

## Thailand: Red Shirts plan another major rally

Thursday 18 November 2010, by [BOYLE Peter](#) (Date first published: 18 November 2010).

November 18, 2010 — Supporters of Thailand's opposition Red Shirt movement are preparing another major mobilisation, on November 19, 2010, to commemorate six months since the military repression of their mass protest camp in Bangkok's Ratchaprasong Intersection.

The Red Shirts have been holding several build-up actions around the country including mass bike rides of red-shirted supporters in several cities and towns. And on Sunday November 14 some 1500 Red Shirt supporters rallied in front of the Rama VI statue Bangkok's Lumpini Park to mark the assassination of rebel general Khattiya Sawatdipho (popularly known as Seh Daeng) six months ago as he gave an interview to a *New York Times* journalist in the Red Shirts protest camp at Ratchaprasong.

Major General Khattiya was already a popular figure in Thailand because he had clashed publicly with the military and police leadership over corruption and democracy but became even more popular in 2008 when he defended Red Shirt activists from being beaten up by the Yellow Shirt thugs (the armed Naclop Srivichai) who support the current military-installed government of Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva.

According to "Klaus", a Red Shirt activist in Bangkok.

"Khattiya recognised that the redshirts also need guards to protect themselves from the attacks of the yellow thugs. He started to train his own group of black-clad guards, called Naclop Prachao Taksin or 'King Taksin Warriors', who were trained in street combat and protection activities to support the Red Shirts."

"King Taksin" has nothing to do with the deposed PM Thaksin Shinawatra, supported by most Red Shirts, explained "Klaus", but refers to the historic warrior King Taksin who successfully defended the kingdom of Siam from invading Burmese armies in the 18<sup>th</sup> century."By training this group and supporting the Red Shirt movement he was getting into a deadly conflict with the then commander of the army, General Anupong Paochinda.

"Khattiya risked his military career by stepping out and supporting the movement against the coup and for democracy. During the conflict in April-May this year, he coordinated the activities of most black-clad guard groups and supervised the erection of the barricades and defence of the Red Shirt camp at Ratchaprasong."He is remembered as a hero by the Red Shirts and earned a firm place in their hearts because he sacrificed all his privileges as a high-ranking general for the cause of the redshirts and died as a warrior by the bullet of a cowardly army sniper."

The November 14 rally was attended by Khattiya's daughter, Khattiyaa Nong Dear, and other family members and close friends.

Everybody at the rally was talking about the big rally on Ratchaprasong planned for November 19 to mark six months since the military crackdown, Klaus told *Links International Journal of Socialist Renewal* and *Green Left Weekly*.

"There are many different activities planned to cover all the day. Some groups are talking about

using 'flash mob' tactics. All of the groups will converge on Ratchaprasong in the afternoon. I reckon we can expect a huge crowd similar as on September 19, 2010."

I asked "Klaus" what was the level of morale and confidence of the Red Shirt movement today.

"The question of morale is a difficult one. On one hand, there is growing frustration about the continuing repression by the government, the strengthening influence of the army and the continuing attempt to hide and whitewash the government's wrongdoings and violations of human rights during and since the crackdown.

"On the other hand the frequent public activities of the Red Shirts are morale boosters and remind individual Red Shirt supporters that they are not alone. What is also obvious is that since September 19 a larger number of small groups of Red Shirts, which are getting more and more organised. Each of these groups are now able to initiate and stage their own mass activities."

"Gunn", a Red Sunday activist, told *Links International Journal of Socialist Renewal* and *Green Left Weekly*:

"The Red Sunday group will also be taking part in the memorial actions in Ratchaprasong on November 19. We expect a big crowd. The Red Sunday group has organised many successful red bike rides and its leader Sombat Boonngamanong will be staging a variety talk show on December 5-6 to raise funds for the movement."

And the popular street sellers of the banned sandals (see below) featuring PM Abhisit, are sure to make an appearance as they did on November 14, despite the danger that they will be arrested again.

**Peter Boyle**

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\* From Lonks:

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