

Open Letter: Calling for Investigation into the Intervention of the work of Amnesty International (AI) Malaysia by Members of the AI Asia-Pacific team

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Open Letter:

Calling for Investigation into the Intervention of the work of Amnesty International (AI) Malaysia by Members of the AI Asia-Pacific team

29 April 2011

Mr. Salil Shetty
Secretary-General
Amnesty International (AI)
International Secretariat
1 Easton Street
London
WC1X 0DW, UK

Dear Mr. Shetty,

We, the members of Amnesty International (AI), human rights activists, and individuals, are writing to you to raise our serious concerns regarding the intervention by International Secretariat specifically by Mr. Benjamin Zawacki, AI Southeast Asia Researcher and Ms. Donna Guest, the Asia-Pacific Deputy Director to block the dialogue that was planned to be held by AI Malaysia on the issue of human rights violations and the case in the International Criminal Court (ICC) on Thailand.

On 23 April 2011, AI Malaysia planned to hold a dialogue with Mr. Robert Amsterdam, the lawyer representing the United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship. Mr. Amsterdam had previously represented many individuals and human rights defenders including Dr. Chee Soon Juan, a Singaporean human rights defender and the Secretary-General of the Singapore Democratic Party. AI had taken action to protect Dr. Chee's right to freedom of expression.

Mr. Amsterdam had filed a case at the ICC against Abhisit Vejjajiva-led government for ordering the military crackdown in April-May 2010 which resulted in the deaths of 92 people, mostly civilians, and 2,000 people injured.

AI Malaysia received strong instructions from the International Secretariat demanding them to cancel dialogue session. The action is a clear violation on the very principle central to human rights for which is on freedom of expression and opinion, toleration of different opinions and ideas, and fighting against culture of impunity. This action further violates the core values of AI which is international solidarity, the universality and indivisibility of human rights.

By directing AI Malaysia to cancel the holding of such event, Amnesty International is taking the same approach by the Thai government in banning Mr. Amsterdam from entering Thailand, and thus violating Mr. Amsterdam the right to exercise his freedom of expression.

We, as the members of Amnesty International, human rights activists, and individuals, urgently ask you as the Secretary General to investigate the interference made by Mr. Zawacki and Ms. Guest, including the explanations for their actions. We look forward to hearing from you on the above and please acknowledge the receipt of this letter.

Yours Sincerely,

1. Boonson Ransikanbum, AI Thailand member
2. Chonrada Narawasinchai, AI Thailand member
3. Pachabedee Pumpoung, AI Thailand member
4. Panithida Phongpaew, AI Thailand member
5. Patcharee Pabua, AI Thailand member
6. Pimsiri Petchnamrob, AI Thailand member
7. Kwanravee Wangudom, AI Thailand member
8. Suluck Lamubol, AI Thailand member
9. Pokpong Lawansiri, AI Thailand member
10. Vorakorn Ruetaivanichkul, AI Thailand member
11. Orawan Raweegoon, AI Thailand member
12. Vipavadee Panyangnoi, AI Thailand member
13. Pansak Srithep, AI Thailand member
14. Ong Jing Cheng, AI Malaysia member
15. Mohd Hariszuan Jaharudin, AI Malaysia member
16. Nor Aishah, AI Malaysia member
17. Phyo Win Latt, AI Malaysia member
18. Azrul Areef, AI Malaysia member
19. Rizal Hamdan, AI Malaysia member
20. Alinsek, AI Malaysia member
21. Firdaus Samad, AI Malaysia member
22. Firdaus Zulkifli, AI Malaysia member
23. Arif Abdull, AI Malaysia member
24. Daud Mili, AI Malaysia member
25. Faisal Aziz, AI Malaysia member
26. Farha Nabiha, AI Malaysia member
27. Farhan Haziq, AI Malaysia member
28. Hui Fei, AI Malaysia member
29. Choo Chon Kai, AI Malaysia member
30. Nadia Abu Bakar, AI Malaysia member
31. Soh Sook Hwa, AI Malaysia member
32. Alip Aizar, AI Malaysia member
33. Zaki Shukor, AI Malaysia member
34. Amir Farid, AI Malaysia member
35. CJ Hinke, Freedom against Censorship Thailand
36. Pratubjit Neelaphaijit, Justice for Peace Foundation, Thailand
37. Chulasak Keawkan, human rights lawyer, Thailand
38. Dr. Jim Taylor, Senior Lecturer in Anthropology, The University of Adelaide, Australia
39. Lee Siewha, Malaysia Support Group for Democracy in Thailand
40. Adisorn Kerdmongkol, Vice President, Peace way Foundation, Thailand

41. Andrew Spooner, freelance journalist and PhD Candidate, United Kingdom
42. Lee Kyu Yung, journalist, Thailand
43. Dr. David Streckfuss, independent scholar, Thailand
44. Dr. Kengkij Kitirianglarb, Faculty of Social Science, Kasetsart University, Thailand
45. Dr. Kewin Hewison, Professor in Asian Studies, University of North Carolina
46. Dr. Tyrell Haberkorn, Department of Political and Social Change, Australian National University
47. Junya Yimprasert, Action for People's Democracy Thailand
48. Anuthee Dejthevaporn, former Secretary-General, Student Federation of Thailand
49. Bencharat Saechua, Center for Human Rights Studies and Social Development, Mahidol University, Thailand
50. Bidhayak Das, Journalist, Thailand
51. Kriangsak Teerakowitkajorn, Lecturer, Thammasat University
52. Laura McLennan, Teacher, Thailand
53. Palida Prakarapho, Philosophy Student, Silpakorn University
54. Patcharee Sae-eaw, human rights defender, Thailand
55. Pichate Yingkiatkun, Thai Netizen Network
56. Pipob Udommitipong, Translator/interpreter, Thailand
57. Pratchayaa Surakamchonrot, political activist, Thailand
58. Irene Xavier, Friends of Women, Malaysia
59. Adiren Pereira, Community Action Network, Malaysia
60. MaraChin Abdullah, EMPOWER, Malaysia
61. Suharuddin Adnan, Labor Resource Center, Malaysia
62. Saksith Saiyasombut, University of Hamburg, Germany
63. Jirutsun Pramualsilp, student, Thammasat University, Thailand
64. Saisamphan Ratanapredakorn, Postgraduate student, University of London
65. Teeranai Charuvastra, Postgraduate student, University of London
66. Trin Aiyara, Researcher, Thammasat University, Thailand
67. Heli Kontio, Helsinki, Finland
68. Donald Jordan, Helsinki, Finland
69. Siriluk Sriprasit, Postgraduate student, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand
70. Igor Christodoulou, United Kingdom

For more information, please contact:

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