

THAILAND: Hunger strike of Suthachai Yimprasert while under arbitrary detention

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A Statement from Mr. Bonsong Chaisingkananont, academy of Department of Philosophy, Silpakorn University forwarded by the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC)

**To whom it may concern (especially the human rights organizations)
This is urgent information regarding Dr. Suthachai Yimprasert, a historian who was arrested by the Thai authorities on May 24, 2010.
Please help campaign for his release.**

Professor Bayan, Dr. Suthachai's wife, visited her husband at the Adisorn Army Camp in Saraburi Province earlier today. The army allows only his wife and mother to visit him, and in the morning only.

Dr. Suthachai is detained in a solitary unit. So is Mr Somyos Pruksakasemsuk who was arrested at the same time. Neither has been charged. In fact the arrests of them involved deception by the authorities. Both had got warrants to report to the police for some questioning. They complied. The police told them that they would bring them to the Crime Suppression Headquarter. Instead, they sent them to the Adisorn Army Camp in another province.

Legally, neither is Dr. Suthachai nor Mr. Somyos a law-breaker or a criminal since there is yet any charge. They are detained for interrogation. But they have been treated as if they were felons. Their treatments are more severe than the UDD leaders who are detained at the Naresuan Police Camp.

Dr. Suthachai brought some books to prepare for his class (at Chulalongkorn University) in a few weeks. But the soldiers took those books away and do not allow him to read anything (except a magazine about horses left by someone in this room). Dr. Suthachai, therefore, protests by going on a hunger strike. Our serious concern is that he has diabetes, requiring insulin injections twice a day. The lack of food may have serious effects on his condition, including a danger to his life.

Every words in the conversation between Dr. Suthachai and his wife on visiting day was recorded by 5 soldiers who stand around the couple.

This coming Sunday is the funeral for Bayan's father. Dr. Suthachai's lawyer will make an appeal to the court to allow him to

attend the funeral of his father-in-law. But we do not know if the appeal would be granted, even though he is not yet charged or being a suspect or criminal of any kind whatsoever.

Sincerely,

Bonsong Chaisingkananont

Department of Philosophy

Silpakorn University

On behalf of friends and family of Dr. Suthachai Yimprasert.

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Addition Information:

Dr. Suthachai Yimprasert is an assistant professor in the Department of History, Faculty of Arts, at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok. On Sunday, 23 May 2010, Dr. Suthachai was ordered to report to the 11th Army Regiment in Bangkok the next morning. Instead, on the morning of Monday, 24 May 2010, a van arrived at his house to take him for seven days of detention at the Adisorn military base in Saraburi province, approximately 100 km from Bangkok. Dr. Suthachai has written widely on Thai and broader Asian history, politics, and violence. When Darunee Charnchoengsilpakul was accused of alleged crimes of *lèse majesté* in 2008, Dr. Suthachai attempted to seek bail in her case, using his academic position as the bond. The authorities denied the bail request, and Darunee was convicted and sentenced to eighteen years in prison in August 2009.

Dr. Suthachai is being held under Section 11(1) of the 2005 Emergency Decree, which states that “a competent official shall have the power of arrest and detention of a person suspected of having a role in causing the emergency situation, or being an instigator, making the propagation, a supporter of such act or concealing relevant information relating to the act which caused the State of Emergency.” In a recent statement submitted to the UN Human Rights Council, the Asian Legal Resource Center expressed concern over arbitrary interrogation under Section 11(2) of the Emergency Decree. (Please see ALRC-CWS-14-01-2010, THAILAND: Arbitrary interrogation under recent emergency regulations in Thailand, <http://www.alrc.net/doc/mainfile.php/hrc14/610/>). The use of Section 11(1) to arbitrarily detain individuals indicates a further constriction of rights in Thailand.