

Criminal Court
Ratchadaphisek Rd.
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Thailand
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28 November 2024

Re: Upcoming verdict hearing on 3 December 2024 in Black Case No. Aor. 1395/2565 against Thai human rights lawyer Arnon Nampa

Honourable Chief Justice, honourable judge overseeing Black Case No. Aor. 1395/2565,

Lawyers for Lawyers (L4L) is an independent and non-political foundation which seeks to promote the proper functioning of the rule of law by pursuing freedom and independence of the legal profession. We support lawyers worldwide who face reprisals, improper interferences or unreasonable restrictions in carrying out their legitimate activities. L4L was granted Special Consultative status with the United Nations (UN) Economic and Social Council in 2013.

L4L wishes to express its grave concern about the ongoing prosecution of **Thai human rights lawyer Arnon Nampa**, ahead of the verdict hearing on 3 December 2024 in Black Case No. Aor. 1395/2565.

According to information received, Arnon Nampa faces charges under section 112 of the Criminal Code for allegedly defaming or insulting King Rama X, alongside charges under Section 14(3) of the Computer Crimes Act B.E. 2550 (2007) for entering data into a computer system 'which is an offence related to national security of the Kingdom of Thailand or related to terrorism under the Criminal Code'. Arnon Nampa's prosecution stems from a social media post published on 8 November 2020, in which he criticised the Thai King for conducting himself in a manner contrary to democratic principles which permitted the King to be the country's head of state. In the post, he cited examples of, *inter alia*, legislative amendments beneficial to the King himself, the use of taxpayers' money in an extravagant manner, and the King's request to amend the draft constitution previously approved by the Thai people in a referendum.

In making these comments on matters of public concern, Arnon Nampa was exercising his right to freedom of expression, protected under international and Thai law.

L4L is concerned that the persistent and repeated prosecution of Arnon Nampa under Thailand's lèse-majesté law, following previous convictions in similar cases ([July 2024](#); [September 2023](#)) as well as the ongoing [disbarment proceedings before the Lawyers Council of Thailand](#), relate to his professional duties as a lawyer and other human rights activities. Arnon Nampa's cumulative prison sentence now totals 14 years, 2 months, and 20 days. With an impending verdict, he risks exceeding the 15-year threshold that mandates transfer to Klong Prem Central Prison, a maximum-security prison. Thus far, all bail requests have been [denied](#) on the grounds that his actions allegedly harmed the democratic system with the King as head of state, and due to concerns that he might flee if released.

This case forms part of a broader and troubling pattern of criminalisation of freedom of expression in Thailand, in which lawyers, human rights defenders, and journalists are increasingly targeted for conducting their professional functions and exercising their human rights. UN human rights bodies and experts, including the [UN Human Rights Committee](#), have repeatedly condemned Thailand's lèse-majesté law and its harsh application. Most recently, on 25 March 2024, various UN experts [expressed alarm](#) over the use of the lèse-majesté law to prosecute and convict Arnon Nampa. They stated that “the prison sentences and repeated criminalised of Mr. Nampa's work are completely disproportionate and form part of a concerning trend of deliberately silencing human rights defenders and other dissenting voices”.

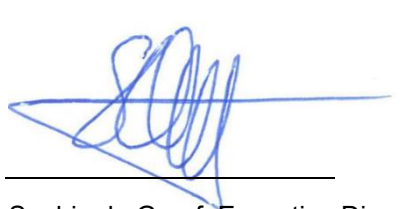
L4L recalls that Thailand, as a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), is bound to respect and protect the right to freedom of expression. Article 19 of the ICCPR provides that this right includes the freedom to seek, receive, and impart information of all kinds. In that light, the charges against Arnon Nampa appear to serve as a tool for silencing criticism of the Thai monarchy.

Furthermore, in accordance with Principle 16 of the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, lawyers must be able to perform all their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference; and shall not suffer, or be threatened with, prosecution or administrative, economic or other sanctions for any action taken in accordance, with recognised professional duties, standards, and ethics. In addition, Principle 23 states that “lawyers, like other citizens, are entitled to freedom of expression, belief, association and assembly. In particular, they shall have the right to take part in public discussion of matters concerning the law, the administration of justice and the promotion and protection of human rights (...) without suffering professional restrictions by reason of their lawful action”.

We appreciate your attention to this letter and respectfully call upon you to act in accordance with international human rights standards on the right to freedom of expression and ensure respect for Arnon Nampa's right to a fair trial.

Yours sincerely,

Lawyers for Lawyers



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