

TLHR

THAI  
LAWYERS  
FOR  
HUMAN  
RIGHTS

# Thai Lawyers for Human Rights Annual Report 2025



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ศูนย์ทนายความเพื่อสิทธิมนุษยชน



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# 2025: Still on the Long Road to Restoring the Rule of Law

In 2025, justice in Thailand did not move closer. It moved further away.

People were prosecuted for speaking, gathering, researching, and questioning power. Courts became less transparent. Bail became harder to obtain. Sentences became longer. At the same time, civil society faced growing pressure simply for doing its work.

For TLHR, this year was not only about legal defense. It was about standing with people who felt abandoned by the justice system—and ensuring they were not alone.

# Political Prosecution at Scale

Between 18 July 2020 and 31 December 2025

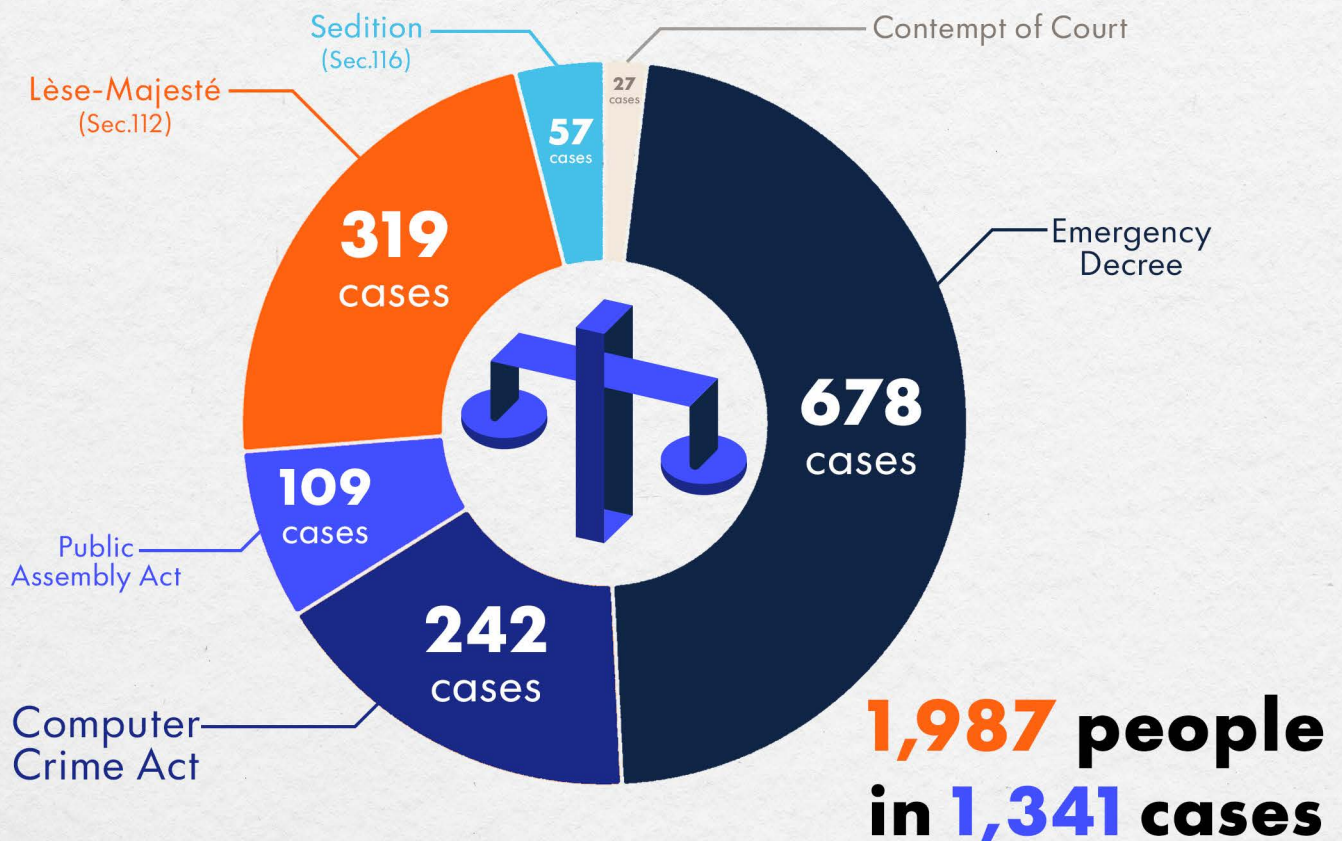
**1,341 political cases** were filed

**1,987 people** were prosecuted

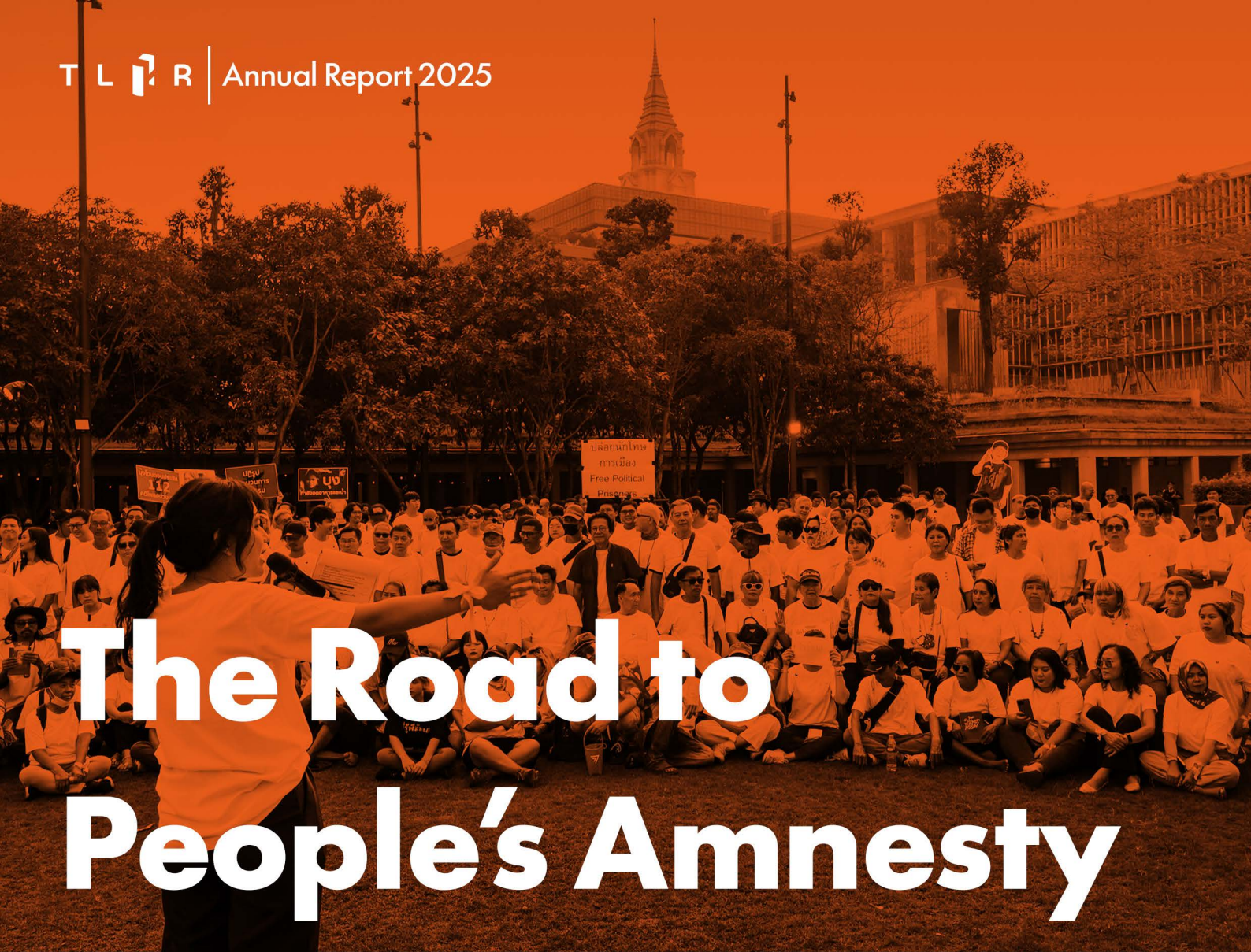
**286 were children and youth**

**319 cases** involved Section 112 (lèse-majesté)

Hundreds of cases remain ongoing. For those charged, this means years of court hearings, detention, stigma, and fear.



\*Statistical data from 18 July 2020 to 31 December 2025



# The Road to People's Amnesty

The scale of political prosecution made one thing clear: people were carrying the burden of the law for too long.

TLHR worked collectively with civil society, including grassroots groups, to push for a people's amnesty: to ease this burden and reopen space for public dialogue where fear had taken hold. Through sustained public participation, this collective effort carried the People's Amnesty Bill into Parliament.

In the end, Parliament rejected the People's Amnesty Bill and advanced less inclusive amnesty bills instead. The bill later lapsed with the dissolution of Parliament.

The prosecutions remain. The burden remains.





