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Thailand

Launch of an Appeal against Repression in Thailand

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The crackdown on the opposition in Thailand and the abuses of the regime have not been met with the solidarity response and the international condemnations which the situation requires. The regime can thus freely operate and stifle the democratic movement.

News from Thailand is alarming: hundreds of people detained for violations of the Emergency Decree, including children; injured people are chained to their hospital bed, several assassinations of local leaders of the Red Shirts have taken place. The country is moving deeper into an authoritarian and military regime. The elite are even considering postponing the elections for six years, thus giving the Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva the possibility of leading the country for ten years against the will of the majority of Thai citizens.

Thai society is deeply unequal in every respect. The red shirts have expressed loud and clear their determination to fight the injustices they suffer: they express a class movement as well as one defending regional diversity, against the establishment in Bangkok.

The Red Shirts movement is not without divisions and problems. Some support the return of former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, a corrupt politician. But overwhelmingly, the movement expresses the revolt of the downtrodden of society whose demands are democracy and social justice.

By demonstrating in the streets of Bangkok, the Red Shirts have only been exercising a basic right: the right to express one's political views and demands. Abhisit Vejjajiva bears full responsibility for the repression and the casualties because, rather than holding meaningful negotiations, he gambled, in vain, on the disintegration of the movement. He then used the repressive legal arsenal (accusations of conspiracy against the monarchy and of terrorism), and finally organized a bloodbath.

This appeal has two simple aims: kick-starting solidarity on the international level, and calling for the Thai regime to stop the repression against the Red Shirts, and to respect fundamental freedoms.

More than a hundred university lecturers, researchers, writers, journalists, trade union and political activists, and elected representatives from all regions of the world have already signed the appeal. New signatures are expected.

Against Repression in Thailand

For more than two months, the Red Shirts have mobilised with decisiveness and purpose in the streets of Bangkok to support their demands of democracy and social justice.

The government led by Abhisit Vejjajiva chose to respond to these demands with violence and repression. It committed a serious violation against human rights when it authorised the use of military hardware to dissolve the demonstrations. The result was extremely serious: there were at least 89 dead and nearly 2000 wounded.

Today, democratic rights are not respected: there are 99 arrest warrants against opponents. The places where most of the detainees are held are kept secret. The government has imposed censorship on the alternative media. The penalties incurred are especially severe: from 3 to 15 years for "lese-majesty" to the death penalty for "terrorism".

The Red Shirts are being treated by the government as if they were "terrorists". It is a complex movement, but its members are mainly ordinary poor people whose most elementary political rights −like the respect due to the result of an electionâ€"have been ignored.

The Thai government can continue to repress the Thai people freely, because its constant violations against human rights have not been confronted by international solidarity and condemnation. We make a call to all progressive and democratic organizations to demand the end of the repression and the respect of fundamental rights in Thailand; to start an international campaign to obtain the freedom of political prisoners and the end of intimidation and inculpation of the Red Shirts.

We demand from the Thai government that it raises the State of Urgency and immediately re-establishes democratic freedoms in the country; that it ends the repression against the Red Shirts and that all prisoners are freed without any delay.

First signatories:

- 1. Samir ABI, General Secretary, Attac (Togo)
- 2. Gilbert ACHCAR, SOAS, Professor of the University of London (UK)
- 3. Christophe AGUITON, Researcher (France)
- 4. Osman AKINHAY, Writer and editor of Mesele Revue (Turkey)
- 5. Greg ALBO, Professor at the York University, Toronto (Canada)
- 6. Josep Maria ANTENTAS, Professor of sociology, Universitat Autonoma de Barcelona (Catalonia)
- 7. Daniel ANTONINI, International Secretary of PRCF (France)
- 8. Zely ARIANE, Spokesperson of KPRM-PRD (Indonesia)
- 9. Salvador LOPEZ ARNAL, Writer and Professor-tutor of Mathematics, UNED (Spain)
- 10. AU Loongyu, Editorial board member of China Labor Net (Hong Kong)
- 11. Walter BAIER, Coordinator of the European network Transform ! Editor of the magazine Transform !, Vienne (Austria)
- 12. Jean BATOU, Professor at the University of Lausanne (Switzerland)
- 13. Pierre BEAUDET, Professor at the University of Ottawa (Canada)
- 14. Walden BELLO, Member of the Congress, Akbayan representative (Philippines)

