



UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW
SUBMISSION FOR THE KINGDOM OF
THAILAND

NGO Submission

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ABOUT HRF

The Human Rights Foundation (HRF) is a nonpartisan nonprofit organization that promotes and protects human rights globally, with a focus on closed societies. HRF unites people in the common cause of defending human rights and promoting liberal democracy. Our mission is to ensure that freedom is both preserved and promoted around the world.

We focus our work on the founding ideals of the human rights movement, those which are most purely enshrined in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1976 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

HRF's Center for Law and Democracy (HRF-CLD) is a program of HRF. HRF-CLD promotes legal scholarship in the areas of comparative constitutional law and international law, with a focus on international human rights law and international democracy law.

INTRODUCTION

This submission was prepared by HRF for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the Kingdom of Thailand ("Thailand"). In this submission, HRF evaluates Thailand's implementation of recommendations made during its previous UPR as it relates to the current human rights situation in the country, which is characterized by systematic, widespread, and gross violations of human rights, including restrictions on the freedoms of assembly, association, and expression.

FOLLOW-UP ON THE PREVIOUS REVIEW

1. As a Member State of the United Nations (UN), Thailand has committed to protecting, promoting, and respecting the individual rights and fundamental freedoms laid out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Notably, Thailand has also ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.¹

2. The most recent UPR of Thailand by the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council took place on November 10, 2021.² A total of 278 recommendations were made to Thailand, with the regime accepting 219 recommendations, 25 of which were initially deferred, and noting 84.³ However, Thailand has not made significant progress in implementing these recommendations.
3. Among many recommendations, the most commonly made by UN Member States suggests that Thailand should ratify particular international conventions. Despite the number of States that have made these recommendations, Thailand has yet to ratify the:⁴
 - a. Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;
 - b. Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights aiming to the abolition of the death penalty; and
 - c. International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.
4. The 2017 Constitution of Thailand (*hereafter* Constitution) formally enshrines within it the protection of several human rights (*see infra Thailand's National Framework for Protecting Human Rights*). However, individuals in Thailand are routinely subjected to human rights violations, not least by the very existence of laws that criminalize and impinge upon their fundamental freedoms.

THAILAND'S NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS

¹ Ratification status for Thailand, OHCHR, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=172&Lang=EN.

² U.N. Human Rights Council, Working Grp. on the Universal Periodic Review of the Forty-Ninth Session, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Thailand*, U.N. Doc. A/HRC/49/17 (Dec. 21, 2021), <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/49/17>.

³ Out of the 278 recommendations, Thailand initially accepted 194 and deferred decisions on 84. Of the 84 deferrals, Thailand decided to support 25 upon further consideration. *Thailand: Responses to Recommendations 49/17/Add.1 – Forty-Ninth session*, Human Rights Council (Feb. 17, 2022), <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/49/17/Add.1>.

⁴ OHCHR, *supra* note 1.

5. Thailand's Constitution⁵ contains several key provisions relating to the protection of the fundamental rights and freedoms of its citizens.

6. In relation to equal protection of individuals under the law, the Constitution states in *Section 4*:

*Human dignity, rights, liberties and equality of the people shall be protected.
The Thai people shall enjoy equal protection under the Constitution.*

7. In relation to arbitrary detention and due process rights, the Constitution states in *Section 29*:

No person shall be subject to a criminal punishment unless he or she has committed an act which the law in force at the time of commission provides to be an offence and prescribes a punishment therefor, and the punishment to be imposed on such person shall not be of greater severity than that provided by law in force at the time of the commission of the offence.

A suspect or defendant in a criminal case shall be presumed innocent, and before the passing of a final judgment convicting a person of having committed an offence, such person shall not be treated as a convict.[...]

An application for a bail of a suspect or defendant in a criminal case shall be accepted for consideration, and excessive bail shall not be demanded. The refusal of a bail must be as provided by law.

8. In relation to the freedoms of assembly and expression, the Constitution states in *Section 34*:

A person shall enjoy the liberty to express opinions, make speeches, write, print, publicise and express by other means. The restriction of such liberty shall not be imposed, except by virtue of the provisions of law specifically enacted for the purpose of maintaining the security of the State, protecting the rights or liberties of other persons, maintaining public order or good morals, or protecting the health of the people.

