

# Thailand: Protesters accused of harming the Queen, royal motorcade route questioned

At least 81 arrested during mass protests 13-18 Oct

Monday 19 October 2020, by [PRACHATAI](#) (Date first published: 19 October 2020).

**The Criminal Court has issued arrest warrants for Ekachai Hongkangwan and Boonkueanoon Paothong, who were at the 14 October protest where they found themselves in the middle of a police blockade and the royal motorcade of the Queen and the King's son.**

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*A moment when the royal motorcade passing through Phitsanulok road.*

As of 18 October, Ekkachai, a former lèse majesté prisoner were denied bail and remanded at the Bangkok Remand Prison. Boonkueanoon was allowed to be bailed.

They were charged with violating the Section 110 of the Criminal Code for harming Her Majesty the Queen's liberty. If found guilty, the two face 16-20 years in prison or life sentences. As of 11.00 on 16 October, Ekachai was reportedly arrested while on the way to turn himself in at Dusit Police Station.

Ekachai will be taken to the Border Patrol Police Region 1 headquarters in Khlong Luang, Pathum Thani, where protesters have been taken en masse to hear the charges from 13 October. Boonkueanoon managed to turn himself in at Dusit Police Station.

Matichon reported that the police are ready to submit to the court requests for arrest warrants for 5 more people on the same charge [\[1\]](#).

The incident took place at around 17.50 on Phitsanulok Road during the march by anti-dictatorship protesters from the Democracy Monument to Government House. The police had blocked the road, but some of the protesters, including the two accused, managed to make it through and were sandwiched by the police from behind.

As the main bulk of the protesters were negotiating with the police to open up the street, a royal motorcade passed by on Phitsanulok Road where there were police, anti-dictatorship protesters and some pro-monarchy people wearing yellow who were already there.

The Queen, representing King Rama X and accompanied by Prince Dipangkorn Rasmijoti, was on her way to offer robes to monks in kathin ceremonies (an annual Buddhist merit offering ceremony) at Wat Arun Ratchawararam (the Temple of the Dawn) and Wat Ratcha Orasaram. The motorcade passed protesters shouting and raising the 3-finger salute. One person also threw a bottle of water at the motorcade.

Ekachai and Boonkueanoon insisted that they were not informed in advance of the appearance of the royal procession.

According to BBC Thai [2], Ekachai said he and other protesters reacted to the sudden formation of police in the form of a human blockade that walked toward them. They were concerned that this could be a crackdown. He insisted that the authorities there did not inform protestors that a royal procession would be passing by.

Ekachai said he did not know where the people were from who were shouting and raising 3 fingers. He felt that his arrest was not fair because the police had not given him any warning about the procession.

Boonkueanoon told Prachatai that he and other protesters rushed at the police out of concern for a crackdown. He also reaffirmed that there were no prior announcements at all about the procession and that he had intention at all to harm any royal family members.

He said that at the time, he was sitting with many friends until they saw police officers lined up in formation. He thought that it may be an operation to clear the protestors. So he went to stand in front of them to tell the police not to do it.

“After that, I saw a crowd come to form a barricade. Another thing I saw after that, at that time, there were clashes with the police but looking across there was a royal motorcade already there. And the police had not informed us that there would be a royal motorcade. There was nothing at all said about a royal motorcade coming that way.

“As soon as I saw it, I walked away and tried to get out of the blockade. I tried to use my megaphone to tell the protesters to move back, to get out of the way of the royal procession and move away so that it could proceed. After that, there were fingers raised as symbols but I did not shout anything and after that I went back to my original spot.”, said Boonkueanoon.

### **Questions raised over procession route**

Many pro-monarchy social media channels [3] saw the confrontation at the royal procession as an assault on and harassment of the royal family. The severe state of emergency in Bangkok that was announced on 15 October also referred to the incident as unlawful and a threat to national security.