- 15. Paul BENEDEK, Thai Red Australia (Australia)
- 16. Olivier BESANCENOT, Spokesperson of NPA (France)
- 17. Hugo BLANCO, Director of « Lucha IndÃ-gena », (Peru)
- Saumen BOSE, Radical Socialist (India)
- 19. Tapan BOSE, Radical Socialist (India)
- 20. Peter Boyle, National Convener, Socialist Alliance (Australia)
- 21. Alex Callinicos, Professor, chair of European Studies at King's College London (UK)
- 22. Porferia CARPINA, KASAMMAKA (Philippines)
- 23. Mabel CARUMBA, Mindanao Peoples' Peace Movement (Philippines)
- 24. Kunal CHATTOPADHYAY, Professor of Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University, Radical Socialist (India)
- 25. Kamal Mitra CHENOY, Chair, Centre for Comparative Politics & Political Theory, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi (India)
- 26. Ashok CHOUDHARY, National Forum of Forest People and Forest Workers (India)
- 27. Annick COUPÉ, Spokesperson of Union Syndicale Solidaires (France)
- 28. Cyc CUABO, ERDAC, Inc. (Philippines)
- 29. Lucile DAUMAS, Attac (Morocco)
- 30. Sushovan DHAR, Radical Socialist (India)
- 31. Jean-Michel DOLIVO, Lawyer and MP, Lausanne (Switzerland)
- 32. Jacques FATH, international head, PCF (France)
- 33. Paulina FERNANDEZ CHRISTLIEB, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Mexico)
- 34. Carlos FERNANDEZ LIRIA, Professor of the Universidad Complutense de Madrid (Spain)
- 35. Mano GANESAN, Convener of Civil Monitoring Commission (Sri Lanka)

- 36. George GASTAUD, Philosopher, National Secretary of PRCF (France)
- 37. Franck GAUDICHAUD University of Grenoble (France)
- 38. Elisabeth GAUTHIER, Managing Director of Espaces Marx, co-Editor of the European revue Transform! (France)
- 39. P.T. GEORGE, Intercultural Resources, Delhi (India)
- 40. Susan GEORGE, Writer (France)
- 41. Jocelyne HALLER, Member of the Constitutional Assembly of Geneva county (Switzerland)
- 42. Adolfo GILLY, Historian, Professor at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Mexico)
- 43. Sam GINDIN, Packer Visitor in Social Justice, York University (Canada)
- 44. Rufino GONZAGA, Ranao Tri-People Movement for Genuine Peace and Development (Philippines)
- 45. Karl GRÜNBERG, Trade-Union Secretary, SSP, Geneva (Switzerland)
- 46. Sébastien GUEX, Professor at the University of Lausanne (Switzerland)
- 47. Priyani GUNARATNA, Rural Services of SLBC (Sri Lanka)
- 48. Shubhra GURURANI, Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, York University, Toronto (Canada)
- 49. Jean-Marie HARRIBEY, Economist, Professor at the Université Bordeaux IV (France)
- 50. Nasir HASHIM, State Assemblyman (Malaysia)
- 51. Mazher HUSSAIN, COVA (India)
- 52. Linus JAYATILAKE, President of the United Federation of Labor (Sri Lanka)
- 53. Andrée JELK-PEILA, President of the Public Service Trade-Union Cartel, Geneva (Switzerland)
- 54. Dr. JEYAKUMAR, Member of Parliament (Malaysia)
- 55. Abdul KHALID, Focal Person, CADTM-Pakistan (Pakistan)
- 56. Alain KRIVINE, Former European MP (France)