9. In relation to freedom of the press, the Constitution states in *Section 35*:

⁵ *Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, 2017*, ConstitutionNet (2017), <https://constitutionnet.org/sites/default/files/2017-05/CONSTITUTION+OF+THE+KINGDOM+OF+THAILAND+%28B.E.+2560+%282017%29%29.pdf>.

A media professional shall have liberty in presenting news or expressing opinions in accordance with professional ethics.

The closure of a newspaper or other mass media in deprivation of the liberty under paragraph one shall not be permitted.

Censorship by a competent official of any news or statements made by a media professional before the publication in a newspaper or any media shall not be permitted, except during the time when the country is in a state of war.[...]

A State official who performs mass media duties shall enjoy the liberties under paragraph one, provided that the purposes and missions of the agency to which he or she is attached shall also be taken into consideration.

POLITICAL BACKGROUND

10. Thailand, formerly known as “Siam,” is a Southeast Asian country with a population of about 71 million.⁶ The country was ruled by an absolute monarchy for centuries until 1932, when the Siamese revolution transitioned it into a constitutional monarchy.⁷ However, Thailand’s politics and government have frequently been disrupted by military coups, with at least 12 successful coups to date.⁸ The latest coup took place in 2014, led by the military junta under General Prayut Chan-o-cha, who ruled the country until 2023.⁹

11. Following the 2014 coup, the military junta imposed martial law, banned political gatherings, and detained student activists protesting against its rule.¹⁰ In 2017, the

⁶ *Thailand Population 2025*, United Nations Population Fund (2025), <https://www.unfpa.org/data/world-population/TH>; Charles F. Keyes et. al, *History of Thailand*, Britannica (Dec. 12, 2025), <https://www.britannica.com/topic/history-of-Thailand>.

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Id.*; *Thailand military seizes power in coup*, BBC (May 22, 2014), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-27517591>.

⁹ *Id.*; *Announcement of the National Peace and Order Maintaining Council No. 30/2557 Subject: Termination of the Senate*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Thailand (Last updated: Nov. 17, 2022), <https://www.mfa.go.th/en/content/5d5bcdc115e39c306001214c?cate=5f1a9f2340789f61121eca84>; Rebecca Ratcliffe, *Thai PM to retire from politics nine years after seizing power in coup*, The Guardian (Jul. 11, 2023), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jul/11/thai-pm-retire-politics-nine-years-power-coup-prayuth-cha-ocha>.

¹⁰ Scott Neuman, *Thai Authorities Arrest Protesters On Anniversary Of 2014 Coup*, NPR (May 22, 2015), <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2015/05/22/408816348/thai-authorities-arrest-protesters-on-anniversary-of-2014-coup>; *Urgent Action: Peaceful Activists Arrested, Facing Charges*, Amnesty International (Jan. 22, 2016), <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/ASA3932892016ENGLISH.pdf>.

military-drafted constitution was adopted following a 2016 referendum, which was widely criticized by human rights groups and experts, due to campaign bans and censorship, for having been held under a repressive political environment.¹¹ Public advocacy against the draft in the lead-up to the referendum was prohibited, and dozens of people were arrested.¹² Additionally, the Election Commission rejected independent observers' requests to monitor the vote.¹³ The 2017 Constitution contains provisions that strengthen the military's power, notably by allowing the junta to appoint members of the Senate, the Election Commission, the Administrative Court, and the Constitutional Court.¹⁴

12. In 2019 and 2023, election-winning parties, the Pheu Thai Party and the Move Forward Party (MFP), respectively, were blocked from forming government coalitions.¹⁵ Moreover, the Constitutional Court has played a role in dissolving political parties.¹⁶ In 2020, the court disbanded the Future Forward Party, a predecessor of MFP, for receiving an illegal loan — a charge widely seen as politically motivated — and barred 16 of its leaders from politics for 10 years.¹⁷ In August 2024, the court dissolved the MFP, now the People's Party, for its campaign to amend Section 112 of the Criminal Code (the royal defamation law) during the 2023 election, and imposed a 10-year political ban on its

