



มูลนิธิผสานวัฒนธรรม Cross Cultural Foundation

89 ซอยสิทธิชน ถ.สุทธิสารวินิจฉัย แขวงสามเสนนอก เขตห้วยขวาง กรุงเทพมหานคร 10310
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For immediate release on 6 September 2019

Press Release:

Chaiwat Limlikhit-aksorn to testify in Court on 10 Sep as co-plaintiff in a libel suit against Wut Boonlert, an independent expert on human rights for indigenous Karen people

On 10 September 2019, from 9.00 to 16.00, the Minburi Criminal Court will take evidence for the prosecution in connection with Black Criminal Case No.Aor 6246/2561 in which Mr. Chaiwat Limlikhit-Aksorn, former Chief of Kaeng Krachan National Park, has filed a libel charge against Mr. Wut Boonlert, an independent academic with expertise on the rights of indigenous Karen people in Thailand. On this day, Mr. Chaiwat will be giving evidence to the Court as a witness and co-plaintiff in this case.

In this case, Mr. Wut Boonlert, an independent expert and human rights activist working for the rights of the indigenous Karen was sued for libel by Mr. Chaiwat Limlikhitaksorn, former Chief of the Kaeng Krachan National Park while he was the Chief of the National Park and Wildlife Taskforce (Phaya Sua). Another defendant in this case is Mr. Samak Donnapee, former Director of the Bureau of National Park.

It is alleged that on 28 August 2016, Mr. Wut and Mr. Samak have committed a libelous act against Mr. Chaiwat Limlikhitaksorn who authorized another person to report the case to the Khan Na Yao Police Station. It is further alleged that Mr. Chaiwat had found the libelous information online while using the computer in the area under jurisdiction of the Minburi Provincial Court (Minburi Criminal Court at present) on 11 September 2016.

On 18 May 2017, Mr. Wut was summoned to acknowledge his charge. Subsequently, he filed a petition to the Minburi Public Prosecutor Office, requesting them not to pursue an indictment. In the request, he stated that his post was about an investigation conducted by news media and the information had already been published before. The existing news report urged public authorities to investigate the Chai Rajaprak Ranch located in the territory of the National Park; Mr. Wut's post simply demanded that the investigation be made transparent since forests are an important natural resource which belongs to the public. Moreover, the post had no explicit mention of Mr. Chaiwat. Therefore, Mr. Wut stated in the petition that he suspected that the lawsuit has been filed against him as a judicial harassment which constitutes unlawful exercise of a judicial right. Such a practice can be considered a strategic lawsuit against public participation (SLAPP) because Mr. Wut has been working for human rights of the indigenous Karen community who lives inside Kaeng Krachan National Park. Mr. Chaiwat, on the other hand, used to be the park chief during the time of intense conflicts between park officers and the Karen community which led to the state-sponsored operation of forced eviction, an ensuing lawsuit filed by the community's spiritual leader Grandfather Kor-Ee Mimi against the officers, and the abduction and murder of Mr. Billy Porlajee Rakchongcharoen.

On 22 October 2018, Mr. Chaiwat has requested to be a co-plaintiff in this case and demanded damages worth 2,000,000 THB if the defendants are found guilty of libel as per the Criminal



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Code's Section 328 which stipulates that libel is punishable by imprisonment of not more than two years and a fine not more than 200,000 baht.

While the five prosecution witnesses will be examined on 10 September 2019, the other four will be examined on 11 September 2019, from 9.00 to 16.00 at the Minburi Criminal Court.

For more information, please contact Mr. Preeda Nakpew, attorney of the Cross-Cultural Foundation (CrCF), Tel. 089-6222474.