- 57. Hayri KOZANOGLU, Professor at the ?stanbul University of Marmara, former President of the Ã-DP (Turkey)
- 58. Zbigniew Marcin KOWALEWSKI, Researcher and editor (Poland)
- 59. Herman KUMARA, National Fisheries Solidarity Movement (Sri Lanka)
- 60. Kenji KUNITOMI, JCRL (Japan)
- 61. Max LANE, Asian Studies, University of Sydney (Australia)
- 62. Bernard LANGLOIS, researcher North/South relations (France)
- 63. Ronald LARA, IIRE-Manila (Philippines)
- 64. Cha N. LAVANDER, Mindanao Tri-People Youth Center (Philippines)
- 65. Doug LORIMER, Editor of Direct Action (Australia)
- 66. Francisco LOUCA, MP, Bloc de Gauche representative (Portugal)
- 67. Javier MAESTRO, Professor at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, (Spain)
- 68. Michael Löwy, Professor, Emerited research director, CNRS (France)
- 69. Acmad MACATIMBOL, Lanao Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (Philippines)
- 70. Lisa MACDONALD, International Relations Convener, Socialist Alliance (Australia)
- 71. Ign MAHENDRA K, Chairperson, Working People Association (PRP) (Indonesia)
- 72. Claire MARTENOT, member of the Constitutional Assembly of the Geneva county (Switzerland)
- 73. Soma MARIK, Associate Professor of History, RKSM Vivekananda Vidyabhavan, member, Nari Nirjatan Pratirodh Mancha (Forum Against Women's Oppression, Calcutta) (India)
- 74. Emre Ã-NGUN, Assistant Professor of the European University of Lefke, Head of Applied Sciences School (Northern Cyprus)
- 75. Gustave MASSIAH, Founding member of CEDETIM /IPAM (France)
- 76. Roberto MONTOYA, Writer, Madrid (Spain)

- 77. Braulio MORO, Journalist, Radio France Internationale, Latin America Section (France)
- 78. Aldjia MOULAÃ, ACOR SOS Racisme (Switzerland)
- 79. P.K. MURTHY, Citu (India)
- 80. SaÃ-d NAJIHI, Attac (Marocco)
- 81. Alessandro PELIZZARI, Trade-union secretary, Unia, Geneva (Switzerland)
- 82. William A. PELZ, Doctor at the Institute of Working Class History, Chicago (USA)
- 83. John PERCY, RSP National Secretary (Australia)
- 84. Manuel PEREZ ROCHA, Associate Fellow, Global Economy Project. Institut for Policy Studies, Washington (USA)
- 85. Philippe PIGNARRE, Editor (France)
- 86. Tommy ARDIAN PRATAMA, Institute for Crisis and Alternative Development Strategy (Indonesia)
- 87. Mimoun RAHMANI, Economist, ATTAC and CADTM Maroc (Morocco)
- 88. Pierre ROUSSET, Europe solidaire sans frontières (France)
- 89. Danielle SABAI, Journalist (France)
- 90. Enis Riza SAKIZLI, Film Director (Turkey)
- 91. Ma. Gittel SAQUILABON, Sumpay Mindanao (Philippines)
- 92. Mehmet SOGANCI, President of the Chamber of Engineers and Architects (Turkey)
- 93. Tanie SUANO, CONZARRD (Philippines)
- 94. Aparna SUNDAR, Assistant Professor, Department of Politics and Public Administration, Ryerson University, Toronto (Canada)
- 95. Hakan TAHMEZ, Spokesperson of the Peace Assembly (Turkey)
- 96. Faroog TARIQ, Spokesperson of the LPP (Pakistan)

