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Thailand: Human rights lawyer facing charges of contempt of court over social media post

On 10 January 2018, Thai human rights lawyer and pro-democracy activist **Anon Nampa** appeared at the Technology Crime Suppression Division (TCSD) of the police to hear charges against him for contempt of court and violation of cyber crime laws as per the Computer Crime Act. If found guilty, he could face up to five years in prison for violating the Computer Crime Act and up to seven years in prison for contempt of court.

[Anon Nampa](#) is a human rights lawyer who works with **Thai Lawyers for Human Rights (TLHR)**. TLHR was established in 2014 to provide legal assistance to alleged violators of *lèse-majesté* and human rights defenders targeted by the authorities following the military coup of 22 May 2014. TLHR received a human rights award by the French Embassy in Bangkok in December 2014. Anon Nampa has defended numerous individuals accused of *lèse-majesté* under Article 112 of the Criminal Code, including the [jailed](#) human rights defender [Jatupat Boonpattaraksa](#).

On 10 January 2018, Anon Nampa was charged with contempt of court in relation to a Facebook post which allegedly violated Article 14 of the Computer Crime Act. The Facebook post expressed views on a verdict delivered by Khon Kaen Court on 2 November 2017 in relation to a case where seven anti-junta activists were found guilty of contempt of court for their peaceful gathering in front of the court in support of Jatupat Boonpattaraksa. In the verdict, the seven activists were prohibited from associating with each other or repeating the same activity. In the Facebook post, Anon Nampa questioned whether it was fair or even possible for the court to prohibit the activists from associating with each other.

Anon Nampa has denied all charges. He believes that the charges are politically motivated and that he was exercising his right to freedom of expression. According to his lawyer, it should be noted that the charges were pressed by security officers rather than the Khon Kaen Provincial Court.

The Computer Crime Act (CCA), *lèse-majesté* (Article 112 of the Criminal Code prohibiting criticism of the royal family) and criminal defamation charges (Article 326 of the Criminal Code) have been repeatedly used by state and non-state actors to target human rights defenders, political activists, and independent voices, thus having a chilling effect on civil society and encouraging self-censorship. The Computer Crime Act was reinforced in 2016, giving the authorities even more surveillance and censorship powers.

Front Line Defenders condemns the ongoing judicial harassment of human rights defender Anon Nampa, as it strongly believes that it is directly linked to his peaceful and legitimate work as a human rights lawyer in Thailand.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Thailand to:

1. Immediately drop all charges against **Anon Nampa** as it is believed that they are solely motivated by his legitimate and peaceful work in defense of human rights;

2. Guarantee that human rights defenders in Thailand are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.