¹¹ *Thai referendum: Military-written constitution approved*, BBC (Aug. 7, 2016), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-36972396>; Patrick Jory, *The real meaning of Thailand's constitutional referendum*, East Asia Forum (Aug. 31, 2016), <https://eastasiaforum.org/2016/08/31/the-real-meaning-of-thailands-constitutional-referendum/>; *Thailand: Junta Bans Referendum Monitoring*, Human Rights Watch (Jun. 21, 2016), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/06/21/thailand-junta-bans-referendum-monitoring>; Adam Ramsey, *Thailand referendum: fears over fair vote as military cracks down on dissent*, The Guardian (Aug. 3, 2016), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/aug/03/thailand-referendum-fears-over-fair-vote-as-military-cracks-down-on-dissent>.

¹² *Thai referendum: Military-written constitution approved*, BBC (Aug. 7, 2016), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-36972396>.

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ *Thailand: Upcoming Election Fundamentally Flawed*, Human Rights Watch (Apr. 6, 2023), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/04/06/thailand-upcoming-election-fundamentally-flawed>; Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, 2017, *supra* note 5.

¹⁵ Hannah Ellis-Peterson, *Thai parties cry foul after election results favour military junta*, The Guardian (May 8, 2019), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/may/08/thai-parties-cry-foul-after-election-results-favour-military-junta>; *Thailand*, Freedom House (2025), <https://freedomhouse.org/country/thailand>.

¹⁶ Jonathan Head, *Thailand election: The party they can't stop winning*, BBC (May 12, 2023), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-65531574>; *Thai politics moves forward without Move Forward*, East Asia Forum (July 31, 2023), <https://eastasiaforum.org/2023/07/31/thai-politics-moves-forward-without-move-forward/>.

¹⁷ Rebecca Ratcliffe, *Thai court dissolves opposition party Future Forward*, The Guardian (Feb. 21, 2020), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/feb/21/thai-court-dissolves-opposition-party-future-forward>.

executive board.¹⁸

13. After a period of political turmoil, then-Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul dissolved the parliament in December 2025.¹⁹ Following the general election scheduled on February 8, 2026, the Bhumjaithai Party, led by Anutin Charnvirakul, won the most votes.²⁰ However, more than 100 complaints were filed alleging election irregularities, including vote-buying and a lack of transparency in reported results.²¹

TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION

14. Thailand has emerged as a key center of Southeast Asia's network of transnational repression.²² The regime cooperates closely with other countries ruled by authoritarian regimes, such as Cambodia, Malaysia, Vietnam, and China, to systematically suppress dissenters seeking refuge.²³ Exiled activists in Thailand have been subjected to surveillance and refoulement.²⁴

15. In December 2023, Thai police arrested Lù A Da, a Vietnamese activist and coordinator of the non-profit Hmong Human Rights Coalition.²⁵ Lù and his family fled to Thailand from Vietnam in 2020, due to religious persecution;²⁶ he had previously publicly

¹⁸ *Thailand: Court dissolves opposition Move Forward Party*, DW (Aug. 7, 2024), <https://www.dw.com/en/thailand-court-dissolves-opposition-move-forward-party/a-69875899>.

¹⁹ Kelly Ng and Thanyarat Dokson, *Thai PM dissolves parliament to 'return power to people'*, BBC (Dec. 12, 2025), <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c3v11rd200yo>.

²⁰ Jonathan Head and Thanyarat Dokson, *Thai PM claims election victory with conservatives well ahead of rivals*, BBC (Feb. 8, 2025), <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx2jn4z4eq0o>.

²¹ *Vote-buying tops poll complaints*, Bangkok Post (Feb. 10, 2026), <https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/politics/3193809/votebuying-tops-poll-complaints>; Panu Wongcha-um et al., *Thailand's election commission faces pressure over vote transparency*, Reuters (Feb. 11, 2026), <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/thailands-election-commission-faces-pressure-over-vote-transparency-2026-02-11/>.

²² Joshua Kurlantzick, *Thailand Has Become Southeast Asia's Hub of Transnational Repression*, Council on Foreign Relations (Oct. 9, 2025), <https://www.cfr.org/articles/thailand-has-become-southeast-asias-hub-transnational-repression>.