97. Alper TAS, President of Ã-DP (Turkey) 98. Eric TOUSSAINT, CADTM (Belgium) 99. Terry TOWNSEND, Editor, Links International Journal of Socialist Renewal (Australia) 100. Enzo TRAVERSO, Assistant Professor at the University of Picardie (France) 101. Charles-André UDRY, Editor (Switzerland) 102. Ahmet ÜMIT, Writer (Turkey) 103. Murat UYURKULAK, Writer (Turkey) 104. Achin VANAIK, Professor of International Relations and Global Politics, Head of the Department of Political Science, University of Delhi (India) 105. Pierre VANEK, Secretary of solidaritéS and former MP of the Federal Parliament (Switzerland) 106. Vikramabahu KARUNARATNE, University of Peradeniya (Sri Lanka) 107. Esther VIVAS, member of the Centro de Estudios sobre Movimientos Sociales de la Universidad Pompeu Fabra (Catalonia) 108. Peter WATERMAN, Reinventing Labour (Netherlands) NEW signatures: 109. Yigit BENER, Writer, (Turkey) 110. Wilfred DCOSTA, Indian Social Action Forum (INSAF) (India) 111. Sonny MELENCIO, Chairperson Partido Lakas ng Masa, (Party of the Laboring Masses) (Philippines) 112. Reihana MOHIDEEN, Transform Asia (Philippines) 113. Kevin HEWISON, Director, Carolina Asia Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (USA) 114. Molo ROMOLO, lawyer, Genève (Switzerland) 115. Charles BARBEY, physicist, Genève (Switzerland)

- 116 Nicola CLANFERONI, researcher, Genève (Switzerland)
- 117. Béatrice BARBEY, Public Services Trade-Union (SSP), Genève (Switzerland)
- 118. Alain GONTHIER, District Counsellor, Vevey (Switzerland)
- 119. Matteo PRONZINI, national representative of UNIA trade-union, Bellinzona (Switzerland)
- 120. Dr. Peter STRECKEISEN, sociologist, University of Bâle, Bâle (Switzerland)
- 121. Sarah SCHILLIGER, senior lecturer University of Bâle, Bâle (Switzerland)
- 122. Lopreno DARIO, teacher, SSP trade-union, Genève (Switzerland)
- 123. Krauer ROLF, UNIA trade-union, Zurich (Switzerland)
- 124. Marie-Christine BERNA, SSP trade-union, Lausanne (Switzerland)
- 125. Zuppinger URS, urbaniste, Lausanne (Switzerland)
- 126. David BROWN, Wanneroo, Western (Australia)
- 127. Alain CASTAN, NPA (France)
- 128. Carlos Sardiña Galache, Journalist (Spain)
- 129. Adam Whiteley, artist, (formally Bangkok) New York (USA)
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- 131. Monique Crinon Cedetim/Ipam (France)
- 132. Belle Kukreja, Education management and training, Bangkok (Thailand)
- 133. Anan Sirisombatwattana (USA)
- 134. Christian Mahieux, spokesperson, Union syndicale Solidaires (France)
- 135. Piyabut Burikham, lecturer at Chulalongkorn University (Thailand)
- 136. Anourack Phiphaksa (Germany)

137. Maisuwan Nichakun, Architect (Singapore) 138. Than Than May, researcher, Paris (France) 139. Connie Shaw, Madison, Wisconsin (USA) 140. Jean-François Marquis, trade-unionist SSP, Lausanne (Switzerland) 141. Geneviève De Rham, Prof. HES, Lausanne (Switzerland) 142. Bernard Bovay, actuaire ASA, Lausanne (Switzerland) 143. Jirat Satjipanon, PHD Student (South Korea) 144. Tanni Renmark, Photographer & Student (Sweden) 145. Phised Naphachaithep, Thai Red Australia Group for Democracy (Australia) 146. Numchai Sukumvanich, Engineer, Khonthai (U.S.A) 147. Peach Sukumvanich, Airport Passenger Service Representative, Khonthai (U.S.A) 148. Dr Paniti Sukumvanich, Doctor and Profesor in Medicine, Khonthai (U.S.A) 149. Dr. Siam Sukumvanich, Doctor in Medicine, Khonthai (U.S.A) 150. Chamai Chatchvasvimol, Hannover (Germany) 151. Pacharin Sribhud, retired business owner, Bangkok & New York (Thailand-USA) 152. Peter Limqueco, Manila (Philippines) 153. Dr Jim Taylor, Senior Lecturer in Anthropology, The University of Adelaide, South Australia (Australia) 154. Jaruke Tharuk, Sarabury (Thailand) 155. Viriya Loewisetkun, and my family (Thailand) 156. Sean Smith, CAW (Canada) 157. Phongsan Meekunnasombat, Ph.D, Freelance Writer (Thailand)

