

7 August 2020

Thailand: Human rights lawyer Arnon Nampa arrested and charged

On 7 August 2020, human rights lawyer **Arnon Nampa** was arrested from his home in Bangkok. The arrest was made following his participation in a peaceful gathering on 18 July 2020. The human rights defender is being charged under eight different articles, including sedition and breaching the Emergency Decree. At the time of writing, Arnon Nampa remains in the custody of the Bangkok Criminal Court.

[Arnon Nampa](#) is a human rights lawyer and volunteers his legal expertise with the Thai Lawyers for Human Rights (TLHR). TLHR was established in 2014 to provide legal assistance to alleged violators of *lèse-majesté* and human rights defenders targeted by the authorities following the military coup of 22 May 2014. TLHR received a human rights award from the French Embassy in Bangkok in December 2014 for its work. Arnon Nampa has defended numerous individuals, including the cases of several imprisoned human rights defenders, accused of *lèse-majesté* under Article 112 of the Criminal Code which, in broad terms, prohibits insulting the monarchy.

On 7 August 2020, police arrested Arnon Nampa at his home in Bangkok. The defender is being charged with sedition under Article 116 of the Criminal code; assembly with the intent of committing an act of violence, and obstructing public way, under Articles 215 and 385 of the Penal code; offence against the regulations on assembly under the Emergency Decree; obstructing traffic, under Article 114 under the Land Traffic Act; use of an amplifier without permission, under Article 4 of the Control of the Use of Amplifier law; placing objects on the road, under Article 19 of the Maintenance of the Cleanliness and Orderliness Act; and participating in the acts that increase the risk for infection, under Article 34 of the Communicable Disease Act.

The arrest was made in response to a peaceful gathering that Arnon Nampa participated in on 18 July 2020, at the Democracy Monument in Phra Nakhon, Bangkok with the Free Youth Movement. The defender is one of the several accused named in the case, which has led human rights defenders in the region to believe that Arnon Nampa's arrest forms part of a wider crackdown on pro-democracy activists, and so they fear further arrests in the coming days. Prior to his arrest, Arnon Nampa had announced that he would join a gathering in Chiang Mai on 9 August to deliver a speech entitled "The Invasive Power of the Monarchy against Democratic Principles". He was also due to participate in a similar gathering the following day, on 10 August, at the Thammasat University Rangsit Campus.

Front Line Defenders condemns the arrest of Arnon Nampa and the charges against him, as it believes he is being targeted for his legitimate and peaceful work for the protection of human rights, specifically on democratisation in Thailand. Front Line Defenders further expresses grave concern about the escalation in judicial harassment and intimidation of human rights defenders advocating for democracy and human rights in the country.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Thailand to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Arnon Nampa, as Front Line Defenders believes that he is being targeted solely as a result of his legitimate and peaceful work in the defence of human rights;
2. Take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and security of Arnon Nampa;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Thailand are able to carry

out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.

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