

PRESS RELEASE

THAI HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER SIRIKAN CHAROENSIRI TO RECEIVE LAWYERS FOR LAWYERS AWARD

AMSTERDAM, 6 April 2017 – Sirikan Charoensiri (June), a human rights lawyer from Thailand, will receive the Lawyers for Lawyers Award 2017. On 19 May 2017 Sirikan Charoensiri will accept the Award at L4L’s seminar ‘*The Voice of Rights*’ about lawyers and freedom of expression, hosted by Allen & Overy in Amsterdam.



Jury remarks

“Sirikan Charoensiri is a young Thai lawyer who stands up for human rights activists, journalists and people tried after the coup by military courts, even though she is facing considerable risks herself. By awarding Sirikan Charoensiri, the jury wants to applaud her unwavering courage and commitment, and draw attention to the human rights situation in Thailand that is relatively unknown in the West.”

High-profile human rights cases on a pro bono basis

Ms. Charoensiri will be the first woman to receive the Lawyers for Lawyers award. Sirikan Charoensiri is the co-founder of Thai Lawyers for Human Rights (TLHR), a lawyers' collective founded shortly after the military coup on 22 May 2014 to provide legal aid and monitor the human rights situation in Thailand. As a human rights lawyer with TLHR, Ms. Charoensiri provides legal services in high-profile human rights cases on a pro bono basis. She acts for the increasing number of individuals facing lèse-majesté charges. These provisions make it illegal to defame, insult or threaten the king in Thailand. Ms. Charoensiri also represents human rights activists facing arbitrary arrest for exercising their rights to peaceful assembly and expression and journalists facing arbitrary arrest in the exercise of media freedom and freedom of information by documenting the work of human rights activists. The political sensitivity of these cases is believed to be the reason why lawyers connected to TLHR are regularly subject to harassment, intimidation, and recently to criminal charges by the Thai authorities.

Four criminal charges in one year

In 2015, Sirikan Charoensiri started representing students from the New Democracy Movement (NDM) involved in peaceful protests on 25 June 2015, calling for democracy and an end to the military rule. Since then, Ms. Charoensiri has continually been subject to intimidation by the Thai authorities. Within one year, Sirikan Charoensiri has been charged

with four criminal offences in connection to her professional activities. If found guilty she could face up to at least 10 years of imprisonment. Furthermore, another case was initiated by the police against her, under charges of reporting false information for having filed a complaint of malfeasance in office against the police. If proceeded, she could face up to a maximum of 5 years imprisonment.

Lawyers for Lawyers Award

The Lawyers for Lawyers award was created in 2011 by the Dutch Civil Society Organization Lawyers for Lawyers (L4L). L4L is an independent and non-political Dutch foundation seeking to promote the proper functioning of the rule of law by pursuing freedom and independence of the legal profession. We do this by supporting lawyers worldwide who are threatened or suppressed in the execution of their profession, in conformity with international law, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers.

L4L hands out this Award every two years recognizing that ensuing attention and publicity will offer the recipient additional protection in the discharge of his/her professional duties. The prize is a special token as well as a donation of €10.000.

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