158. Arnaud Dubus, French journaliste based in Thailand (France-Thailand) 159. II-bung Choi, Member of All Together (South Korea) 160. Seong-jin Jeong, Professor of Economics, Gyeongsang National University (South Korea) 162. Alexis Bertolino (France) 163. Jean-Michel Hennequin, gardien d'immeuble, Paris (France) 164. Silvia Cattori, journaliste (France) 165. Alvin Lim, University of Hawaii at Manoa (USA) 166. Chatchawal POONPUN, Faculty of Science, ChiangMai University (Thailand) 167. Yongyos Jariya MD. Retired officer from Government hospital (Thailand) 168. I, Somphong, Banker, Lao PDR (Laos) 169. Yaoline Butang, Assistante, Bangkok (ThaÃ-lande) 170. Henri Descomptes, retraité, Bangkok (ThaÃ-lande) 171. Dr Leyla Pekoz Caliskan, Paris (France) 172. Sevim Hazine, lawyer, Bern (Switzerland) 173. Kemal Pekoz, Editor, Istanbul (Turkey) 174. Dr Sekan Saruhan, Diyarbakir (Turkey) 175. Prof Narmin Muhamed Amin, Erbil (Irak) 176. Dr Gulen Iletmis, Diyarbakir (Turkey) 177. Fadil Ozcelik, Journalist, Bonn (Germany) 178. Hem-i Tazi Engineur, Ottowa (Canada) 179. Jean-Robert VELVETH, web freelancer, NPA (France)

180. Hap Sendelbach, gesellschafter im ruhestand, Bangkok 10120 (Thailand) 181. Sakol Srihakam, Lampang (Thailand) 182. Sujeera Pengya (Thailand) 183. Dominic Armand Meyer, Citizen, Zurich (Switzerland) 184. Diane Largs (UK) 185. Kutlu Tunca, writer/translator (Turkey) 186. Somsak Rachso, Thai Red Australia (Australia) 187. Marie-Noelle PEE, 64800 Coarraze (France) 188. Mr. Kongkiat Naksook, Graphic Design, Bangkok (Thailand) 189. Laurence BEAUPAIN, Le Fayet (France) 190. Jacques de Rostolan, retired, 41500 MER (France) 191. David POTENT - Artiste numérique (France) 192. Léopold Goossens, retired, Khon Kaen (Thailand) 193. Gareth Mitchell, Mahidol Student (UK-Thailand) 194. Mohamed Achbani, Intérimaire, Angers (France) 195. Shawn Bosin, IT Director, Reno NV (USA) 196. Klaus Hartmann, Vice President of World Union of Freethinkers, Offenbach (Germany) 197. Christine M ZABALA (France) 198. Mrs. Anchana SPECK-KONGPATANAYUEN, Ossingen (Switzerland) 199. Pascal Engelmajer, retired, Hua Hin (Thailand) 200. Lyliane Rivera, Cannes (France)

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204. Pongsak Phusitsakul M.D., General Surgeon (Thailand)
205. Mr. Chiravat Thienngern, Employee, Bangkok (Thailand)
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223. Monson Ondang, medical student (Thailand)
224. Ms Waraporn Thamcharoen employee, Bangkok (Thailand)
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236. Rungravee Udomwathavee (Thailand)
237. Busbabun Udomwathavee (Thailand)
238. Raveevalai Udomwathavee (Thailand)
239. Dr Myo Nyunt, Political Economist, Democracy for Free Burma Action Group, Perth, Western Australia (Australia)
240. Miss.Janveerawong Benjarmas (Thailand)
241. Phiradit Worawitphinyo, Victoria University's Student (New Zealand)
242. Krit Kitwiwatkul (Thailand)

