

BM79: Resolution on student and human rights in Thailand

For months now, thousands of students, have been at the forefront of a movement for their rights and democracy and, as a result, have faced heavy oppression, and violence by state forces. The protests have since grown, taking on graver issues like the disappearance of Thai dissidents. For weeks now, thousands of students, have staged rallies across the country, urging the armed forces and their allies to withdraw from politics and respect human rights. The protests have grown and Thai people of all ages are taking to the streets and growing the ranks of this peaceful student-led movement.

The prime minister, Prayuth Chan-ocha, is a former army chief who orchestrated a military coup in 2014, the 12th successful one since a 1932 putsch ended Thailand's absolute monarchy. Two other retired heads of the army are in his cabinet. Generals drafted the country's latest constitution to ensure that the military retained significant power even after elections were held.

Protecting the monarchy was a prime justification for the 2014 coup, after which democracy withered. The prime minister refused to hold elections for another five years. A military-drafted Constitution decreed that the Senate would be entirely appointed. Outspoken critics of the military and the monarchy have been jailed, killed or gone missing. Even when elections were held last year, international observers deemed them less than fair. An upstart party that promised to move the country beyond the old politics won a surprisingly large number of votes — and was later ordered to dissolve in what was seen by human-rights groups as a politically motivated ban. Prayuth remains the country's prime minister and defense minister.

The current movement, while led by university students, has attracted younger students who have become politicized through more news and information from the internet and social media, and spurred by how their teachers and school administrators suppress individualism and exercise authoritarian policies that control dress code, haircuts, gender choice, and ceremonies that are seen as originating from ancient times

The student driven pro-Democracy movement has currently three clear demands:

- They want Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha's resignation;
- changes to a constitution that was drafted under military rule;
- reforms to the constitutional monarchy.



European Students' Union (ESU)

Fighting for students' rights since 1982

esu-online.org

In the last days the protests intensified, and the Thai authorities reacted with a formidable legal structure to try to criminalize the movement. The government issued an emergency decree in which public gatherings of more than four people were banned in the Thai capital. With their emergency powers, the police can also declare any place in Bangkok off-limits to protesters. Additionally, a court has upheld a government order to shut down several media platforms.

Furthermore, Thai authorities put pressure on the heads of universities to tell them to stop students demanding reform of the monarchy. Each day, the authorities detain more protest leaders. More than 80 protesters have been arrested over the last days and the Police use water cannons and chemical irritants against the young protesters.

The European Student's Union is recognizing the work from students and student unions fighting for democracy, respect for human rights and academic freedom. Defending these values is maybe more important today than ever, not just in Europe but across the world.

In light of this,

- ESU declares its full solidarity with the protest for democracy in Thailand and strongly condemns oppressive actions.
- ESU demands the Thai authorities to respect and protect the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and media freedom.
- ESU calls upon the European Union, its member states, and national student unions to condemn heavy oppression, and violence by state forces and listen to the demands of the student-lead movement.

Proposed by: VSS UNES USU

Seconded by: UDU, fzs OH, FAGE, CSC

Facebook: [@Europeanstudents](#)

Twitter: [@ESUtwt](#)

Instagram: [@european_students_union](#)

The European Students' Union (ESU) is the umbrella organisation of 46 National Unions of Students (NUS) from 40 countries. The aim of ESU is to represent and promote the interests of students at the European level towards all relevant bodies and in particular the European Union, Bologna Follow Up Group, Council of Europe and UNESCO.