

## Thailand: Red Shirts allege military behind activist killings

Thursday 16 September 2010, by [BOYLE Peter](#) (Date first published: 16 September 2010).

September 16, 2010 — Chiangmai, in Thailand's north, is considered to be a Red Shirt stronghold. On August 29, a 21-year-old local Red Shirt (popular name for the United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship, UDD) activist "James" Krissada Klaharn and his girlfriend Nongnuch Kampor were driving home at about 1.15 am after a long day selling popular stickers at a roadside stall, when the killers struck.



*Krissada in Chiangmai hospital ICU. Photo by Ruangsil.*

Nongnuch was driving. They noticed a vehicle, with headlights off, following them. Suddenly the vehicle accelerated, pulled alongside and sprayed their cars with bullets. Krissada was hit in the legs, abdomen and shoulder.

Nongnuch was also shot in the leg but was able to keep driving to the local Hangdong hospital and Krissada was admitted with critical injuries. He was later transferred to the intensive care unit in Chiangmai hospital where he battled on until he died on September 4. Large numbers of supporters rallied to donate blood and send messages of support to him and his nearest ones.

Krissada had served as a Red Shirt guard for northern Red Shirt woman leader "DJ Aom" Kanyapak Maneejak, a popular radio host in Chiangmai, who has been forced into hiding. Some Red Shirts believe his killing may have been an attempt to draw out DJ Aom and other leaders in hiding.

He also served as a guard in the Bangkok protests which were violently crushed by the military in May, but after returning to his hometown he had been living openly and peacefully, working in Nongnuch's father's carpentry business during the week and helping his girlfriend run her street stall on the weekends.

Local Red Shirts allege that this yet another extrajudicial killing carried out by the Thai military against their movement. Bullets and bullet casings found at the scene were from a US-made M16A1 military assault rifle used by the Thai military.

This is the fourth Red Shirt who served as a guard in the mass protest camp in Bangkok to be killed since May but as yet there have been no prosecutions of their killers. In addition, there have been many disappearances according to human rights activists from the Mirror Foundation quoted in an August 21 IPS report by Marwaan Macan-Markar.

Further, several radio stations and publications sympathetic to the Red Shirts have been closed down or intimidated with accusations they have offended the monarchy (the crime of *lèse majesté* is defined by Article 112 of the Criminal Code, which states: “Whoever defames, insults or threatens the King, Queen, the Heir-apparent or the Regent, shall be punished [with] imprisonment of three to fifteen years”).

If the intention behind these killings and disappearances is to intimidate the Red Shirts from remobilising, it does not seem to be working. Thousands turned out for a funeral march (watch Youtube video [here](#)) for Krissada on September 6. The march stopped at the Region 5 Provincial Police headquarters where the demand for speeding up the official inquiry into this murder was raised.

At the cremation ceremony, addressed by prominent Red Shirt leader and MP Jutaporn Prompan and other leaders, a big banner saying “No peace without justice” was held up by the crowd.



*Funeral procession for Krissada.*

Even bigger mobilisations are planned around the country to mark four months since the May 19 massacre and four years since the 2006 military coup which ousted the last elected government headed by Thaksin Shinawatra. On May 17, the Red Sunday group led by activist Sombat Boonngamanong will be arranging the symbolic placing of red roses outside jails where hundreds of Red Shirts remain in detention since the May 19 crushing of the protest camp Bangkok. This follows a Red Sunday build up action in Bangkok on September 12 which drew 100 cyclists in red t-shirts matched by hundreds more who gathered at various points around the city. Watch a Youtube video of this action [here](#).

And on September 19, there will be a mass motorcade from Bangkok to Chiangmai. Red Shirt supporters expect about 5000 people to gather in Bangkok for the start of the motorcade. Some 5000 troops are reported to have been placed on standby to deal with this peaceful mobilisation.

## **Peter Boyle**



*Red Sunday action at Ratchaprasong Junction, Bangkok, September 12, 2010.*

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\* From Links:

<http://links.org.au/node/1894>

\* Peter Boyle is national convenor of the Socialist Alliance of Australia. Thanks to several Thai activists — who have to remain anonymous for their own safety — for their assistance in collecting and translating the material for this story.