

We demand an end to State Violence and for a new government – the government we all deserve.

**The Community Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) Collective in Thailand statement on
International Women's Day**

Over one hundred years ago when women in Russia, and in the US took to the streets, giving birth to International Women's Day, it was not a celebration. The women were in the street marching to end the violence of the State that had made life for them and their families impossible.

International Women's Day 2021 is not a day of celebration either. We hear our sisters next door in Burma. With enormous courage they push back against the deadly violence of the military junta. We raise our voices and our fists with theirs. Doh A Yay! Doh A Yay! (Our cause! Our cause!)

Women in Thailand are forced on a daily basis to confront the tyranny of the State. The majority of taxpayers and voters are women, yet we are not served by our government. Society and the government always rely heavily on women to protect and ensure the welfare of the family and society. During the pandemic and the resulting economic crisis they have leant on us harder but not given a single baht to mothers. Instead of representing us they ignore us, instead of being our protectors they have become our bullies.

It is women, especially mothers, who are doing the work of protecting children, grandchildren, parents, communities, and the natural world. Across the country, women are the first to wake up, and the last to go to sleep. We do the work of caring for the family, we work to earn the cash to care for the family, and many of us also do the work of defending rights and seeking justice.

Women are defending life, livelihood, and the land. We live under a cloud of State violence, where we must constantly calculate the risk for even the smallest resistance like raising three fingers or wearing a white bow or sharing online. For women in the Deep South simply going to the market carries a risk of State violence. As mothers we also must calculate and prepare for the risks taken by our children and family.

We demand change. The current government must step down and let us, the people, build a new Constitution that can produce the kind of government we want and deserve.

- A government that is serious about taking away our poverty, not our homes, and livelihoods.
- A government that serves us, not capitalism and greed.
- We want a government whose laws don't choke us when we try to make a living, and whose officials do not demand bribes at every turn.
- A government that upholds our right to the security of citizenship and asylum.
- A government that is anti-racists that respects self-determination and dignity of indigenous women and her community
- A government that makes sure our children are safe in school, where education is free and available to all.

- A government that safeguards our right to land, defends us against the destruction of our natural resources and our way of life
- A government that respects our worth and guarantees the welfare of those of us who are disabled or elderly.
- A government that represents all of us and does not tolerate hate or violence against any woman, including transgender women, and regardless of whether we love women, men, both or neither.
- A government that does not imprison, harass, or threaten us, our children, or our family when we speak out in defense of life and fundamental rights and freedom.
- A government that does not imprison more women than any other country in the world.
- A government committed to justice, peace and an end to violence in the Deep South
- A government that does not take part in or cover up killings and disappearances.
- A government that ensures the soil is not poisoned, protects the rivers and the sea, and guarantees the air we breathe is not killing us.

We deserve to live free of State violence. We deserve a government that invests in caring not killing – “mouth stomach” not guns and weapons. We demand an end to State violence in Thailand, for our sisters in Burma and others around the world.

You may shoot me with your words,

You may cut me with your eyes,

You may kill me with your hatefulness,

But still, like air, I'll rise ...

Maya Angelou, a Black woman American poet and civil rights activist

The Women Human Rights Defenders Collective in Thailand is comprised of community and grassroots women human rights defenders currently representing seventeen different sectors. Indigenous women, Disabled women, Lesbians, Muslim women from the Deep South, Sex Workers, Women fighting for natural resources and environment e.g. resisting coal power plant, potash and gold mining, and mega-dam projects, Women occupying and farming land, Woman fighting for rights to the sea, Women fighting for land reform in the Northeast, Women for democracy, Refugee women, Migrant women, Former prisoners, Women lawyers who represent various communities under threat (and are under threat themselves), Rural women, Assembly of the Poor, Women from the Slum Communities, Garment Workers (Tri-Arm) and Women journalists.



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