

Justice and Peace

Newsletter of the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (Thailand)

2005 Issue #2

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Message on Human Rights Day of Catholic Church in Thailand

Sunday, 20 November 2005

“Forgiveness and Reconciliation: A Road to True Peace”

To Christians and People of Good Will

Sunday 20 November 2005 is marked as the Human Rights Day of Catholic Church in Thailand. Its goal is to raise awareness of Christians on values and equal dignity of fellow human beings according to the teachings of the Gospel, to participate in promotion of human rights and peace in society.

In 2005, Thailand has celebrated the 60th anniversary of Thai and International Peace (establishment of United Nations on 26 June 1945 to commemorate heroic contribution of Seri Thai (Free Thai Movement) and those who have given their lives to protect peace in the Second World War. It was also to promote direction of peace and reconciliation among human beings regardless of race, religion, faith and culture, and firmly hold on direction of peace.

Actually, the current situation sees the absence of peace in global and Thai society, resulted from widespread violation of human rights without having consideration on human dignity which God has conferred equally to them. Human being is less and less aware of their dignity. Religion is devalued and given less significance. At the same time, society gives priority to capitalism and consumers, leading to competition and conflict. Human beings allow greed, pessimism and indifference to control their hearts and conscience of peace, which is conducive to violation of human rights in different forms. All are directly and indirectly affected by violence, such as situation of violence occurring daily in several areas of the South, especially the 3 Southern border provinces which cause losses in life and properties. It also causes mistrust, changing good relationship in the past to suspicion and misunderstanding, blaming differences in race, religion, culture and social status as conditions leading to hatred, discrimination and division and finally leading to unrest in society.



It is necessary, therefore, that Catholic Church in Thailand to seriously reflect and give attention to such cases. The event is contradictory to belief and practical guidelines of Christians. Our “Lord of Peace” has initiated and laid foundation for world peace. Christ has done away with these obstacles and difference. “Blesses are the peacemakers: for they shall be called children of God.” (Mt. 5:9)

The Gospel teaches that “For as the body is one, and has many organs; and all the organs of the body, whereas they are many, yet are one body, so also is Christ. For in one Spirit were we all baptised into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and in one Spirit we have all been made to receive.” (1Cr. 12:12-13)

“We must not look at our brothers and sisters as enemies, strangers or other people, if we have faith in God who is the Lord of Reconciliation. He has appointed us ambassadors of reconciliation” (2Cr. 5:19-20). “He has ordered us to care for all our brothers and sisters, for true knowledge in God

(continued on page 2)

Exposure/Immersion program for Hong Kong Federation Catholic Students

On 4-10 July 2005, Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) and Hotline Asia Hong Kong co-organised an "exposure-immersion program" for Hong Kong Federation Catholic Students whose members are students from several institutions. In this exposure-immersion program, 6 students joined the program. They had a chance to have a direct experience on reality of people in society that is different from theirs, especially that of the poor. It helped them to really understand root-cause of the problem and helped identify solution to address many social problems occurring in the world

The site they visited to be exposed and immersed in the life of villagers is Sedoza village in Mae Chaem District, Chiangmai. It is a Karen village where the Karens continue their simplistic living. They are engaged in farming growing cabbage, red onion, dry rice and

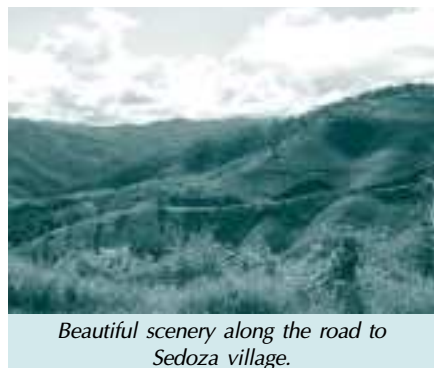
animal raising. Karens firmly hold their unique traditions and culture. Their way of life depends on the nature. They respect nature and take it as an essential part of their life. They live simple life and are not enslaved by mammon. They value kinship relations with high sense of fraternity.

