



**Statement of the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand (NHRCT)
on the dispersal of demonstration in the evening of 16 October 2020**

The situation in which the authorities enforced the declaration of severe state of emergency in the early evening of 16 October at Pathumwan intersection by dispersing the rally of 'Khana Ratsadorn' (the People's Committee), comprising school and university students and members of general public, has caused grave concerns to the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand (NHRCT). The sensitive political situation and the expression of different opinions possibly leads to further conflict in the society.

Although the rally of 'Khana Ratsadorn' was against the declaration of severe state of emergency, the NHRCT considers that the demonstration did not show any sign of unrest or violence to the degree that the government needed to undertake measures to disperse the demonstration. For this reason, the operation of the police force was disproportionate to the needs of the case. The NHRCT also views that the enforcement of the declaration is required to respect certain rights and fundamental freedoms which are non-derogable and owned by demonstrators, particularly children and youths.

Consequently, the NHRCT calls upon all parties to consider the following:

1. The government and officials should not deploy harsh measures against peaceful demonstration since it is the right safeguarded by the Constitution and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) to which Thailand is party. Instead, they should resort to peaceful means of settlement for disputes or conflicts;
2. The government should not commit the acts of violence against demonstrators, particularly children and youths. The right of children to freely express their views must be protected, including their welfare, development and integrity, as enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC);
3. The government and the legislative should mutually agree to use the process in the Parliament to seriously resolve conflict and guarantee that demands of all conflicting parties will be fairly and equally considered in order that the problem will be solved soon;

4. The government should provide remedial measures to inflicting parties, both protesters and police officers who were injured from the operation on 16 October. Furthermore, protesters in the peaceful assembly who are still in police custody should be accorded due process of law.

5. The exercise of the right to freedom of opinion and expression must respect the rights of others, should refrain from abusive words and any type of communication which will provoke conflicts, incite hatred, instigate violence, and dehumanize other people's dignity.

The NHRCT reiterates the importance of tolerance and cooperation of all parties to find conflict resolution by peaceful means in order to pass through the current national crisis.

Office of the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand

17 October 2020