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264. Julien Lusson, Ipam (France)
265. Woan-Ping Liu (USA)
266. Sothy, French Tamil man for Justice and Peace (France)
267. Thiru, French, Tamil (France)
268. Nutsinee Suriyaruangsiri (Thailand)
269. Natagron Tyagronwong (Thailand)
270. Komolwech Hiranwatcharawong, people in Thailand
271. Pascal Boissel, Poitiers (France)
272. Jim Clark (USA)
273. Data Brainanta, People's Democratic Party (PRD) (Indonesia)
274. Nadège EDWARDS (France)
275. Emma Murphy, co-editor, Green Left Weekly (Australia)
276. Stuart Munckton, co-editor, Green Left Weekly (Australia)
277. Simon Butler, journalist, Green Left Weekly (Australia)
278. Peter Robson, journalist, Green Left Weekly (Australia)
279. Tony Iltis, journalist, Green Left Weekly (Australia)
280. Gustavo Buster, revista Sin Permiso (Spain)
281. Twiggy Wild, Housewife (Thailand)
282. Josing Demit, Mindanao Tri-People Women Resource Center (MTWRC), Inc, 9600 Cotabato, Mindanao (Philippines)
283. Charatroek Nipitrajchanaphon, Bangkok (Thailand)
284. Elizabeth M. Padilla, SALAM, Inc. (Philippines)

285. Ms. Thiprachara Suphanichsirisakul (Thailand)
286. Tony Hedges
287. Wanpen Hedges
288. Khairodin L. Amerol, Mindanao Peoples' Peace Movement (MPPM) - Bangsamoro Secretariat. Susatainable Alternatives fo rthe Advancement of MIndanao (SALAM), Inc. Iligan Clty, Mindanao (Philippines)
289. Haydee A. Lodovece, SALAM, Inc. (Philippines)
290. Tipakson Manpati (Thailand)
291. Srinuan (Thailand)
292. Paparsiri Hemmunt (Saudi Arabia)
293. Kaewta Kerddeelarp, People of Thailand (Thailand)
294. Anan Samanchua, Bangkok (Thailand)
295. Suthee Polachai, People of Thailand (Thailand)
296. Vhong Fenis, Alyansa ng mga Mamamayan para sa Karapatang Pantao (Peoples' Alliance for Human Rights) - Cotabato City, Mindanao (Philippines)
297. James Lauderdale, Civil Service Advocate (USA)
298. Robert Mertzig, sociologist (Luxembourg)
299. Capt.Trakul Pumsnoh MNI (Thailand)
300. Harry HERBAUT, employee, Air France (France)
301. Chompoonuch Carey (UK)
302. Surachanee Yaoath, teacher (Thailand)
303. Somsak Sakulsurarat, Doctor of Dental Surgery (Germany)
304. Gwenaelle EAN, Le Loroux Bottereau (France)

305. Sonia Clément, professeur (France) 306. Mrs. Monchaya Jadson Cable, (Thailand) 307. Pipat Panprom (Thailand) 308. Songpol (Thailand) 309. Teeranun (Thailand) 310. Qittipong (Thailand) 311. Komolwech (Thailand) 312. Julien Zumtangwald, étudiant, sociology, Aix-En-Provence (France) 313. Mr. Thongchai Phadungnuek, Ayutthaya (Thailand) 314. Ian Parker, Professor of Psychology, Manchester Metropolitan University (UK) 315. Eakkachai Jaikaew, Engineer (Thailand) 316. Phyllis Sartison, Plymouth (UK) 317. Chamnan Chanruang (Canada) 318. Suchada S. for Poor People of Thailand (Thailand) 319. Mr. Suppiya Siranan, Nakhon Ratchasima, (Thailand) 320. Judy Ann Miranda, Secretary General, Partido ng Manggagawa (Philippines) 321. René RENAUDIN, retired, member of the NPA in Indre et Loire (France) 322. Nilkangkha Khonthai, political science student (Thailand-USA) 323. Shahbaz Bajwa, Labour Education Foundation, Lahore (Pakistan) 324. Sarayuth Nawarattanakorn, Pakchong Korat (Thailand) 325. Dr Danaya Holloway (U.K.)