²³ *Id.*

²⁴ *Id.*

²⁵ *H'mong activist arrested by Thai police after denouncing Vietnam's rights violations*, Radio Free Asia (Dec. 13, 2023), <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/vietnam/vietnam-thailand-hmong-activist-arrested-12132023162244.html>.

²⁶ *Lu A Da*, Project 88 (Jun. 27, 2024), <https://the88project.org/profile/623/lu-a-da/>.

denounced the Vietnamese regime's human rights violations against ethnic Hmong communities.²⁷ Lù was detained at the Bangkok police station in Bangkok, before being sent to the Immigration Detention Center.²⁸ While in detention, Vietnamese officials visited and tried to force him to return to Vietnam. When Lù refused, the officials used his family in Vietnam to intimidate him.²⁹ Since his release in February 2024, he has remained at risk of being extradited back to Vietnam.³⁰ Lù is required to report to the Bangkok Immigration Bureau monthly so officials can continue to monitor him.³¹

16. In June 2024, Y Quynh Bdap, a Montagnard³² indigenous human rights activist and cofounder of the Montagnards Stand for Justice group, was detained in Bangkok at the request of Vietnamese officials.³³ Shortly thereafter, in November 2025, Bdap was extradited from Thailand to Vietnam.³⁴ Since 2018, Bdap has lived in Thailand and was recognized as a refugee by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).³⁵ In 2023, Vietnamese officials accused Bdap of alleged involvement in anti-

²⁷ Radio Free Asia, *supra* note. 25.

²⁸ *H'mong activist arrested by Thai police after denouncing Vietnam's rights violations*, Radio Free Asia (Dec. 13, 2023), <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/vietnam/vietnam-thailand-hmong-activist-arrested-12132023162244.html>; *Thailand: Vietnamese Refugees at Risk from Hanoi*, Human Rights Watch (Nov. 13, 2025), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/11/13/thailand-vietnamese-refugees-at-risk-from-hanoi>; *Alternative Report to the Human Rights Committee (CCPR) in response to the List of Issues relating to the fourth periodic report of Vietnam: Intensifying Transnational Repression*, The Refugee Board (May 26, 2025), <https://fn.dk/media/fplcm0dr/viet264.pdf>.

²⁹ *Thailand: Vietnamese Refugees at Risk from Hanoi*, Human Rights Watch (Nov. 13, 2025), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/11/13/thailand-vietnamese-refugees-at-risk-from-hanoi>.

³⁰ *Lu A Da*, Project 88 (Jun. 27, 2024), <https://the88project.org/profile/623/lu-a-da/>.

³¹ *Id.*

³² An indigenous community in the central highlands of Vietnam. *Collecting Carolina: Montagnards, Vietnam's Central Highlanders*, North Carolina Museum of History (n.d.), <https://www.ncmuseumofhistory.org/collecting-carolina-montagnards-vietnams-central-highlanders>.

³³ Jintamas Saksornchai, *Thailand extradites a Vietnamese activist despite concerns from rights groups*, AP (Dec. 1, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/thailand-vietnam-activist-extradition-bdap-aea1ce468be04d84e676633dfbef8329>; *Thailand: Montagnard Activist Extradited to Vietnam*, Human Rights Watch (Dec. 1, 2025), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/12/02/thailand-montagnard-activist-extradited-to-vietnam>.

³⁴ Jintamas Saksornchai, *Thailand extradites a Vietnamese activist despite concerns from rights groups*, AP (Dec. 1, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/thailand-vietnam-activist-extradition-bdap-aea1ce468be04d84e676633dfbef8329>; *Thailand: Montagnard Activist Extradited to Vietnam*, Human Rights Watch (Dec. 1, 2025), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/12/02/thailand-montagnard-activist-extradited-to-vietnam>.

³⁵ *Thailand: Montagnard Activist Extradited to Vietnam*, Human Rights Watch (Dec. 1, 2025), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/12/02/thailand-montagnard-activist-extradited-to-vietnam>.

regime riots in Dak Lak province.³⁶ In January 2024, Bdap was tried in absentia in the People's Court of Dak Lak province in Vietnam on terrorism charges and sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment.³⁷ His current whereabouts remain unknown.