The experience in living with Karens at Sedoza village, although in a short period of 4 nights, has changed worldview and perception of this group of students. It helped them to understand that shortage of materials, money and other facilities did not affect the way of life of Karens at all. They have a sufficiency living and are happy in a natural environment. This is different from the

Sedoza has no electricity. As a result, there are no facilities such as television, refrigerator. But at present, Solar cell project has been introduced to the community, result is some good and bad things.



life of Hong Kong students who, despite their better living, feel less happy than the Karens.



Beautiful scenery along the road to Sedoza village.

All villagers of Sedoza are highland farmers. They plant rices and vegetables such as cabbages and cauliflowers.



The group of Hongkong students visited the villagers; karens and learning about their culture and tradition.



Kitchen style of karens.



Try to taste a snack of karens, tea leaves and salt.



(continued from page 1)

comes from our sharing of sufferings and happiness with our suffering brothers and sisters." (2Cr. 5:14-16)

Catholic Church in Thailand is fully aware that in renewing peace, an important condition is respect of human dignity and rights and exercise of love and justice. However, the process of building peace in society cannot be materialised if there is lack of attitudes for reconciliation and forgiveness rooted in the hearts of all human being.¹ Without this condition, the path of peace is difficult.

On this occasion, I would like to invite all Christians to pray for the building of a path to peace by being united with

brothers and sisters who are suffering from violence in society, by trying to understand the situation with an eye of compassion, charity and perseverance. Open our hearts, reduce our pessimism, and accept differences in opinion, race, religion, culture and social status. Help find direction and take action to reinstate peace as soon as possible. Let the hearts of all filled with forgiveness and reconciliation for true peace to happen and endure permanently.

Let Christ's abundant blessings come to all people of good will.

(Michael Bunlue Mansap)

Bishop of Ubonratchathani Diocese

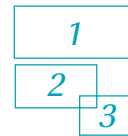
Chairperson of Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace

¹ John Paul II, Message on World Day of Peace 1997, "Offer forgiveness and Receive peace"

Participation in Interfaith Ceremonies on the Occasion of 60th Anniversary of Thai Peace Day

On 16 August 2005, Thammasat University has organised a celebration on the 60th anniversary of Thai Peace Day at its auditorium in Tha Phrajan to commemorate the heroic contribution of Free Thai Movement (Seri Thai) and those who have given their lives to protect peace during the Second World War. It also aimed at disseminating direction of peace, harmony and fraternity in humanity regardless of race, religion, belief and culture so as to foster direction of peace.

Fr. Chalerm Kitmongkhol, deputy secretary general of Catholic Bishops' Conference of Thailand, together with staff members of CCJP as Catholic representatives have attended an interfaith ceremony of Buddhists, Christians and Muslims to commemorate the heroic contribution of Seri Thai Movement who fought the war to protect sovereignty and independence of Thailand during the Second World War. After the religious ceremony, there was a keynote address on "The End of the Second World War and Peace Building in Thailand" by Prof. Eiji Murashima, a professor who advocates and promotes peace from Waseda University of Japan. This was followed by musical performance with a theme "Duriya Niphond Shanti Dharm" (Musical Composition on Peace), an address on "60 Years on Building Thai Peace" by Mr. Sulak Suvaraksa, a senior academician and Siamese intellectual, a chorus for peace by T.U. Chorus and a special address on "Peace and Harmony in Thai Society" by Mr. Ananda Panyarachun, a former Prime Minister.



- 1 : a chorus for peace by T.U. (Thammasat University) Chorus played musical performance with a theme "Duriya Niphond Shanti Dharm" (Musical Composition on Peace).
 2, 3 : Fr.Chalerm Kitmongkhol, deputy secretary general of Bishops' Conference of Thailand, together with staff members of CCJP as catholic representatives have attended an interfaith religious ceremony.