326. Virat Vongjintanarak
327. Elodie BIETRIX, lycéenne, Saint-Etienne (France)
328. Josette Trat, Senior Lecturer, sociology, Université de Paris VIII, member of the GTM (Genre, travail, mobilités) (France)
329. Mr. Somphop Sanitaugson, Lawyer (Thailand)
330. Vorapong Pongvisut (Thailand)
331. Udom Tintachat (Thailand)
332. Rani Mungsommai (Thailand)
333. Sirinun Tongsaisan (Thailand)
334. Sangtein Punpiput (Thailand)
335. Sureeporn Sutthitearranun (Thailand)
336. Arthit Jiamrattanyoo (Thailand)
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338. Wilai Kirdpole, Assist.Prof.Doctor at Khon Kaen University (Thailand)
339. Mrs. Issaraporn Triratrungraung, Thai Government nurse (Thailand)
340. Darunee Luenam (Thailand)
341. Tipsuda, Sydney (Australia)
342. Sam Corlett, student, Sydney (Australia)
343. Dr.Varodom Toochinda, Researcher/Lecturer, Kasetsart University (Thailand)
344. Lydia C. Mangcao-Chairperson, DKMP-Lanao, Inc. (Philippines)
345. Bernd Mechsner
346. Woan-Ping Liu (U.S.A)

347. Pipob Udomittipong (Siam/Thailand)
348. Jette Lulu (Denmark)
349. Rolf Krauer, Secrétaire syndical UNIA, CH-8055 Zürich (Switzerland)
350. Aida F. Santos Chairperson, Board of Directors, WeDpro, Inc. (Philippines)
351. Vee Intarakratug, journalist (Thailand)
352. Ismar Indarsyah, Liga Mahasiswa Nasional untuk Demokrasi (LMND), National Student League for Democracy, Sulawesi Tenggara (Indonesia)
353. Christian RONSE, Professeur des Universités, Strasbourg (France)
354. Florent Jouffret, teacher (France)
355. S. Boodrod, Writer, Advising Editor, Red on the Rock, Thai red in Holland, Amsterdam (The Netherlands)
356. S. Notayah, Writer & Editor, Red on the Rock, Thai red in Holland (The Netherlands)
357. Ms. Supicha Keosathit (Thailand)
358. Yves THEBAULT, NPAR (Ile de la Reunion)
359. Mario Milan, musician, Roma (Italy)
360. Oumar CHEGOU, Student, Marrakech (Niger-Maroc)
361. Sally Rousset, Centre Lebret-Irfed (France)
362. Lionel RETORNAZ, Film maker (France)
363. kamal Vichitsarasatra
364. Tanom Piroh - Chiang Mai (Thailand)
365. Paulus Suryanta Ginting, KPRM PRD (Indonesia)
366. Manophat Kaiyaraj (Thailand)
367. Jason Devine, Student at University of Calgary (Canada)

368. James McLeary
369. Krikkajorn KUANSOM
370. Mary Joy B. Villagomez BUKAS-SND Women Organization, Mindanao, Philippines
371. Anon Jitwaree, Bangkok (Thailand)
372. NINJA PINK Ocummi
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375. Suchai Treeratt, Associate Professor Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University, (Thailand)
376. Ekkasak Yooktanan, Assistant Professor Faculty of Humanity and Social Sciences, Khon Kaen University, (Thailand)
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- 420. Ragip Duran, Journalist (Turkey)
- 420. Kanchanad Thahom Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University (Thailand)
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- 422. Mary Joy B. Villagomez BUKAS-SND Women Organization, Mindanao (Philippines)
- 423. Vhong Fenis Alyansa ng mga Mamamayan para sa Karapatang Pantao (Peoples' Alliance for Human Rights) Cotabato City, Mindanao (Philippines)
- 424. Josing Demit Mindanao Tri-People Women Resource Center (MTWRC), Inc, 9600 Cotabato, Mindanao (Philippines)
- 425. Miguel Salas, director La Aurora y Sin Muro/POR (Spain)
- 426. Daniel Mathews, Bloque Socialista (Perú)
- 427. Claude BOUTIN, Professor (retired), biology & ecology, University Paul Sabatier, Toulouse (France)

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