17. In November 2024, Thai officials deported Pen Chan Sangkream, Hong An, Mean Chanthon, Yin Chanthou, Soeung Khunthea, and Vorn Chanratana, Cambodian activists linked to the dissolved opposition Cambodian National Rescue Party (CNRP),³⁸ to Cambodia.³⁹ The six were charged with treason under Article 453 of the Criminal Code in August 2024 for their Facebook comments critical of the Cambodian regime's role in the Cambodia-Laos-Vietnam Development Triangle Area.⁴⁰ The comments raised concerns over land concessions and the potential ceding of land and sovereignty to Vietnam.⁴¹ Upon their forced return, the activists were detained in separate pre-trial detentions.⁴² If found guilty, they face up to 10 years in prison.⁴³

18. In January 2025, Lim Kimya, a former Cambodian politician and member of the opposition CNRP, was fatally shot in Bangkok shortly after arriving in Thailand with his

³⁶ Jintamas Saksornchai, *Thailand extradites a Vietnamese activist despite concerns from rights groups*, AP (Dec. 1, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/thailand-vietnam-activist-extradition-bdap-aea1ce468be04d84e676633dfbef8329>.

³⁷ *Id.*; *Thailand: Montagnard Activist Extradited to Vietnam*, Human Rights Watch (Dec. 1, 2025), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/12/02/thailand-montagnard-activist-extradited-to-vietnam>; *Thai Authorities Forcibly Extradited Human Rights Defender Y Quynh Bdap from Bangkok to Vietnam*, Front Line Defenders (Dec. 3, 2025), <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/thai-authorities-forcibly-extradited-human-rights-defender-y-quynh-bdap-bangkok-vietnam>.

³⁸ Sopheng Cheang and David Rising, *Thailand departs 6 Cambodian activists facing treason charges over critical Facebook comments*, AP (Nov. 29, 2024), <https://apnews.com/article/cambodia-thailand-activists-deported-treason-prison-2aedefe40e50d594d9c7d8e4d4a0f6b>.

³⁹ Thailand and Cambodia allegedly have an informal agreement to facilitate the cross-border transfer of activists. See Sopheng Cheang and David Rising, *Thailand departs 6 Cambodian activists facing treason charges over critical Facebook comments*, AP (Nov. 29, 2024), <https://apnews.com/article/cambodia-thailand-activists-deported-treason-prison-2aedefe40e50d594d9c7d8e4d4a0f6b>; Jonathan Head, *A politician was shot dead in Bangkok. Did another country do it?*, BBC (Jan. 9, 2025), <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cdr0rx307p3o>.

⁴⁰ Sopheng Cheang and David Rising, *Thailand departs 6 Cambodian activists facing treason charges over critical Facebook comments*, AP (Nov. 29, 2024), <https://apnews.com/article/cambodia-thailand-activists-deported-treason-prison-2aedefe40e50d594d9c7d8e4d4a0f6b>; *Thailand: Cambodian Refugees Forcibly Returned*, Human Rights Watch (Nov. 29, 2024), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/11/29/thailand-cambodian-refugees-forcibly-returned>.

⁴¹ Sopheng Cheang and David Rising, *Thailand departs 6 Cambodian activists facing treason charges over critical Facebook comments*, AP (Nov. 29, 2024), <https://apnews.com/article/cambodia-thailand-activists-deported-treason-prison-2aedefe40e50d594d9c7d8e4d4a0f6b>.

⁴² *Thailand: Cambodian Refugees Forcibly Returned*, Human Rights Watch (Nov. 29, 2024), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/11/29/thailand-cambodian-refugees-forcibly-returned>.

⁴³ Sopheng Cheang and David Rising, *supra* note 41.

wife.⁴⁴ His killing has been widely seen as an example of transnational repression.⁴⁵ Although the gunman, former Thai marine, Ekkalak Paenoi was arrested and later sentenced to life imprisonment and ordered to pay approximately \$55,000 to Lim Kimya's family,⁴⁶ the case also implicated two Cambodian suspects.⁴⁷ Ly Ratanaksmeay, reportedly a former advisor to Hun Sen, was accused of recruiting the gunman, while Pich Kimsin was accused of helping identify Lim Kimya.⁴⁸ The Thai court issued arrest warrants for the two,⁴⁹ but their arrest status remains unknown. In April 2025, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet publicly expressed gratitude to then-Thai Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra for "not allowing any individuals to use Thai territory to interfere with the internal affairs" and stated that Cambodia would adopt the same approach.⁵⁰

