



Thailand's Constitution Referendum Must be Free and Fair

The Thai Junta has blocked all efforts to establish monitoring mechanisms for the nationwide constitutional referendum process. Prime Minister Gen. Prayut Chan-ocha, the Head of the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) that is responsible for the implementation of the referendum, has warned the people of Thailand that anyone monitoring support for the referendum will be arrested and tried before a military court.

Article 61 of the Referendum Act, which was enacted in April 2016, imposes a prison sentence of up to 10 years for opposing the draft constitution or disrupting the referendum including the blanket ban on public discussion. The attempt of the military government to silence the people of Thailand as well as the action of intimidation and threats to the process of monitoring of the referendum process that should be free, open and fair is proof they want to prolong the military rule.

The Asia Democracy Network (ADN) calls for an open, fair, and free constitutional referendum process and for the Thai Junta to allow for civil society regardless of their political affiliation to conduct pre-referendum and referendum monitoring activities. The right to freedom of expression, a basic right, should be observed and allow for the people of Thailand to voice their opinions. With only a referendum process that is participatory and inclusive of all people of Thailand will it bring peace and prosperity. The ADN and the rest of the international community emphasize that we will only recognize a referendum that follows international standards.