Training on Human Rights Study



Training on human rights study was organised for the second group of teachers of St. Theresa School in Nong Jork, Bangkok on 3-4 September 2005 and the third group on 10-11 September 2005. There were 90 kindergarten, primary, secondary and assistant teachers in the two groups attended the training. The training subjects included principles of human rights, which was given by Mr.

Pairote Polpet (secretary general of Union for Civil Liberty Association), child rights by Mr. Nuttawut Buapratoom (a lawyer from Centre for the Protection of Children's Rights), human rights in educational institutions and principle to integrate human rights study with lesson plan by Ass. Prof. Dr. Walai Na Pombetr (chairperson of human rights study program).

Training on human rights was organised for 165 teachers of Preechanusart in Chonburi Province. This training was given in two sessions. The first was held on 9-11 October, and the second on 13-15 October 2005. Training subjects included 1) situation of human

rights in our life by Ms. Achara Somsaengsuang, 2) essential principle of human rights by Mr. Pairote Polpet, 3) women's rights by Ms. Chuensuk Asaidharmakul, co-ordinator of Alliance for Progress of Women, 4) child rights by Ms. Wassana Kaonoparat from the Centre for the Protection of Children's Rights, 5) Virtue of human rights in educational institutions by Fr. Vacharin Samanchit, and 6) principle of integrating human rights with lesson plan by Ass. Prof. Dr. Valai Na Pombejr. At the end, teachers had a chance to formulate a lesson plan and present to the plenary session with Dr. Walai as commentator, from which the teachers could improve, revise and experiment in their school.

A Seminar on Learning, Understanding and Solidarity with Situation in 3 Southern Border Provinces: Challenge to the Situation and Stand of the Church in its Work with People of Other Faiths

CCJP has contacted Bishop Prathan Sridarunsil, bishop of Suratthani to take this seminar as part of an annual priests' seminar for 2005 of Suratthani Diocese, which was held on 26-28 October 2005 at Baan Chumpha Barn (Pastoral Center), Amphoe Muang, Suratthani Province.

In this seminar, 2 resource persons were invited by CCJP. A Muslim Scholar Mr. Sukri Langpooteh talked on "Faith and Way of Life of Muslims: Belief and Reality of the Situation". Mr. Sukri is a dean of Faculty of Art, Yala Muslim College. Fr. Ignatius Ismartono S.J. from the Commission for Inter-religious Dialogue and Ecumenical Affairs of Bishops' Conference of Indonesia, talked on "Living in a predominantly Muslim country : Indonesia, Experience in Inter-religious Dialogue".

About 121 people 33 priest, 28 religious and 60 lay people attended this seminar. They were Catholic priests, religious sisters and lay people in Southern region from Prachuabkhirikhan, Chumporn, Suratthani, Krabi, Phangnga, Nakhonsrithammarat, Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat. The participants have learned

the way of life of Muslims and gained better understanding on Islam. The important point, highlighted throughout the seminar, was the need to understand ourselves and to understand others. 'Being together with adherents of different religions, believers listen to and at the same time let themselves be addressed by the faith and life of faith of others. A believer tries to understand and to be open to be enriched by others without being afraid of losing one's own, or of robbing the richness of others,' Fr. Ismartono wrote in his paper.

Fr. Ismartono also suggested some actions that need to be taken for the situation to change; i.e. to transform the atmosphere of hostility to tolerance, dialogue and true sister-brotherhood. These actions include visiting the conflict areas; advocating and conducting deeper study



Mr. Sukri Langpooteh ; a dean of Faculty of Art, Yala Muslim College talked on "Faith and Way of Life of Muslims : Believe and Reality of the Situation."



Fr. Ignatius Ismartono S.J. talked on 'Living in a predominantly Muslim country: Indonesia, Experience in Inter-religious Dialogue'.

of the cases; exchanging of inspiration and developing respect; and collaboration.

After taking part at the seminar, CCJP concluded that it has a big role to play in order to support the local needs, understanding and strengthening the unity of the people of Thailand. However, the key player is indeed each and everyone.



