

The Thai Government and UDD Must Urgently Return to the Negotiating Table

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Suppression of Dissent and Resultant Violence Cannot Resolve Conflicts: The Thai Government and UDD Must Urgently Return to the Negotiating Table

Statement from Focus on the Global South, May 17, 2010

The steps taken by the Thai Government in the past week, especially after the failure of the five-steps reconciliation proposal to gain acceptance by the United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship (UDD), are totally unacceptable. The Government must take full responsibility for the deaths and injuries that ensued. Violence, suppression of dissent, and the violation of peoples' civil and political rights, including coup d'états, cannot resolve the conflicts that have gripped Thai society. The use of weapons of war, whether by the Government or by all other parties, which amounts to abusing the lives of fellow human-beings for political gains, must be unequivocally condemned.

Focus on the Global South joins several Thai civil society members in strongly calling that:

- 1) the Thai Government immediately stop firing at people and pull back all of its armed personnel from all the conflict zones, unconditionally;
- 2) the UDD leaders call all their members and supporters back to the main camp and refrain from all violent means of demonstration;
- 3) both the Government and the UDD agree without any delay to return to the negotiation process with full commitment to serving the interests of all Thai society, rather than selected factions or groups, as the basis for negotiations;
- 4) the Thai Government's commitment in these negotiations be no less than the five-steps reconciliation proposal which the Government announced to the Thai public and international community; these include elections no later than November 2010;
- 5) all the parties involved in causing deaths and injuries in the past 2 months assume responsibility for their actions and submit themselves equally to judicial processes, and;
- 6) the Government and UDD accept the presence of national-international human rights monitors to monitor peaceful resolution of the current conflicts, including the new elections;

Political differences should not be used by any side to foment hatred. We urge the Thai Government and all members of Thai society to commit to peace and equity as non-negotiable principles in the resolution of all conflicts.