19. In February 2025, Thai officials deported at least 40 Uyghurs⁵¹ to China, despite warnings from human rights groups that they could face persecution, torture, and imprisonment if forced to return.⁵² The Uyghurs were among hundreds initially detained in 2014 by Thai officials, after fleeing persecution under the Chinese Communist Party.⁵³

⁴⁴ *Former Cambodian opposition politician shot dead in Bangkok – reports*, The Guardian (Jan. 8, 2025), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jan/08/former-cambodian-opposition-politician-shot-dead-in-bangkok-reports>.

⁴⁵ *FORUM-ASIA condemns the killing of Cambodia's former opposition MP, Lim Kimya, in Thailand*, FORUM-ASIA (Jan. 9, 2025), <https://forum-asia.org/forum-asia-condemns-the-killing-of-cambodias-former-opposition-mp-lim-kimya-in-thailand/>.

⁴⁶ Koh Ewe, *Thai killer of Cambodian opposition politician sentenced to life in prison*, BBC (Oct. 3, 2025), <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c740yj8g1p2o>; *Thai hitman gets life sentence for murder of Cambodian opposition politician*, Reuters (Oct. 3, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/thai-hitman-gets-life-sentence-murder-cambodian-opposition-politician-2025-10-03/>.

⁴⁷ *Ekkalak Paenoi sentenced to life in prison for Lim Kimya's murder but his widow wants to know who ordered the killing*, ABC News (Oct. 3, 2025), <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-10-03/gunman-sentenced-over-lim-kimyias-murder-in-thailand/105851196>; Erich Parpart, *Thai Court Sentences Suspect to Life for Killing Former Cambodian Opposition MP Lim Kimya*, Thai Enquirer (Oct. 3, 2025), <https://www.thaienquirer.com/60791/thai-court-sentences-suspect-to-life-for-killing-former-cambodian-opposition-mp-lim-kim-ya/>.

⁴⁸ ABC, *supra* note 47.

⁴⁹ Pimuk Rakkanam, *Two suspects at large as Thai court sentences hitman for Cambodian politician killing*, Radio Free Asia (Oct. 3, 2025), <https://www.rfa.org/english/cambodia/2025/10/03/lim-kimya-killing-thailand-court-verdict/>.

⁵⁰ *Cambodian PM thanks Thailand for suppressing dissidents*, Radio Free Asia (Apr. 23, 2025), <https://www.rfa.org/english/cambodia/2025/04/23/cambodia-thailand/>.

⁵¹ A ethnic minority group currently facing mass persecution and human rights violations, including concentration camps in Northwest China.

⁵² Nat Sumon and Jennifer Jett, *Thailand departs 40 Uyghur detainees to China despite warnings from U.S. and rights groups*, NBC News (Feb. 27, 2025), <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/thailand-uyghur-detainees-china-warnings-rights-groups-rcna193958>.

⁵³ *Id.*

Those remaining in Thai detention expressed fear of being forcibly returned to China and refused to sign a voluntary repatriation document.⁵⁴

20. In August 2025, the Bangkok Art and Cultural Centre (BACC) removed artworks by Tibetan, Uyghur, and Hong Kong artists at the request of the Chinese Communist Party.⁵⁵ The art pieces were a part of the “Constellation of Complicity: Visualising the Global Machinery of Authoritarian Solidarity” exhibition, which highlighted the persecution under authoritarian regimes and the mistreatment of ethnic minorities in Burma, Iran, Russia, Syria, China, and the diaspora community.⁵⁶ After a visit by Chinese embassy staff, accompanied by Thai officials, the exhibition co-organizer received an email from BACC stating that it had been warned “that the exhibition may risk creating diplomatic tensions between Thailand and China” and that adjustments were required.⁵⁷

21. In September 2025, Murray Hunter, an Australian journalist, was arrested at the Suvarnabhumi Airport in Thailand and charged with criminal defamation under Section 328 of the Thai Criminal Code.⁵⁸ He was held overnight at Yannawa Police Station and later released on bail of 20,000 baht (approximately USD 643).⁵⁹ In November 2025, Hunter was indicted by Bangkok’s Criminal Court with four counts for defamation following a request from Malaysian officials.⁶⁰ The charges against him stemmed from his articles criticizing the Malaysia Communications and Multimedia Commission

⁵⁴ Tom Levitt, *Thailand condemned for ‘shameful’ mass deportation of Uyghur refugees to China*, The Guardian (Mar. 23, 2025), <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2025/mar/03/thailand-condemned-for-shameful-mass-deportation-of-uyghur-refugees-to-china>.