The Thai Move Institute, a conservative and pro-monarchy online influencer, interviewed people wearing yellow who were there to greet the royal procession. One of them said he was informed from news sources that there would be a royal procession there. So he moved from Makkhawan bridge where another royal procession had already passed by.

He said he and 20 other like-minded people tried to block the protesters while shouting “long live the Queen”. Another interviewee said that he did not know who was in the procession.

News reporters who were there also gave their views of the incident. Pravit Rojanaphruk [4] from Khaosod English stated that he was there reporting via Facebook live. According to his observation, he did not see anyone trying to stop the procession or hitting the vehicles.

Live footage (sound muted due to improper language) from Teeranai Charuvastra, another Khaosod English reporter, confirms Pravit’s observation that no announcements were made as the police formed up the blockade. Ekachai and Boonkueanoon can be seen raising 3 fingers but neither of them blocked or got close to the procession at all.

“And importantly, there was no announcement from the police at all that there would be a royal procession along Phitsanulok Road, in front of Government House which the first group of protesters had occupied so easily that Francis (Boonkueanoon) told me that it was so easy that it felt ‘fishy’,” stated Pravit on Facebook.

Noppakow Kongsuwan, another reporter from Khaosod Online who was reporting on the pedestrian bridge across Phitsanulok Road, which would normally be cleared of people if there was a royal procession, stated on his Facebook post that there were no announcements or attempts to clear the pedestrian bridge.

He also questioned why the royal motorcade travelled via this route where the main bulk of the protesters were. Even though all alternative routes like Ratchadamnoen Avenue were almost completely cleared of protesters, the police responsible for arranging the motorcade route still decided to use Phitsanulok Road.

“I raise the question with no intent to provoke, based on available facts which many media agencies reported or even from many video clips or many of those who were there. There is collective agreement that in this case “there was no blocking” at all,” stated Noppakow.

## **Prachatai**

- Prachatai. Submitted on Mon, 19 Oct 2020 - 11:50 AM:  
<https://prachatai.com/english/node/8851>

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## **At least 81 arrested during mass protests 13-18 Oct**

**By 18 October, 81 protestors, activists, guards, students and truck drivers have been arrested in connection with pro-democracy protests, according to Thai Lawyers for Human Rights (TLHR).**

Protesters raising posters rallying for releasing of people who were arrested and put in detention. Those in the posters are Jatupat Boonpattaraksa and Parit Chiwarak.

TLHR records that as of 12.00 on 18 Oct, 80 people had been arrested and 1 more was added to the count after a voice amplifier truck driver was arrested later that night as he returned from the

protest at Victory Monument. He was charged the next morning and his voice amplifier equipment and truck were seized.

76 have been charged, 27 are currently in temporary detention and 8 are still in police custody.

As a result of the 13 October protest: 21 people and activists were arrested trying to set up camp outside Satriwithaya School, close to the Democracy Monument, in preparation for the protest the next day. 20 were denied bail by Dusit Municipal Court. The other, aged 17, was allowed bail by the Juvenile Court.

The 14 October protest: 26 people arrested, including Anon Nampa, Parit 'Penguin' Chiwarak, and Panussaya Sittthijirawatthanakul, leading protest figures who have repeatedly called for monarchy reform. They, plus Prasit Karutarote, another activist, were denied bail.

Anon and Prasit are now under detention in Chiang Mai Prison while 3 others are in Thanyaburi District Prison.

The 15 October protest at Ratchaprasong: 7 people arrested, 6 of whom were voice amplifier truck crew. They were allowed bail of 20,000 baht each by Pathumwan Municipal Court. The 7<sup>th</sup> person was arrested for shouting "Dictator's lackeys" at the police. Pathumwan Municipal Court allowed bail at the same amount.

The 16 October protest at Pathum Wan intersection where the police dispersed protesters using riot control and high-pressure water cannon: 12 were officially arrested including a Prachatai reporter, Kitti Pantapak, whose Facebook live report was interrupted as police grabbed his device. Kitti was released with 300 baht fine for defying a police order.

