



Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances (AFAD)

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AFAD STATEMENT ON THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1992 BLACK MAY MASSACRE IN THAILAND

The *Phruetsapha Thamin*, or Black May, refers to the protest that erupted in Bangkok in 1992 against the government of General Suchinda Kraprayoon, and to the military crackdown that followed. At the height of the protest, between 17-20 May 1992, 200,000 people demonstrated in central Bangkok.

The protest, however, was met with incredible violence by the military, resulting in 52 officially confirmed deaths, many disappearances, hundreds of injured people, and over 3,500 arrests. Many of those who were arrested were also tortured while they were in custody.

Today is the 25th anniversary of the Black May massacre. Still, the families of those who disappeared during the military crackdown have been given no answers on the fate or whereabouts of their loved ones. Twenty five years have passed, and they continue to long for truth and justice that they remain deprived of.

Regrettably, human rights in Thailand have been under constant threat and attack to this day.

Following the military coup in 2014, which instated the junta rule named “National Council for Peace and Order”, Prime Minister Gen. Prayut Chan-ocha and his junta have been ruling with complete impunity, banning political activities and peaceful assemblies, arbitrarily arresting activists and dissidents, and using the crime of *lese majeste* (insulting the monarchy) to suppress free speech.

A few weeks ago, Mr. Prawet Prapanukul, a Thai human rights lawyer, disappeared after security forces raided his Bangkok home on April 29, 2017. Authorities finally acknowledged his arrest and detention on May 3, on the charges of *lese majeste*, sedition, and computer crimes.

Five more people have been arrested on the same day and kept incommunicado for days, without any access to their families and legal counsel, before being put in pre-trial detention in Bangkok.

Despite the many pledges made to the United Nations General Assembly and Human Rights Council to respect human rights and restore democratic rule, the disappearances of the prominent Muslim lawyer Somchai Neelapaijit in March 2004, and of the Karen activist Por Cha Lee “Billy” Rakchongcharoen in April 2014 have not been resolved.

AFAD calls on the Government of Thailand to fulfill its promise to ratify the UN Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and to recognize the competence of the UN Committee Against Enforced Disappearance. It should also enact domestic legislation criminalizing enforced disappearance and put an end to the complete impunity surrounding the commission of this crime.

Moreover, AFAD stands firmly in solidarity with all victims and their families and joins their voices in calling for the release of all disappeared, for truth and justice to be finally delivered and for the Thai government to respect its international human rights obligations to protect all people from any violation.

Signed by,



KHURRAM PARVEZ
Chairperson



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