⁵⁵ Poppy McPherson and Napat Wesshasartar, *Exclusive: Thai gallery removes China-focused artworks after ‘pressure’ from Beijing*, Reuters (Aug. 11, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/thai-gallery-removes-china-focused-artworks-after-pressure-beijing-2025-08-08/>.

⁵⁶ *Constellation of Complicity: Visualising the Global Machinery of Authoritarian Solidarity*, Bangkok Art and Culture Centre (n.d.), <https://www.bacc.or.th/en/events/86981>.

⁵⁷ Poppy McPherson and Napat Wesshasartar, *Exclusive: Thai gallery removes China-focused artworks after ‘pressure’ from Beijing*, Reuters (Aug. 11, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/thai-gallery-removes-china-focused-artworks-after-pressure-beijing-2025-08-08/>.

⁵⁸ *Australian Journalist Indicted for Criminal Defamation, Faces up to 8 Years in Prison for Reporting on the Malaysian Government*, Thai Lawyers for Human Rights (Nov. 11, 2025), <https://tlhr2014.com/en/archives/80003>.

⁵⁹ *Id; Thailand: Australian journalist indicted for alleged Malaysian government defamation*, International Federation of Journalists (Nov. 25, 2025), <https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/press-releases/article/thailand-australian-journalist-indicted-for-alleged-malaysian-government-defamation>.

⁶⁰ *Australia–Malaysia–Thailand: PEN Centres urge action as writer Murray Hunter faces transnational repression*, PEN International (Nov. 27, 2025), <https://www.pen-international.org/news/australiamalaysiathailand-pen-centres-urge-action-as-writer-murray-hunter-faces-transnational-repression>; *Thailand: Australian Journalist Charged with Defamation*, Human Rights Watch (Nov. 26, 2025), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/11/26/thailand-australian-journalist-charged-with-defamation>.

(MCMC) for blocking content critical of the Malaysian regime and accusing its chair of a conflict of interest.⁶¹ If convicted, he faces a maximum two-year prison term and a fine of up to 200,000 baht (approximately USD 6,430).⁶² Hunter’s case is believed to be the first instance in which Thailand has pursued legal action against a journalist for reporting on a foreign government.⁶³ In January 2026, Hunter issued an apology to the MCMC and removed his blog posts critical of the agency.⁶⁴ He stated that the months-long ordeal had taken a toll on his health.⁶⁵

FREEDOMS OF ASSEMBLY, ASSOCIATION, AND EXPRESSION

22. Despite constitutional guarantees on the right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly and commitment to the ICCPR, the regime routinely suppressed dissenters and subjected them to intimidation and imprisonment. Following the youth-led pro-democracy movements in 2020, at least 1,980 people have been persecuted for their participation or political expression.⁶⁶

23. In August 2023, Sophon “Get” Surariddhidhamrong, a Thai pro-democracy activist, was sentenced to three years in prison under Section 112 of the Criminal Code, and six

⁶¹ *Australian living in Thailand faces trial over alleged criminal defamation of Malaysian government*, The Guardian (Nov. 20, 2025), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/nov/20/australian-murray-hunter-journalist-academic-trial-over-alleged-criminal-defamation-of-malaysian-government>.

⁶² *Australian living in Thailand faces trial over alleged criminal defamation of Malaysian government*, The Guardian (Nov. 20, 2025), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/nov/20/australian-murray-hunter-journalist-academic-trial-over-alleged-criminal-defamation-of-malaysian-government>.

⁶³ *Thailand: Australian journalist indicted for alleged Malaysian government defamation*, International Federation of Journalists (Nov. 25, 2025), <https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/press-releases/article/thailand-australian-journalist-indicted-for-alleged-malaysian-government-defamation>.