Bishop Prathan Sridarunsil, bishop of Suratthani (the first person from the left) and others participants from Suratthani Diocese.



Photo taken together.

A Seminar on the Occasion of Human Rights Day of the Catholic Church in Thailand on a theme **“60 Years of Thai Peace, Mission of the Faithful in Protection of Human Rights”**, held on Saturday, 19 November 2005 at **Centenary Hall, St. Gabriel Foundation Building, Soi Thonglor 15, Bangkok.**



On the occasion of the Human Rights Day of 2005, which fell on Sunday 20 November 2005, CCJP in close collaboration with Association of Religious Women, Justice and Peace Program of the Ursulines and Justice and Peace Committee of St. Gabriel, co-organised a seminar on “60 Years of Thai Peace,

Mission of the Faithful in Protection of Human Rights”. The purpose of this seminar was to express the stand of the Catholic Church in Thailand on the work to promote human rights and peace, as well as expressing her solidarity with fellow human beings who are suffering from violence in society. It also wanted to raise awareness and promote participation in the building of peace through respect in equal rights and dignity of human beings, as well as giving assistance to fellow humans affected by violence and human rights violation.

Before the seminar began, a liturgy was led by Fr. Vacharin Samanchit , a CCJP’s chaplain, followed by a keynote speech on “Mission of the Faithful and Protection of Human Rights” by Professor Saneh Jamariks, chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission. Then, a panel discussion with a theme “Human Rights and Peace in the Situation of Three Southern Provinces” with Ass. Prof. Saowanee Jitmuad, Independent National Reconciliation Committee, and Doctor Bancha Pongpanit, Suan Moke Study Group and Independent National Reconciliation Committee, with Ms. Chuensuk Asaidharmakul, co-ordinator of Alliance for Progress of Women. After the panel discussion, Fr. Ignatius Smartono, SJ, from Catholic Commission for Inter-Religious Dialogue, Indonesia, gave a talk on Human Rights From Christian Perspective with Ms. Katalae Sikarangkul, member of CCJP Board of Director as an interpreter. The event adjourned with candle lighting for peace.

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1 : Prof. Saneh Jamariks, chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission had a keynote speech on “Mission of Faithful and Protection of Human Rights.”
 2 : Ms.Kattalee Sikarangkul as an interpreter with Fr.Ignatius Smartono SJ.
 3 : A panel discussion with a theme “Human Rights and Peace in the Situation of three Southern Provinces” by Ass.Prof.Saowanee Jitmuad , Ms.Chuensuk Asaidharmakul and Dr.Bancha Pongpanit. (From Left to Right)

CCJP co-organised a workshop on “**Human Rights Study for Building a Culture of Human Rights in Thai Society**” on the occasion of International Human Rights Day, which was held on 7-8 December at **Surasak Montri School**, Vibhavadi Road, Bangkok.



Ass.Prof.Dr.Walai Na Pombejr, member of a sub-committee on human rights study held public talk on “Human Rights in Thai and World society.”

This workshop was co-organised with a human rights study sub-committee of the National Human rights Commission, the Office of Basic Education Committee, the Office of Education of Bangkok Area 1, Surasak Montri and Mater Dei Schools. The event included exhibition on knowledge and understanding on human rights, which was prepared and displayed by students from participating schools. There was presentation of documentary video on human rights study. There was a public talk on “Human Rights Study in Thai and World Society” by Ass. Prof. Dr. Walai Na Pombejr, member of a sub-committee on human rights study. There were also talks on “Human Rights Study: Building Learning Process in Culture and Way of Human Rights in Thai Society” by Asst. Prof. Dr. Sutin Noppaket, member of National Human Rights



Commission, and “Human Rights and Happiness of Family” by Professor Emerita Doctor Chanika Toojinda, chairperson of paediatric centre, Smitivej Sri Nagarindra Hospital. Furthermore, there was also a test on human rights knowledge, workshop to identify direction for co-operation in development of human rights study in educational institutions and formulation of teaching plan to integrate essential elements of human rights in basic educational curriculum.

