth Cha-o-cha, Prime Minister of Thailand

We are shocked and deeply saddened to learn about the killing of Mr. Chai Bunthonglek, a land rights activist and member of the Southern Peasant Federation of Thailand. Mr. Chai was shot on 11th February 2014 at 6 p.m. by gunmen riding on a motorbike. This is the fourth assassination of a land rights activist from Klong Sai Pattana village, Chaiburi District Surathhani Province in the past five years. Ms. Montha Chukaew, Ms. Pranee Boonrat and Ms. Somporn Pattaphum were also killed by gunmen and the perpetrators have not yet been arrested.

The community members of Khong Sai Pattana continue to be threatened with forced evictions and violence by armed personnel closely linked the Jew Kung Juy Development Company, despite the fact that they won court cases in the Court of First Instance and the Court of Appeals against the Company. Although these victories affirm the legal rights of community members to their lands, the company continues to occupy these lands while the case is pending in the High Court.

Since the declaration of martial law in May, 2014, we have witnessed an escalation and expansion of human rights violations in Thailand. In both, rural and urban areas, local communities are becoming economically and politically marginalized and vulnerable because of land grabbing, forced evictions and restricted access to forest areas, which threaten their fundamental rights to life and dignity.

We fully extend our solidarity and support to the local communities defending their rights and especially to the Southern Peasant's Federation of Thailand. We urge the Government of Thailand to immediately take the following actions:

1. Investigate, identify and arrest the gunmen and their accomplices responsible for the assassination of Mr. Chai, Ms. Montha Chukaew, Ms. Pranee Boonrat and Ms. Somporn Pattaphum in Chaiburi District, Surathhani Province and in Khaopranom District, Krabi Province.
2. Ensure that the Agricultural Land Reform Office transfers the disputed lands to the community members of Khlong Sai Pattana in the form of a community land deed as ordered by the Court of Appeals.
3. Ensure that the families of the deceased receive the reparations and compensations enshrined in Thai law.

We also urge the Government of Thailand to initiate and implement structural remedies to ensure peace and democracy in the country without delay. A crucial component to this is creating a climate of transparency and justice by repealing martial law and returning political power to a civilian government.

We are hopeful that the government of Thailand will take immediate action to bring justice and peace in both the short and long term for the collective benefit of its citizens and nation.

Yours sincerely,

Individual

Mr. Lamphong Khanthavanh

Peter Rosset, Center for the Study of Rural change in Mexico, Mexico

Walden Bello, Focus on the Global South, Philippines

Brazil

Rede Social DeJustice e Direitos Humanos

Cambodia

Cambodia Indigenous Youth Association

Equitable Cambodia

Land Research Action Network

Social Action for Change

Worker's Information Center

China

Green Watershed

Indonesia

Serikat Petani Indonesia

Myanmar

Karen Environmental and Social Action Network

Paung Ku

Dawei Development Association

Tarkapaw - Karen Youth Group

Candle Light

Dawei Research Association

Dawei Lawyer Group

Dawei Youth Fellowship

Community Sustainable livelihood and Development Committee - Kamothe,Dawei

88 Generation (Peace and Open Society) – Dawei

88 Generation (Peace and Open Society) Myeik

University Student Union (Dawei District)

Dawei Farmer Union (Dawei District)

Human Rights Watch – Dawei

Tavoyan Women Union

Tavoy Youth Organization

Dawei Watch Foundation

Farmer Union (Myeik District)

Youth Doctors Network

Southern Youth – Tanintharyi

University Student Union (Myeik District)

Myeik Youth

Our Future Initiative

Myeik Health Network

NNER Myeik Network

Anti Coal Group (Myeik Region)

Dawei Nationalities Party (Central)

Netherlands

Both ENDS

Philippines

NGO Forum on ADB

Katarungan

Thailand

Altsean-Burma

Assembly of the poor

Northern Peasant Federation

Northern Development Foundation

United States

American Jewish World Service

EarthRights International

Regional organization

Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development

Focus on the Global South

International organization

Civil Rights Defenders

GRAIN International

Transnational Institute

International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), within the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders

World Organization against Torture, (OMCT) within the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders