



**Statement of the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand  
on the urgent enactment of anti-SLAPP legislation  
to protect human rights defenders, the public, and the media  
acting in the public interest**

The National Human Rights Commission of Thailand (NHRCT) expresses its profound concern over several cases of strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs), which have recently come to light. Most recently, a former Labor Minister filed a defamation lawsuit against the editor-in-chief and the news editor of the Isaan Record, seeking a claim for damages worth 50 million baht and 1 million baht respectively, for their reporting on high-ranking politicians soliciting bribes from a recruitment company in exchange for sending Thai workers for wild berries picking in Finland. Although the plaintiff later withdrew the case against the editor-in-chief, the lawsuit against the news with the claim of 1 million baht remains ongoing.

In an earlier case, a former police officer filed defamation by advertisement charges against a member of the Educational Management Committee of the Migrant Workers Union of Thailand (MWUT), following the latter's effort to assist Thai workers who were deceived into working as wild berries pickers in Switzerland. Furthermore, false reporting charges were filed against affected workers, with cases lodged in localities that are far from the workers' hometowns, thereby creating financial burden and travel difficulties.

As an independent constitutional body, the NHRCT is seriously concerned about the increasing trend of cases that bear the characteristics of SLAPPs. Such legal actions are not primarily intended to seek justice through judicial determination, but rather to impose burdens in terms of time, costs, and psychological pressure. Their apparent aim is to intimidate and discourage members of the public, human rights defenders, and the media from exercising their roles in scrutinizing corruption and human rights violations, ultimately silencing views that are made in the public interest. Such practices are inappropriate and inconsistent with the right to freedom of expression as guaranteed under the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, as well as under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Thailand is a State Party.

The NHRCT is of the view that high-level politicians and public figures should be ready to face scrutiny and constructive criticism on matters of public interest. They should also foster an enabling environment for free and constructive expression of views, which is essential for transparency and accountability in the exercise of public functions.

In this regard, the NHRCT calls upon the Government to expedite the enactment of the anti-SLAPP legislation. Such law is essential to ensure that human rights defenders, members of the public, and media professionals who act to expose corruption, misconduct, or otherwise express their views in the public interest are afforded effective protection and remedies against abusive litigation, and that bad-faith lawsuits are prevented. This measure is crucial to strengthening a democratic system that is transparent, accountable, and fair.

National Human Rights Commissions of Thailand  
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