In afternoon sessions, CCJP has presented a movie entitled ‘Whale Rider’ for around 400 secondary students from Surasak Montri School. After the presentation, Ms. Achara Somsaengsuang, secretary general of CCJP has raised issues for discussion regarding impression on contents of the movie if it was related to whose rights, such as the right to gender equality, the right to conservation and renewal of customs, traditions and indigenous wisdom of Maoris in New Zealand. The discussion was very interesting and gained good response from the students who have learned knowledge on human rights, which was inserted in this entertainment.

Movie time for Students, CCJP has presented a movie entitled ‘Whale Rider’.



Movie Fair on Human Rights and Democracy on 9-16 December 2005 at 14 October Monument, Kork Wua Junction, Ratchadamnern, Bangkok.

Human Rights Week Organising Committee of popular sector has organised Human Rights Week of 2005 under the theme “Human Rights are the Starting Point of Peace” on 9-16 December 2005 at 14 October Monument. CCJP worked with Pridi Phanomyong Institution also co-organised movie fair on human rights, peace and democracy. We have chosen movie with contents related to human rights, such as rights violation,

praise and respect of rights, such as ‘Hotel Rwanda’, ‘The Shawshank Redemption’, ‘I am Sam’, ‘Grave of Fireflies’, ‘Erin Brokovich’, ‘Whale Rider’, ‘Gandhi’ and ‘Men of Honour’. These movies were presented to the general audience to promote understanding on human rights that are inserted in the movies, which was one means to give knowledge on human rights.

10 Positive and 10 Negative Cases of Human Rights Situation under Thaksin's Administration in 2005

Picked up by Formulated Union for Civil Liberty (UCL) and Thai Coalition for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders



10 Negative Cases of Human Rights under Thaksin's Administration are listed below.

1. PROMULGATION OF ROYAL ACT ON ADMINISTRATION IN EMERGENCY B.E. 2548 (2005)

The government of Thaksin has claimed situation of unrest in the three southern border provinces to pass a Royal Act on Administration in Emergency to be enforced in the three Southern border provinces on 19 July 2005. This Royal Act empowers local authorities and their commanders in this particular area without any civil, criminal or disciplinary responsibility. It enables officials to misuse power that is uncontrollable. It is like issuing a license to kill, which would lead to serious violation of rights in life and bodies of the people.



2. THAI PEOPLE SOUGHT ASYLUM IN MALAYSIA

At the end of August 2005, 131 Thai people from Yala and Narathiwat have sought asylum in Malaysia for they felt their life was insecure and unsafe from the unrest situation in the three Southern border provinces provoked by both terrorists and state officials. They argued that state officials who had a direct duty to give protection and safety to life and right to life, but could not give them protection. Therefore, they crossed the border to neighbouring country to seek asylum.

3. FREEDOM OF PRESS

Violation of freedom of press was widespread in several forms, which affected freedom of mass media and right of the people to information as can be seen from the following cases.

- 1) Banned a TV program "Thailand Weekly" by Manager Group, threatening TV and radio presenters with different means, such as throwing explosives at the office of Manager Newspaper.
- 2) Investigated community radio stations presenting opinions different from that of the government, such as FM 92.25.
- 3) Used government media to discredit mass media by blaming operation of mass media of misleading the public, such as blaming mass media of disloyal to the country, departing from the professional ethical norms, and so on.



4. INVESTIGATION OF DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL INVESTIGATION ON THE MISSING OF A HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATE LAWYER DID NOT MAKE PROGRESS.

