

Thailand: Student leader 'Penguin' in critical condition after 45-day hunger strike

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A 22-year-old student activist who has helped lead calls for monarchy reforms and other democratic demands is in critical condition after a 45-day hunger strike, his lawyer said.



Photos of Parit "Penguin" Chiwarak and the hashtag [#SavePenguin](#) were circulating online this morning after the student attorney Krisadang Nutcharus said he found him during a Wednesday visit to be in a "life-threatening" condition, suffering from exhaustion, dizziness, immobility and digestive problems.

Given the situation, Penguin's mother and lawyers plan to go to the Criminal Court at 1pm today to request his release on a bond.

"We believe that due to the principle of justice, there might be enough reasons for the court to grant bail for the kids, to save their lives," Krisadang said.

Penguin is among the key pro-democracy movement leaders who have been held months now in unusual pre-trial detention. The head? Of the United Front of Thammasat and Demonstration group, Penguin has been jailed since February while he awaits trial on charges including lese majeste (insulting the king) and sedition. He declared in March that he would go on hunger strike until the court "came to its senses" and released other activists.

Penguin said he would consume only water and milk and, as of today, has not eaten solid food for 45 days.

Apart from Penguin, other activists still behind bars include Panupong "Mike" Jadnok, [lawyer Arnon Nampa](#), singer [Chaiamorn "Ammy" Kaewwiboonpan](#) and Panusaya "Rung" Sithijirawattanakul, who five months ago was [named an inspiring Thai female leader](#) by the BBC. Panusaya has been on her own hunger strike for nearly a month now.

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