Another 3 were arrested and/or charged on 16 October for an incident on 14 October. Boonkueanoon Paothong and Ekkachai Hongkangwan were charged with harming Her Majesty the Queen's liberty under Section 110 of the Criminal Code. They were accused of blocking the Queen's royal procession. Another was Somyot Prueksakasemsuk for his participation in the 19 September protest.

Somyot and Ekkachai, former lèse majesté prisoners, were denied bail and remanded at the Bangkok Remand Prison. Boonkueanoon was allow bail.

The 17 October protests: 8 people were arrested. 6 were charged in Bangkok and taken for questioning at the Border Patrol Police Region 1 headquarters in Pathum Thani. 1 was charged over his participation in a 22 August protest in Ubon Ratchathani, and another was charged and questioned at Pattaya Police Station for violating the Computer Crimes Act.

## **Prachatai**

- Prachatai. Submitted on Mon, 19 Oct 2020 - 05:25 PM:  
<https://prachatai.com/english/node/8852>
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## **Defying crackdown, 'The People' occupy Bangkok's streets**

**The 16 October police crackdown has not deterred the people's will to express their anti-dictatorship ideas and criticisms of the monarchy. They turned from single protests to mobile leaderless ones.**

Protesters could be seen at many BTS skytrain stations on the afternoon of 17 October in line with the strategy after the 16 October crackdown posted by the United Front of Thammasat and Demonstration, the Thammasat University student group protest organizers. The message stated 'Everyone is a leader'.

In response, at 13.30, the police held a press conference warning against protests which obstructed transportation routes. The BTS skytrain stations were ordered closed from Ari to Phromphong from 14.30 onward. Phayathai Station on the Airport Link was closed, As were 4 access points to the Victory Monument. All access to Asok intersection were also blocked.

Most police resources seem to have been deployed at the Victory Monument. But no protestors turned up.

The police said that no teargas would be used against protesters, only water with chemical substances will be used to mark protesters' clothes for future arrests. The doctors confirmed that these chemical substances cause no harm.

However, all BTS skytrain stations and MRT subway stations were closed by the authorities as protesters started gathering.

*Photo: A closed MRT station and people who raised 3 fingers at the BTS gate.*

Closing skytrain and subway stations was a tactic which the authorities hoped would discourage protesters who, over the last several days, had demonstrated against the government, calling for constitutional amendments, respect for human rights and monarchy reform.

Nevertheless, people started gathering at many spots. At Asok station, protesters handed out sheets of papers for signs to be written on. Protesters gave anti-government speeches: release our friends, release our children. Some said they were going to Lad Phrao intersection.

*Photo: People sharing their experience regarding the 16 October crackdown. Some said they had to take care of another protesters who cannot go back home as their family hate what the protests are calling for.*

At 15.35, at Lad Phrao intersection, people came down from the platform to the street in front of Central Plaza Lad Phrao and gradually took over the intersection.

The people formed protest groups at 3 main spots around the city: Udom Suk BTS station where protestors later moved to nearby Bang Na intersection; Lad Phrao BTS station which occupied Lad Phrao 5-way intersection; and Wongwian Yai BTS station.

An additional gathering point was at Samyan Mitrtown shopping mall, opposite Chulalongkorn University, announced by the Spring Movement, an activist group of CU students. Protesters exchanged their experience of the previous night's crackdown.

*Photo: People gathering at Sam Yan Mitr Town.*

"There is no more staying neutral, either you side with democracy or side with dictatorship that uses power unfairly," said a protester. Another protester also called for a boycott of graduation ceremonies presided over by members of the royal family in order to change the cultural structure.

The mall announced that it would close at 17.00

*Photo: Standing in the centre: Sombat Boonngam-anong giving a speech.*

At 16.35, activist Sombat Boonngam-anong gave a speech along with other people on the Asok station skywalk as they could not go anywhere else due to the transportation shutdown. There was also a protest at Ramkamhaeng University.