Many human rights defenders in Thailand were threatened, missing and lost their lives under this government, especially the cases of Mr. Somchai Neelapaijit, a lawyer and human rights advocate was kidnapped on 12 March 2004, a killing of Mr. Charoen Wat-aksorn, leader of Bor Nok local environmentalist group, Prachuabkhirikhan Province, who were shot on 21 June 2004, and an assassination of Venerable Phra Supot Suwajoe, abbot of meditation centre, Wat Suan Metta Dharm Temple, Fang District, Chiangmai, leader of watershed forest and land conservation group, who was shot on 18 June 2005. All the three cases are under responsibility of Department of Special Investigation (DSI). It is expected by society that DSI would be able to resolve the case and bring justice to families of the victims. Yet, until now there is no progress at all from the work of DSI in investigating these cases.

6. RIGHTS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATES

In the past year, there were significant violations of rights of two cases of human rights advocates. The first case is assassination of Venerable Phra Supot Suwajoe, a conservationist Buddhist monk, abbot of Suan Metta Dharm Temple, Fang District, Chiangmai Province. He stood up to protect forestland along river basin and was later assassinated. A fire was also set on a house of the first witness who found the body of the Buddhist monk. In addition, Phra Kittisak Kitti Sophano, chairperson of Sekiyadharm, who came out to demand rapid investigation of the case of Phra Supot, was also threatened. Other human rights advocates who are still alive have also been threatened, still in dangers and threatened by local influential people. This threat seriously affects morale and spirit of human rights advocates.



5. ATTEMPT TO PASS LAW ON COMMUNITY FOREST THAT IS CONTRADICTIONARY TO INTENTION OF THE CONSTITUTION

Bill on community forest, which was advocated by 52,968 people signing their names in support of the bill, was submitted to the Parliament as a legal recognition of community right to participation in management, care and use of natural resources and the environment in a balanced and sustainable manner as per article 46 of the Constitution. However, the Senate has changed essential principles of the bill inhibiting local communities to establish community forest in conserved forest areas. This move is a hindrance preventing local communities to take part in management of community forest in their areas, which is contradictory to the intention of the bill on community forest that has been approved by the House of Representatives and article 46 of the Constitution. It is a violation of the rights of local communities which have already been managing community forest in their surrounding.

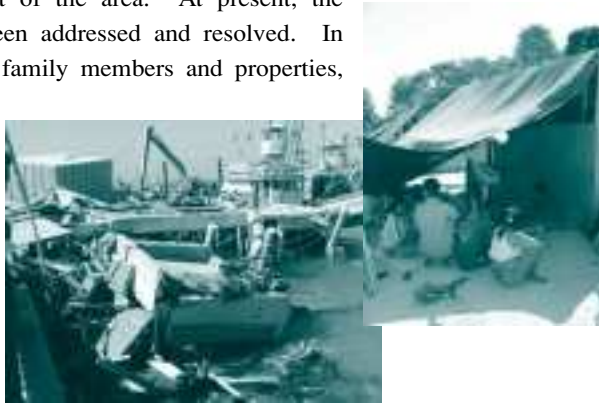


7. SUB-CONTRACTING SERIOUSLY AFFECTS RIGHTS OF WORKERS.

In the past year, entrepreneurs and employers in all production and service sectors have adopted sub-contracting method of employment by paying fee to individuals or legal entities who recruit workers to work in production process of entrepreneurs. They will deliver jobs to be done at home by paying lump sum amount of money as compensation. This method affects rights of workers in many aspects. It is a means for sub-contractors to exploit their workers and violate their rights to basic labour law. For example, workers only get minimum wage or a little higher without any benefits. They will not get wage if they take sick leave. Employers can terminate contract if they want to. Furthermore, these workers cannot organise trade union to negotiate with their employers as provided by the law. Workers under sub-contractors are under unfair contract and become just a part of production. This arrangement affects employment security and human dignity.

8. RIGHTS OF TSUNAMI AFFECTED COMMUNITIES TO LAND.

Tsunami affected communities, such as Thabtawan, Laempom and Ban Nai Rai in Phangnga Province, are facing problems on occupation of land for residence and farming. After the Tsunami, capitalists tried to claim ownership of the land where the above 3 communities are located. They used all legal measures and threatened community members by all means to put pressure and drive them out of the area. At present, the problem has not been addressed and resolved. In addition to loss of family members and properties, community members also have to face insecurity in residential area, which is a threat to security to their existence.



