

# Thailand: Gen Prayut Chan-o-cha promises election, but ban on political activity to remain

Thursday 12 October 2017, by [PRACHATAI](#) (Date first published: 10 October 2017).

**Political parties, despite their divergent ideologies, are united in urging the junta to lift its ban on political activity now that the Organic Act on Political Parties is in effect. Meanwhile, the junta head has announced that the next general election will be held in November 2018.**

On 8 October 2017, the *Royal Gazette* published the Organic Act on Political Parties [\[1\]](#), one of four organic laws which have to be passed before the long-awaited general election can be held.

But the Organic Act on Political Parties has been widely criticised [\[2\]](#) for placing excessive burdens on small and newly-emerging parties with limited resources. One regulation requires parties to have at least 500 founding members, with each member contributing between 2,000 and 500,000 baht to start-up costs. A party needs to have 5,000 members within a year of being established and 20,000 members within 4 years.

Each party must have a branch in all regions and must have at least 100 members in each province. Existing parties also have to comply with these requirements in order to stand in an election.

In response to the new regulations, politicians across the political spectrum have demanded more political liberty from the ruling junta.

On 10 October, Sudarat Keyuraphan, a key Pheu Thai politician, told the media [\[3\]](#) that parties should be able to hold discussions and prepare for the next election campaign. She therefore urged the junta to lift its ban on political activity which has been in effect since the coup in 2014.

The same day, the deputy leader of the Democrat Party, Jurin Laksanawisit, also asked the junta to allow more freedom for political parties [\[4\]](#) so that they could meet the requirements in time for the election. Jurin, however, clarified he was not asking the junta revoke its ban on political activities entirely.

But Deputy Prime Minister Gen Prawit Wongsuwan has stated that the ban on political activities will remain until at least the end of October [\[5\]](#), since it would be 'inappropriate timing' to allow political activity during the period of mourning.

The junta is holding firm even though junta head Gen Prayut Chan-o-cha has recently reaffirmed that a general election will be held next year [\[6\]](#).

On 10 October, the junta head clarified that the exact election date will be announced in June 2018, with a general election to be held in November. Prayut asked all politicians not to mobilise until the junta eases the ban on political activity when the 'appropriate time' comes.

“In October, this is the period when we’re all in grief and sorrow. So I ask that everything pass peacefully for now. At this point I can only say that in approximately June 2018, and I say approximately, an election date will be announced and in approximately November 2018, there will be an election.”

The Organic Act on Political Parties is the second organic law to be approved by the junta-appointed National Legislative Assembly (NLA); the Organic Act on the Election Commission was passed on 13 September [7]. Drafts of the other two organic acts, on the selection of senators and on the general election, have yet to be submitted to the NLA.

## **Prachatai**

\* Tue, 10/10/2017 - 19:08:

<https://prachatai.com/english/node/7423>

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## **New election commissioners to be handpicked by junta-appointed senators**

Thailand has taken another step closer to general elections after the promulgation of the new junta-written election commission law. New election commissioners will be selected by the 250 junta-appointed senators.

On 13 September 2017, the Organic Act on the Election Commission was published in the Royal Gazette after being passed by the National Legislative Assembly on 8 September. The Act dismisses the current election commissioners but they will continue as caretakers until new commissioners are appointed.

Article 8 of the Act states that the King shall appoint commissioners on the recommendation of the Senate, and according to Section 269 of the 2017 Constitution, the first 250 senators will all be appointed by the ruling junta to serve for five years after the first general election.

The Organic Act on the Election Commission was drafted by the junta-appointed Constitution Drafting Committee and is one of the four key organic laws which have to be passed before the long-awaited general election can be held. The other three are the organic acts on general elections, on the selection of senators, and on political parties.

The current ECT recently announced that the general election will be held on 18 August 2018. However, since organic acts on general elections and the selection of senators have not been drafted, this date could be postponed again.

Deputy Prime Minister Gen Prawit Wongsuwan has also said that he cannot guarantee that the election can be held in 2018 as the junta previously stated in its so-called “roadmap to democracy” since the drafting of the organic laws is not yet finished.

## **Prachatai**

\* Thu, 14/09/2017 - 15:24:

<https://prachatai.com/english/node/7375>

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## Footnotes

[1] <http://www.ratchakitcha.soc.go.th/DATA/PDF/2560/A/105/1.PDF>

[2] <https://prachatai.com/english/node/6776>

[3] <https://www.matichon.co.th/news/691123>

[4] <https://www.matichon.co.th/news/691022>

[5] <https://www.matichon.co.th/news/691240>

[6] [https://www.khaosod.co.th/politics/news\\_561161](https://www.khaosod.co.th/politics/news_561161)

[7] see below