

# Thailand: Jon Ungphakorn, 9 other activists given deferred sentence for parliament sit in

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After a decade-long legal battle, the Supreme Court has handed one to two years suspended sentences to 10 civil society workers, including Jon Ungphakorn, Director of iLaw, former Senator and founder of Prachatai, for instigating chaos and trespassing into the parliament compound in 2007.

On 15 March 2017, the Supreme Court handed guilty verdicts to 10 high-profile civil society workers accused of trespassing onto the grounds of parliament during a rally against the 2007 National Legislative Assembly (NLA), appointed by the 2006 coup-makers.

The rally, which took place on 12 December 2007, was staged because the NLA was rushing to pass several bills on issues such as internal security and the privatization of universities, without public participation.

The Supreme Court confirmed the ruling of the Court of First Instance, which sentenced six defendants to two years in prison with a 9,000 baht fine while another four defendants were suspended sentence to a year of imprisonment with a 9,000 baht fine.

However, since all defendants were cooperative during the investigation process and had committed no crime before, the defendants' penalties were reduced by one third. In the final verdict all defendants were deferred sentenced for two years.



*Jon Ungpakorn (centre) talks to reporters after the Supeme Court verdict on 15 March 2017*

The final ruling overturned the Appeal Court verdict of November 2014 which dismissed charges against the 10, reasoning that they committed the alleged crimes with good intentions.

The Court of First Instance accepted lawsuits against Jon and nine others in December 2010 after prosecutors filed charges against them for trespass, inciting people to break the law, and leading an illegal gathering of ten or more people under Articles 362, 116/3, and 215 of the Criminal Code.

The 10 are:

1. Jon Ungphakorn, former Senator and founder of Prachatai
2. Sawit Keawwan, union leader at the State Railways of Thailand

3. Sriwichai Maingam, leader of Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand union
4. Pichit Chaimongkol, former executive committee member of the New Politics Party
5. Anirut Kaewsanit, farmer activist
6. Naser Yama
7. Amnaj Palamee, Deputy Secretary General of the State Enterprise Workers' Relations Federation
8. Pairoj Polpetch, member of the Law Reform Commission of Thailand
9. Saree Ongsomwang, Secretary-General of the Foundation for Consumers
10. Supinya Klangnarong, currently National Broadcasting and Telecommunication Commissioner (NBTC)

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\* Prachatai. Wed, 15/03/2017 - 11:36:  
<http://prachatai.org/english/node/7004>