*Protesters raising 3 fingers at Wongwian Yai.*

At Wongwian Yai, protesters asked "Who killed King Taksin?" King Taksin ruled in the Thonburi era and died in mysterious circumstances that allowed King Rama I of the current Chakri dynasty to come to power.

Thonburi, the former capital, is where the protesters were standing. An equestrian statue of King Taksin is situated at Wongwian Yai.

At 16.40 at the Lad Phrao intersection, occupying protesters organized a guard and arranged barriers in preparation for a potential crackdown. Some came prepared with masks and helmets.

Meanwhile, protesters occupied Udom Suk intersection.

At 18.00, protesters at the various locations gave the 3-finger salute while singing the National Anthem. Raising 3 fingers during the National Anthem has become a regular protest action as one peaceful way to fight against dictatorship proposed by Parit 'Penguin' Chiwarak, a student activist who is now in police custody.



*Left to Right: "[I] pay taxes. [I] don't want tear gas from your father & We come peacefully. Why do we have to be cautious? Why must [you] hurt us?"*

The protests went on with no reports of any clashes or crackdowns. They one by one, the protests separately dissolved at around 18.45-19.45.

The anti-dictatorship protesters have come up with an even more mobile mindset than the day before. On 16 October, they changed the protest site to Pathumwan after the police heavily deployed forces to occupy Ratchaprasong intersection, the original protest venue.

But because it was only a few hundred yards from the original spot, it did not take long for riot control forces to redeploy and disperse the protesters with high pressure water cannon [5], riot shields, batons and water mixed with a chemical irritant.

The protest raised the political temperature as new state of emergency was announced after the overnight protest on 14 October. This 'severe' emergency decree covers Bangkok and is aimed at quelling the ongoing protests which the government can now call unlawful, claiming that they endanger public safety.

The new emergency decree prohibits the gathering of more than 5 people, enables detention for 7 days without charge, authorizes high-ranking police officers to conduct searches without court orders and prohibits people and the media from publishing or broadcasting information which threatens stability.

On 17 October, Pol Maj Gen Yingyot Thepchamnong [6], deputy spokesperson of the Thai National Police, said during a press briefing that political gatherings violate the emergency decree. The police have to respond according to the law. As the protesters have adjusted their tactics, the police will have to change their tactics too.

## Prachatai

- Prachatai. Submitted on Sun, 18 Oct 2020 - 04:44 PM:  
<https://prachatai.com/english/node/8850>

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## Footnotes

- [1] [https://www.matichon.co.th/politics/news\\_2397404](https://www.matichon.co.th/politics/news_2397404)
- [2] [https://www.bbc.com/thai/thailand-54549559?fbclid=IwAR1\\_LJUtuGcY9VJoksFBucO\\_Rywwi5aIEjcsCzOqPRMRAGFehEfnDT9GYkI](https://www.bbc.com/thai/thailand-54549559?fbclid=IwAR1_LJUtuGcY9VJoksFBucO_Rywwi5aIEjcsCzOqPRMRAGFehEfnDT9GYkI)
- [3] [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E4fbo6gjAzY&fbclid=IwAR3vAAz86pT7\\_T2dJHk7Zz1NuIG5txq7gMxx3ct0sKXDgeyqzIFA0Qub9tA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E4fbo6gjAzY&fbclid=IwAR3vAAz86pT7_T2dJHk7Zz1NuIG5txq7gMxx3ct0sKXDgeyqzIFA0Qub9tA)
- [4] <https://www.facebook.com/pravit.rojanaphruk.5/posts/2920998171461348>
- [5] <https://prachatai.com/english/node/8849>
- [6] [https://www.matichon.co.th/news-monitor/news\\_2400389](https://www.matichon.co.th/news-monitor/news_2400389)