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## Press Release

### **Investigation of alleged torture against suspects of the Criminal Court Bomb urged, Martial Law must be lifted**

**For immediate release on 17 March 2015**

A bomb exploded inside the compound of the Bangkok Criminal Court on 7 March 2015 and nine suspects have been arrested so far. Today, 17 March 2015, the Thai Lawyers for Human Rights (TLHR) has received complaints from four of the suspects in this case including Mr. Sansern Sriounruen, Mr. Chanwit Chariyanukul, Mr. Norapat Luephon and Mr. Wichai Yusuk. It was alleged in the complaints that the four suspects had been subjected to torture including being hit, punched, booted in their head, chest, back and threatened with an assault in order to extract information from them. In addition, some suspects were electrocuted leaving visible traces on their skin while being held in custody invoking Martial Law during 9-15 March 2015.

TLHR is gravely concerned about the use of Martial Law to hold a person in custody and to prevent the person from communicating with his or her relatives and lawyers during the seven days. Previous detentions invoking Martial Law since the coup have taken place in undisclosed facilities and were conducted without transparency and accountability. The latest case of its kind of the detention of Ms. Nutthathida Meewangpla which was made known later that she had been subjected to military custody. The deprivation of liberty of a person invoking Martial Law may give rise to arbitrary exercise of power, torture and ill treatment, and enforced disappearance. Torture inflicted on a person while being held in custody is considered a gross human rights abuse and is a breach to obligations regarding the UN Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT) to which Thailand is a state party and was obliged to follow since 1 November 2007.

TLHR demands the following from concerned agencies;

1. The National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) must bring to a halt the invocation of Martial Law to suppress any criminal act since the police are already able to invoke their power as per the Criminal Procedure Code to effectively apply for arrest warrants and to investigate the case.

2. The Department of Corrections which supervises detention facilities must ensure access to independent and impartial physicians of the four suspects. They along with other suspects in the same case should have access to physical and mental examination so as to create a guarantee against any possibility of being subjected to torture and ill treatment during the time Martial Law is imposed.

3. The Royal Thai Police must conduct an investigation and collect evidence related to the abuses committed against the four suspects and to bring to justice the perpetrators.

With respect of people's rights and liberties

Thai Lawyers for Human Rights (TLHR)