

ATT: The UN (ICERD) Committee

Dear Sir,

I am a resident of Southern Thailand which has been ravaged by chronic unrest in the past nine years. The situation seems to get more violent and death and injury tolls have been on the rise day in day out. One simple solution to address the restiveness is the government attempt to catch the perpetrators. That is where the problem begins. It is assumed that since the incidence happens locally, local people must be held liable (in my opinion, most state officials adopt this idea). Whenever an incidence happens, every finger is pointed toward local people and I have experienced such a prejudice myself. I have been prosecuted since 2007, more than five years now.

My case has been dragging on. It has not even done at the Lower Court level. Frankly speaking, such a legal wrangle has implanted much fear and suspicion in me. Whenever any incidence happens, or during my encounter with the officials, I really fear that I might be subjected to “unfairness”, the abuse of power by the law enforcement officers. In their opinion, local people like me who are Malay descendants are the cause of violence. And all alleged offenders or accused in any security related cases since 2004 are entirely local people.

But according to the Foundation of Muslim Attorney Centre (MAC), most cases filed with the Court have been dismissed. Such a pretext has given rise from biases against local people and between the officials and local people. It has prompted them to suspect each other losing mutual trust. But this mainly works to the disadvantage of local people since they are just civilians and have no weapons.

But the security officials are equipped with weapons. The situation is very precarious. I suppose that as law enforcement officials, they are bound to act within the rule of law. I simply do not understand why certain officials have carried out their duties beyond what the law provides for. During my being held in custody, I got to meet and exchange with people who had been victims of torture. I cannot understand why this can happen. And I am writing this letter and hope that it may help to bring about peace in my region. That is my fervent hope and I sincerely want the UN Commissions to take action on the following premises;

1. Ensuring safety of people living in Thailand’s Southern Border Provinces
2. Addressing the problems by allowing people to choose the desirable methods. As of now, the region’s administration falls in the hand of people from elsewhere and they have no idea what the real problems are.
3. Many people are still asked to report themselves to the authorities repeatedly.
4. During the search of houses, people who used to be criminal defendants or those people being issued with Emergency warrants as well as local people are often the prime target.
5. People who were issued with Emergency warrants, though they had been discharged by the authorities, their official records are not corrected, and they can be stopped at any checkpoint causing trouble when thy travel.
6. Kangaroo court or extrajudicial killing is being used against people who cannot be held liable through normal justice process. Several have been killed as a result. I really sympathize with them. It cases a lot of trouble. Since the perpetrators are unknown, their surviving families often find it difficult to apply for remedies from the state. And it gives rise to many social problems. As the breadwinners of the families who used to be detained or used to be criminal defendants got killed, their surviving wives and children are left at their own devices. They are eligible to for remedies since their deceased breadwinners used to be criminal defendants.

These are some of the problems I want to share with you. It has gone from bad to worse. I am one among many who have to always live in fear since such abuses happen every so often. We fear that when it will turn against us after we see it has happened to our friends. Those who become victimized stand to face the same destiny again and again. Personally, I have conflict with anyone, I have no enemy or hostile persons. The persons I fear the most are officials since they tend to assume that I am the cause of restiveness. If I happen to lose my life like my friends, I want to emphasize that it happens not because of my personal conflict with anyone. I have had conflicts with no one. I do not fight with anyone for any benefits. Please help me. I simply want peace to return. I want to prevent anyone from capitalizing on the suffering of people in the Southern Border Provinces. The powers that be want to be here, just to serve their self interest and then run away. But people like me, my sisters and brothers, and my relatives and people in the Southern Border Provinces, we have to bear with the problems in the past nine years and the situation is far from being peaceful. Please help me. I really want to have people to who can come and genuinely help to solve the problems, but not to reap any benefits from here.

Yours sincerely,

A person affected by unrest in Thailand’s Southern Border Provinces