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Thailand

Free Somyot and all political prisoners in Thailand! End the Medieval Lèse-Majesty Law!

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We, the undersigned organizations, are deeply concerned about the continuous repression against social activists under lèse-majesté law in Thailand, including Somyot Pruksakasemsuk, a labour activist who has been imprisoned without bail since 30 April, 2011.

We are concerned about Somyot's continuous imprisonment, his transfer to another prison and his bail request being denied numerous times.

Somyot is known for his tireless work in the workers' movement and to establish democratic trade unionism in Thailand. In 2007, he became Editor of the Voice of Taksin magazine (now called Red Power), a political publication opposed to the military coup. Somyot is the chair of the Union of Democratic Labour Alliance and the leader of 24th June democracy group, which was formed in the aftermath of the military coup in September 2006.

Somyot was arrested on 30 April 2011 by the Department of Special Investigation (DSI) by which he was accused for violation of section 112. Somyot's arrest came only five days after the launch of a petition for a parliamentary review to revoke Section 112 of the Criminal Code, which Somyot claims contradicts democratic and human rights principles. According to a document produced by the public-prosecutor, Somyot is also alleged to have allowed two articles that make negative references to the monarchy to be published in his magazine.

We are also concerned that Somyot's application for bail continues to be denied. The authorities have yet to provide any adequate justification for the prolonged detention of Somyot. We believe that such a measure is a severe violation of fundamental rights. We urge the government of Thailand to urgently address the matter of Somyot's right to bail.

Somyot is not the only victim being persecuted under the draconian lèse-majesté law. We are alarmed by the escalating misuse of the lèse-majesté law to silence social activists and political dissidents in the years following the 2006 military coup. We believe the continuous abuses of the lèse-majesté laws are politically motivated and detrimental to rebuilding democracy in Thailand. These laws must be reviewed in accordance with international human rights standards.

We call upon the authorities in Thailand to:

- Immediately drop all charges against Somyot Pruksakasemsuk and release him unconditionally;
- Immediately drop all charges based on the lèse-majesté laws against political activists, journalists and any other individuals;
- Grant amnesty to all those who have been convicted and sentenced to jail under lèse-majesté charges;
- Repeal Article 112 (lèse-majesté prohibition) of Thai Criminal Code, in order to restore freedom of expression and opinion in Thailand.

Initiated by:

Free Somyot and all political prisoners in Thailand! End the Medieval Lèse-Majesty Law!

Parti Socialis Malaysia (PSM)

Endorsed by:

Jaringan Rakyat Tertindas (JERIT), Malaysia
Suara Rakyat Malaysia (SUARAM), Malaysia
Malaysia Support Group for Democracy in Thailand, Malaysia
Community Action Network, Malaysia
Friends of Women, Malaysia
Labour Resource Centre, Malaysia

International groups:

Party of the Labouring Masses (PLM), the Philippines
People's Liberation Party, Indonesia
Reorganize Committee – Working People Association (KPO-PRP), Indonesia
Confederation of Congress of Indonesian Unions Alliance (KASBI), Indonesia
People's Democratic Party (PRD), Indonesia
Socialist Alliance, Australia
Labour Party Pakistan
Radical Socialist, India
Communist Party of Bangladesh (M-L), Bangladesh
La Aurora – POR Tendency in Izquierda Unida, Spain
Pioneer, Hong Kong