



**Statement of the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand
on the dispersal of demonstration against *Thepa* coal-fired power plant and arrest of its leaders**

The National Human Rights Commission of Thailand (NHRCT) expresses its concern over the dispersal of demonstration and arrest of leaders of the *Songkhla-Pattani* People against Coal-fired Power Plant Network during a campaign to protest against the construction of the *Thepha* coal-fired power plant to present a petition to the Prime Minister on 27 November 2017. The NHRCT calls on all parties to address the problem peacefully with respect and adherence to human rights principles.

The *Thepha* power plant project is a large coal-fired power plant which has been criticized for potentially having a severe and widespread impact on the environment and health. The case is under investigation of the NHRCT which is in the process of preparing the report on the case. At this stage, the NHRCT has found that there are problems relating to disclosure of information, participation and understanding of the public especially those who may be affected. This has led the people to submit a complaint against the project to the Prime Minister.

The NHRCT is of the view that the campaign is still within the scope of exercising the right to freedom of expression and the right to peaceful assembly under the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand B.E.2560 (2017) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which Thailand is party.

The NHRCT calls upon the Prime Minister to order the police to review the charges against the group of human rights defenders and carefully enforce the laws on the basis of rights and freedoms of the people under the Constitution and to provide opportunities for the Network to meet and express its concerns and recommendations on a sustainable development project in a peaceful way and without any obstruction.

The NHRCT calls upon the government and relevant agencies to adhere to the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights under the Protect, Respect and Remedy Framework together with the national agenda on human rights as a driving force toward Thailand 4.0 for sustainable development which was approved by the Cabinet on 21 November 2017 as guidelines for the project operation. The NHRCT will continue to closely monitor the situation.

National Human Rights Commission of Thailand
28 November 2017