



**Statement of the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand (NHRCT)
concerning the observed political demonstration on 7 August 2021
The NHRCT urges all parties to cease violence**

On 7 August 2021, the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand (NHRCT) had four Commissioners observed political demonstrations on the ground where Free Youth Group Network and REDEM held at Democracy Monument, Victory Monument and the area of Din Daeng Triangle in Bangkok. In undertaking the function of observation and monitoring the situations, the NHRCT reaffirms the adherence to the principle of independence, fairness and openness to information from all parties.

Based on the observation of demonstrations on the day, the NHRCT was particularly concerned with the violent clashes between crowd control officers and groups of protesters. The NHRCT preliminarily noted that barricades which were set up to block protesters and the use of less lethal weapons including steps taken for crowd control did not start from lesser to higher degree. They were disproportionate and inconsistent with international standards. As a result, a number of non-violent protesters, reporters and people who were not involved with the demonstrations suffered the injury.

Concerning rally goers, it is undeniable that some people prepared and used weapons or other objects as weapons to counter police officers. Such acts did not comply with the principle of peaceful and unarmed assembly, and subsequently caused injuries to several police officers.

To protect human rights and prevent violence not to recur in future, the NHRCT urges all parties to consider the following:

1. The acts of violence must be ceased by all parties. The demonstrators must exercise freedom to assembly peacefully and without weapons. The government must have guidance for managing and controlling crowds in accordance with the United Nations Basic Principle on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials by following steps and being commensurate with due respect for human rights. In addition, the government should listen to people's different views with tolerance.

2. Authorities are required to discriminate between peaceful and non-peaceful protesters. In the event of violence carried out by anyone causing damages to life and public or private properties, the perpetrators should be urgently brought to justice to remove doubt and build mutual trust.

3. The NHRCT proposes to keep communication mechanism or channel between the assembly organizers and the crowd control officials to solve the immediate problems and to avoid tension and violence.

4. For long-term conflict resolution, the NHRCT encourages to create a safe negotiating space to discuss differences to search for common ground for resolution by peaceful means.

In this regard, the case of the 7 August political assembly will be raised for further investigation of human rights violation by the NHRCT. Under the critical circumstance of the COVID-19 pandemic that severely affects economic stability and public well-being, the NHRCT reiterates the importance that all parties constructively exercise their rights and liberties under the constitutional framework and human rights principles. All forms of violence including hateful communication have to be ceased, and all opinions have to be heard in order that the nation can go through the existing crises.

National Human Rights Commission of Thailand

9 August 2021