



[Statement] THAILAND: Government must grant human rights defender Arnon Nampa temporary release on bail, uphold freedom of expression and peaceful assembly

GENEVA, Switzerland (10 June 2025) – The Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA), CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation, and Asia Democracy Network (ADN) jointly condemn the recent conviction, sentencing, and continued arbitrary detention of Thai human rights lawyer and pro-democracy activist Arnon Nampa under Section 112 of the Thai Criminal Code or *lèse-majesté* (royal defamation) law.

This marks the eighth *lèse-majesté* conviction against Arnon. He now [faces](#) cumulative prison sentences of 22 years, 25 months, and 20 days.

All verdicts are not yet final and are still under appeal. However, Arnon has been held in pre-trial and post-conviction detention for prolonged periods. His requests for temporary release on bail have been repeatedly denied. He has been detained at the Bangkok Remand Prison since 26 September 2023.

These actions are emblematic of a broader pattern of judicial harassment against human rights defenders as well as ordinary citizens peacefully exercising their rights to freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly.

We call on the Thai Government to grant temporary release on bail to Arnon while awaiting the dismissal of his convictions and charges. Bail conditions must not undermine his right to a fair trial and arbitrarily restrict his fundamental freedoms.

What happened

On 28 May 2025, the Bangkok Criminal Court [found](#) Arnon guilty of violating Section 112 of the Criminal Code or *lèse-majesté* law which criminalizes defaming, insulting, or threatening the King, Queen, or Regent. It is punishable up to 15 years in prison. This conviction led to a three-year prison sentence, which was later reduced to two years due to his cooperation during trial.

Arnon was also found guilty of violating the Loudspeaker Act, which prohibits the use of loudspeakers in public without prior permission from local authorities. This resulted in a 100-baht (approximately USD 3) fine.

The conviction stemmed from a speech Arnon delivered on 21 December 2020 in front of the Bang Khen Police Station. His speech supported fellow activists and called for monarchy reforms, highlighting concerns over the King's direct control over royal assets and military units.

At least [1,972 individuals](#) have been charged for engaging in youth-led demonstrations or expressing political opinions between July 2020 and April 2025, according to Thai Lawyers for Human Rights.

At least 279 individuals were charged under Section 112 of the Criminal Code.

Arbitrary detention

Anon's detention is "arbitrary," said the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention determined in its [opinion](#) adopted on 30 August 2024.

The Working Group found that Anon's arbitrary detention under Section 112 of the Criminal Code lacks a legal basis. Likewise, it infringes on his freedom of expression, violates his right to a fair trial, and constitutes discrimination based on his political activism.

These actions are in clear violation of international human rights standards, particularly the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

While in custody, Anon has also been [subjected](#) to foot-shackling. This cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment was challenged in a petition led by Professor Thongchai Winichakul alongside human rights groups.

The ICCPR and Thai Corrections Act stipulates that leg shackles should be used only when necessary to prevent escape, harm to self or others, and when no alternative measures are available. Using leg-shackles on Anon raises concerns about the deprivation of human dignity.

Call to action

Anon's unjust prosecution stands in stark contrast to the international recognition he has received. On 22 May 2025, Anon was [awarded](#) the 2025 Award for Human Rights Defenders at Risk, which affirms his long-standing dedication to promoting justice, defending civic space, and protecting the rights of others, especially among fellow human rights defenders and political prisoners in Thailand.

To uphold its credibility as a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council, Thailand must demonstrate concrete progress in meeting its international human rights commitments. To do this, the government must guarantee people's freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly in all circumstances.

We urge Thai authorities to end all forms of judicial harassment against human rights defenders. The government should bring Section 112 of the Criminal Code into full compliance with Thailand's obligations under the ICCPR, to which it is a State Party.

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For media inquiries, please contact:

- Communications and Media Programme, FORUM-ASIA, communication@forum-asia.org