



**33rd Regular Session of the UN Human Rights Council
Item 6: Universal Periodic Review Plenary on Thailand**

**Oral Statement Delivered by Chalida Tajaroensuk
On behalf of the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)**

Friday, 25 September 2016

Mr. President. FORUM-ASIA makes this statement in solidarity with People's Empowerment Foundation (PEF), Community Resources Centre Foundation (CRC) and Thai Lawyers for Human Rights (TLHR). We appreciate that the government has fully accepted 187 recommendations. However, we regret that it has not accepted recommendations related to key human rights concerns.

We are concerned that despite accepting several general recommendations to safeguard freedom of expression and human rights defenders, the government has shown no intention of easing existing restrictions on freedoms of expression, assembly and on human rights defenders. Since the coup in May 2014, at least 523 political activists and human rights defenders have been charged under lèse-majesté, sedition, criminal defamation, Computer Crime Act or military decrees banning freedom of expression and public gatherings.¹ Further, at least 208 people are charged with various offenses concerning the constitutional referendum including for allegedly violating the ban on public opinions on the draft constitution under the Referendum Act and the ban on public gatherings.²

We call on Thailand to implement recommendations it has accepted by releasing or dropping charges against political activists and human rights defenders in detention or facing charges for exercising their legitimate rights. Thailand must ensure safety of human rights defenders including those working on civil and political rights, rights of communities affected by development projects, extractive industries and those in the context of conflicts in the three Southern provinces. We call for the amendment or review of repressive provisions and repeal of all military decrees that restrict fundamental freedoms.

We welcome the end of military trials of civilians. We remain gravely concerned that this does not apply to cases pending at military courts. We urge the government to transfer all pending civilian cases since the 2014 coup to civilian courts and ensure that the practice of prosecuting civilians in military courts will never be enforced again. We call on the government to repeal decrees that empower the military to detain people up to seven days without judicial review, and end arbitrary arrest and detention of civilians in military compounds.

Lastly, we urge the government to immediately accept pending requests for official country visits by the Special Procedure mandate holders. We further call on the Government to guarantee the independence and effectiveness of National Human Rights Commission of Thailand (NHRCT) and ensure that the new NHRI law will fully comply with Paris Principles.

Thank you Mr President.

1 <https://freedom.ilaw.or.th/en/content/charges-against-individuals-after-2014-coup>
2 <http://www.tlhr2014.com/th/?p=1508> (Thai)