



Joint media release

## **Thai government fails to accept recommendations to repeal restrictive laws at UN periodic review**

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Human rights groups CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation and the Asia Democracy Network (ADN) are disappointed by the Thai government's failure to accept recommendations to repeal restrictive laws as recommended by members states of the UN Human Right Council, despite making commitments to civic freedoms. These actions highlight the inconsistent approach of the government to human rights that is undermining its credibility.

Thailand's human rights record was reviewed by the UN Human Rights Council on 10th November 2021. Ahead of the review CIVICUS and the Asia Democracy Network (ADN) submitted a [report](#) to the Council highlighting a range of concerns including the use of criminal defamation, lèse -majesté (royal defamation) and other restrictive laws against activists and journalists as well as harassment, physical attacks and allegations of enforced disappearances of activists. The report also documented the crackdown on peaceful protests, the arrests and criminalisation of protesters and use of excessive force by the police.

Our organisations welcome the decision by the Thai government to accepted recommendations to guarantee civil society space and ensure that laws and policies on the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and association comply with relevant international human rights standards.

We also welcome the support for recommendations to foster a safe, respectful and enabling environment for civil society, ensure human rights defenders especially women human rights defenders are free from persecution, intimidation and harassment for prompt and thorough investigation of attacks.

However, at the same time, the government appears to contradict its position on civic freedoms by the recommendations it has failed to support. These include a failure to accept recommendations to review lèse-majesté provisions (Article 112), the Computer Crimes Act and criminal defamation provisions. As they are now, these laws are inconsistent with international laws and standards relating to the rights to freedom of expression and have been used to criminalise and silence activists, opposition politicians, academics and journalists

Further, the government is adamant in pushing ahead with Draft Act of Operations of Not-for Profit Organizations that will put civil society at risk. The current draft law contains excessively restrictive measures curtailing their rights to freedom of expression, association, peaceful assembly and other human rights, including facing arbitrary interference with the right to privacy. We urge the Thai government to withdraw the Draft Act immediately.

The UPR is a process, in operation since 2008, which examines the human rights records of all 193 UN Member States every four and a half years. The review is an interactive dialogue between the State delegation and members of the Council and addresses a broad range of human rights topics. Following the review, a report and recommendations are prepared, which is discussed and adopted at a subsequent session of the Human Rights Council.

Civic space in Thailand is rated **Repressed** by the [CIVICUS Monitor](#)