⁶⁴ Max Walden, *Australian writer Murray Hunter apologises to Malaysian regulator over criminal complaint in Thailand*, ABC (Jan. 22, 2026), <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-01-22/australian-writer-murray-hunter-faces-prosecution-in-thailand/106071904>.

⁶⁵ *Id.*

⁶⁶ *November 2025: Supreme Court sentenced “Udom” to 10 years under Section 112, ruling that the law also protects former kings, while Australian journalist was charged with defamation in Thailand by foreign government*, Thai Lawyers for Human Rights (Dec. 18, 2025), <https://tlhr2014.com/en/archives/80657>.

months for using the sound amplifier without permission.⁶⁷ In December 2023, Surariddhidhamrong was sentenced to three additional years in prison by the Thonburi Criminal Court, again under Section 112, for challenging the country's historical narratives.⁶⁸ In October 2024, Surariddhidhamrong was sentenced to another two years in prison under Section 112 of the Criminal Code for criticizing the regime's unequal distribution of COVID-19 vaccines in May 2022.⁶⁹ In September 2025, the Bangkok South Criminal Court sentenced Surariddhidhamrong to an additional two years in prison for his speech at the 2022 APEC rally.⁷⁰ Surariddhidhamrong is now serving 10 years and six months in prison.⁷¹

24. Arnon Nampa is a Thai human rights lawyer and activist, who has been re-arrested and imprisoned since September 2023 for his participation in peaceful protests and calls for democratic reform to the monarchy.⁷² In July 2025, he was sentenced to an additional two years and four months in prison by the Bangkok Criminal Court under Section 112 for his speech during a November 2020 protest.⁷³ This marked his tenth conviction, for a total of 29 years and one month in prison.

RECOMMENDATIONS

25. HRF calls on Thailand to:

⁶⁷ HRF Submits Joint UNWGAD Petition for Thai Pro-Democracy Activist Sapon 'Get' Surariddhidhamrong, Human Rights Foundation (Nov. 27, 2024), <https://hrf.org/latest/hrf-submits-joint-unwgad-petition-for-thai-pro-democracy-activist-sopon-get-surariddhidhamrong/>.

⁶⁸ *Id.*

⁶⁹ *Id.*

⁷⁰ "Get" and "Baipor" were sentenced to two years in prison each for violating Section 112 of the Thai Criminal Code (*Lèse-Majesty*) in connection with their statement read at the "WHAT HAPPENED IN THAILAND" event during the APEC 2022 protest, Thai Lawyers for Human Rights (Sep. 29, 2025), <https://tlhr2014.com/archives/78844>.

⁷¹ *Id.*

⁷² Arnon Nampa, Civic Space Case Tracker (Jan 12, 2026), <https://civicspace-casetracker.rfkhumanrights.org/cases/arnon-nampa/>.

⁷³ Thailand: Chronology of judicial harassment against human rights defender Arnon Nampa, CIVICUS (Jul. 24, 2025), <https://www.civicus.org/index.php/media-resources/news/7778-thailand-chronology-of-judicial-harassment-against-human-rights-defender-arnon-nampa>; Rights lawyer's jail time reaches 29 years, Bangkok Post (Jul. 8, 2025), <https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/3065350/rights-lawyers-jail-time-reaches-29-years>.

- a. Protect, respect, and promote, without reservation, the rights of all individuals to freedoms of expression and association, and ensure that activists, journalists, and opposition groups can operate peacefully and safely within Thailand, without fear of retribution in the form of censorship, harassment, arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, ill-treatment, among other types of punishment;
- b. Commit to ratifying critical international human rights instruments, including, but not limited to: the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights aiming to the abolition of the death penalty; and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families;
- c. End transnational repression and cease harassment of exiled activists and journalists in Thailand;
- d. Guarantee the freedoms of expression, assembly, and association, as set out in *Section 34* of the Thailand Constitution, by ceasing the harassment and repression of activists, especially in the form of legal harassment; and
- e. Repeal Section 112 of the Criminal Code, in line with international human rights laws, and immediately and unconditionally release all imprisoned prisoners of conscience.