9. RIGHTS TO CRIMINAL PROCEDURES

At present, police continue to torture alleged offenders to squeeze confession, which is violation of rights to life and body of the alleged offender. Arrest and detention are done with torture and threat for confession.

10. RIGHTS TO SAFETY IN LIFE

The losses of life of people and officials in 3 Southern border provinces in “daily killing” continue as a reality in the South, such as brutal killing of 2 marines, or other cases. The state still could not guarantee sufficient safety to life.

10 Positive Cases of Human Rights under Thaksin’s government

1. RIGHTS OF ETHNIC GROUPS OF MAE AYE

On 9 September 2005, Supreme Court of Administration has passed a judgement in favour of villagers of Mae Aye in a case filed against Department of Local Administration of Chiangmai and district chief of Mai Aye who failed to abide by Act on Administration Procedures B.E. 2539 (1996). This judgement results in revocation of a notification of Mai Aye District Office, and obliges the district office to add the names of 1,243 people of Mai Aye in their house registrations as before.

This story occurred in Mae Aye District in 1956 when the first census was conducted, but not all households were covered. Later, the office of Mai Aye District was damaged by fire, burning house-hold registration documents. Furthermore, in 1974-1975 there was fighting along borderline, pushing villagers along the border to flee the area to the district area as displaced persons. Then the government arranged for house-hold registration and issuance of Burmese displaced person card. However, officials did not have verification process prove their Thai nationality. This



negligence misled some villagers to get registration as Burmese displaced persons. In 1994, villagers of Mae Aye District has appealed to the King to seek justice. The Department of Local Administration and the District Office of Mae Aye then investigated evidences and found that these villagers are really Thai people. Therefore, their names are added in their house-hold registration. The judgement also provides guidelines for other villagers to file complaint to the district office later on.



2. RIGHTS OF THAI DISPLACED PERSONS IN RANONG

On 20 March 2003, Mr. Prasert Intarajak, a Thai displaced person, was arrested by police with a charge of offending the Act on Immigration B.E. 2522 (1979). Later on 10 August 2005, Ranong Provincial Court has passed a judgement that Thai displaced persons are Thai people without Thai nationality, and are allowed to live in the Kingdom of Thailand. The court ruled that Thai people have the right to live in Thailand although they have not yet got Thai nationality.

3. RIGHTS TO ACCESS TO ANTIRETROVIRAL THERAPY

Thai network of people living with HIV/AIDS (TNP) and network of AIDS NGOs have struggled to demand the government to cover antiretroviral therapy for people living with HIV and AIDS patients in the universal coverage program of national health security system, or 30 Baht for all diseases, since 2001. Until 1 October 2004, the national office of health security has declared coverage of antiretroviral therapy as a benefit in the national health security system. In this regard, the government has approved 2,700 million Baht for the operation. It would take 3 months to prepare a system for service on antiretroviral therapy (October-December 2005).

4. RIGHTS OF ALLEGED OFFENDERS/DAMAGED PERSONS

National Police Office has issued a notification on guidelines for press conference, interview giving, information giving, and news distribution to mass media and preparation of public relation media dated 18 November 2005. The notification aims at giving practical guidelines for police restricting them from arranging damaged persons, alleged offenders or witness for press conference, giving news or information, declaring new or information or giving interview to mass media. It also restricts police to accompany reporters to write news or take photo while they are on duty in searching and arresting. This notification also covers criteria on taking convicts to point the place where the case was committed to support their confession. This is a progress of Thai police in protecting human rights of convicts, because they deserve treatment as innocents until there is a prove in court, instead of being branded in mass media. It is also a protection of personal rights of not to be publicised by photos and news in media.

