

Sample letter:

Dear _____,

THAILAND: Your intervention is urgently needed to rescue lives & liberties

I am writing to you to express my very serious concern over the threats to lives and fundamental liberties in Thailand since the military coup of September 19.

As you will be aware, the armed forces under control of Commander in Chief General Sonthi Boonyaratglin took control of the government in Thailand from Wednesday night (19 September 2006), abrogated the 1997 Constitution and declared martial law. It has ceased the functioning of the Constitutional Court, and placed all government ministries under senior bureaucrats that are answerable to its directives. The fate of independent public institutions, including the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand and the Ombudsmen, remains unknown.

The military junta has in a series of announcements curtailed basic rights to free speech and assembly, and has indefinitely detained persons without charge.

I am particularly concerned that the junta has instructed the Ministry of Information & Communications Technology to "control, block and destroy" mass media news that is considered harmful to its agenda. Following from this instruction, it has most recently ordered the closure of chat websites with messages "detrimental to peace and morality" and the prohibition of talkback radio and TV broadcasts that include scrolling SMS messages. Some 300 local radio stations have reportedly been ordered to cease operating altogether. Needless to say, all of these steps are blatant violations of freedom of speech and expression.

In addition, I am aware that political gatherings of five or more persons have been banned, as have all political activities.

The junta is also known to be ordering the arrest of political opponents and protesters. To date, six persons, four former caretaker ministers and two protesters, are said to be held incommunicado in army detention. They are:

- i. Dr Pommin Lertsuridej, former caretaker deputy prime minister (September 19); believed held at Army Headquarters
- ii. Pol. Gen. Chidchai Wannasatidya, former caretaker deputy prime minister & caretaker justice minister (September 19); believed held at Army Headquarters
- iii. Mr Tavee Kaikub, protester at Democracy Monument (September 20); held in unidentified location
- iv. Mr Charad Worachath, protester at Democracy Monument (September 20); held in unidentified location
- v. Mr Yongyuth Tiyapairat, former caretaker natural resources & environment minister (September 21); believed held at Army Headquarters
- vi. Mr Newin Chidchob, former prime minister's office minister (September 21); believed held at Army Headquarters

This situation also obviously poses a very grave threat for human rights defenders, journalists and any other persons in Thailand who are outspoken on their fundamental rights.

In view of this drastic and worsening situation, I call for your urgent intervention. Please do

not hesitate to communicate your concerns over the current situation in Thailand to the military junta there, in accordance with your mandate, for the sake of the lives and liberties of all people in Thailand.

I look forward to your much-needed intervention.

Yours sincerely,

PLEASE SEND YOUR LETTERS TO:

1. Mr. Kofi Annan
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2. Mr. Luis Alfonso de Alba
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4. Ms. Hina Jilani
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5. Prof. Leandro Despouy
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6. Mr. Ambeyi Ligabo
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7. Ms. Leila Zerrougui
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8. Prof. Saneh Chamarik
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Thank you.

Urgent Appeals Programme
Asian Human Rights Commission (ahrchk@ahrchk.org)