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Resolution on Democratic Backsliding and Political Persecution in Thailand

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Buenos Aires, Argentina

The Progressive Alliance expresses its deep concern over the ongoing political persecution of 44 former Members of Parliament of the dissolved Move Forward Party (MFP) in Thailand, which continue to threaten democracy, human rights, and freedom of expression in the country. We recall that the Move Forward Party Thailand, once a member party of the Progressive Alliance, was forced out of office together with their elected MPs as a move to suppress broader opposition to Thailand's entrenched political establishment.

On 10 February 2021, amid Thailand's pro-democracy protests, Pita Limjaroenrat, the then leader of the Move Forward Party (MFP), and 43 other MPs submitted a proposal to amend Section 112 of the Criminal Code—the lèse-majesté law. This initiative sought to bring Section 112 into alignment with international human rights standards and correct the disproportionate punishment imposed under the existing law, which mandates a minimum of 3 years' imprisonment if found guilty, while maintaining respect for the monarchy. The initiative quickly became a target of political persecution spanning several years.

On 7 August 2024, the Constitutional Court of Thailand ruled to dissolve the MFP, the party that had won the most seats in the 2023 general election, supported by over 14 million voters, citing actions deemed "an attempt to overthrow the democratic system with the King as Head of State." The Court imposed a 10-year political ban on Party Leader Pita Limjaroenrat and other former party executives and prohibited them from advocating for reform of Section 112 outside Parliament.

Today, the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) continues investigating these 44 former MPs, threatening them with lifetime bans from politics for their exercise of parliamentary duties and defense of freedom of expression. This move also would effectively silence elected officials serving in Parliament and would ultimately disenfranchise millions of Thai voters.

The Progressive Alliance:



- Denounces the continued political persecution of the 44 former MPs from the dissolved MFP, including 25 of them who are currently serving MPs from the People's Party, and calls upon Thai authorities to immediately cease legal harassment, disproportionate investigations, and politically motivated prosecutions targeting these representatives.
- Reaffirms the right to freedom of expression and parliamentary debate and urges Thailand to uphold its commitments under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), ensuring that legislative initiatives and parliamentary debates cannot be used as grounds for criminal persecution.
- Calls on ASEAN to engage constructively with Thai authorities to defend democratic values, protect political freedoms, and strengthen regional stability. Stresses that the ongoing suppression of political pluralism in Thailand not only undermines the country's democratic integrity but also poses wider risks to ASEAN's regional stability, rule of law, and collective efforts toward democracy and human rights. As one of ASEAN's founding members and a key geoeconomic and geopolitical hub, Thailand's democratic backsliding sets a dangerous precedent that could embolden authoritarian actors across the region, encourage further restrictions on civil liberties in neighboring countries, and erode ASEAN's credibility in upholding its stated principles on democracy, human rights, and inclusive governance.
- Calls for the protection of political pluralism and parliamentary integrity, stressing that the essence of democracy lies in open competition between parties and viewpoints. Emphasizes that no political party should be dissolved or banned for exercising legitimate democratic debate and warns that banning MPs from politics undermines the functioning of Parliament, erodes public trust, and risks destabilizing Thailand's democratic institutions.
- Expresses concern that potential lifetime bans on MPs for exercising their legislative responsibilities represent an abuse of investigative powers, and urges the National Anti-Corruption Commission to ensure due process through transparent, fair, and impartial proceedings. Calls on Thai authorities and judicial institutions to uphold the principles of the rule of law and separation of powers, ensuring that judicial processes remain independent and are not used as tools of political repression.
- Urges democratic allies and human rights organizations to monitor Thailand's political situation, provide technical support for democratic reforms, and encourage inclusive political dialogue that protects pluralism.
- Acknowledges the vital role of Thailand's civil society, youth, student movements, and women, in defending democracy and human rights, and calls upon Thai authorities to respect and protect their rights to peaceful protest and political participation. Stresses that gender equality, youth empowerment, and women's political participation are integral to building a genuinely inclusive and democratic system.