5. RIGHTS OF PATIENTS

On 4 August 2005, Nonthaburi Provincial Court has ordered the office of permanent secretary to the Ministry of Public Health to pay a compensation of 800,000 Baht with an interest rate of 7.5% per year from 26 October 1999 to Ms. Dokrak Petprasert, who file a lawsuit against Ministry of Public Health on a charge of carelessness. In her case, a doctor has made a mistake in diagnosis and given wrong injection, causing allergy until her two eyes are blind and she has suffered for 6 years.

6. APPOINTMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL RECONCILIATION COMMITTEE

This national committee was headed by Mr. Anand Panyarachun with people from various social sectors as its members. The main objective was to find means and ways to end violence in the 3 Southern border provinces. This committee had important tasks of proposing policies, measures, mechanisms and finding ways to foster reconciliation and peace in Thai society, especially in the 3 Southern border provinces, i.e. Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat. It also had to help promote justice and abolish misunderstanding among various groups with differences, eradicate conditions and prevent violence, as well as building unity in the country, which is a non-violence approach in addressing serious violation of rights in the 3 Southern border provinces.

7. SUPREME ADMINISTRATIVE COURT TEMPORARILY BANNED SALE OF SHARES OF ELECTRICITY GENERATING AUTHORITY OF THAILAND

When Foundation of Consumers and organisations of popular sector filed a lawsuit to the Supreme Administrative Court demanding to stop enlisting Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand in the Stock Exchange of Thailand on 16-17 November 2005, since the state issued to 2 decrees that could cause damage on people in general. The first was a decree on power, rights and benefits of Electricity Generating Authority, and the second is a decree on timeframe for nullification of a law on electricity generating authority of Thailand. On 15 November 2005, the Supreme Administrative Court has ruled out termination of sale of shares or any other activity related to sale of share until the Court would come out with judgement on the case.



image : www.consumerthai.org

8. RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN

The Cabinet has approved a bill on prevention and solution to violence in family, which would be submitted to the House of Representatives for further consideration before its promulgation as a tool to protect rights of children and women who face a problem of violence in families.

9. NATIONAL MASTER PLAN ON HUMAN RIGHTS

The government has organised a workshop on human rights, Thai society and measures for application on 6 August 2005 at Sofitel Hotel, Central Plaza. Prime Minister Thaksin Shinnawatra presided over in this workshop. Participants included people engaged in human rights in different parts. The Prime Minister has assigned the National Human Rights Commission and Ministry of Justice to formulate a master plan on human rights. This is a significant step of Thai society where all sectors once again would take part in review and formulation of a plan on human rights and its application after the government has neglected for a long time.

10. SOCIAL SECURITY EXTENDS ITS PROTECTION TO LABOUR RIGHTS

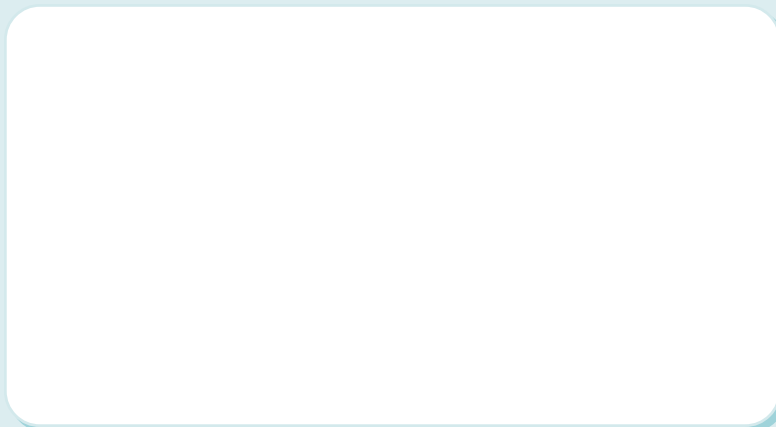
In case of delivery, earlier a woman got a maximum coverage of 6,000 Baht. This coverage is extended to unlimited amount. Welfare for a child is extended from 200 Baht per child to 350 Baht from birth to 6 years old, which is a protection of labour rights of social security members.

Candle lighting for Peace.



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