# Defending Rights in a Volatile Landscape



## Civil Society Under Pressure

**Proposed laws on associations and foundations would expand state control** through vague ideas of “public order” and “national security.” For groups that document abuses or challenge power, legal work itself is becoming a risk. TLHR works within the law. When accountability is treated as a threat, justice is what disappears.



## Advocacy in Uncertain Times

In 2025, Thailand’s political landscape shifted rapidly, narrowing space for rights and accountability. **The People’s Amnesty Bill was rejected and later lapsed with Parliament’s dissolution, while less inclusive amnesty bills advanced;** efforts to advance anti-SLAPP legislation also lapsed with the dissolution, leaving those targeted for speaking out without meaningful safeguards. Still, TLHR and its partners continued—adapting, holding ground, and preparing to return. When progress faltered, we held the line—so justice could move again.



## Protection Work Impacted by Funding Cuts

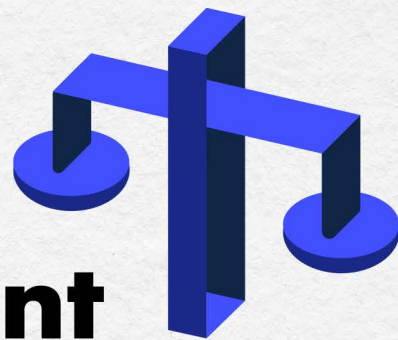
**In early 2025, funding for democracy and human rights work contracted worldwide.** Protection systems for HRDs weakened, including in Thailand. Safe spaces closed. Emergency support vanished. Risks increased. This exposed a simple truth: without flexible, independent funding, protection fails first.



## Academic and Media Freedom Under Threat

The case against **Dr. Paul Chambers**, an American academic charged under Section 112, ended without indictment, but only after detention, electronic monitoring, loss of visa, and loss of employment. The case sent a chilling signal to scholars across Thailand. **Murray Hunter**, an Australian independent academic and commentator residing in Thailand, faced criminal prosecution for his reporting on a Malaysian government agency. Research, commentary, and journalism are increasingly treated as crimes.

# Detention, Silence, and Severe Punishment



## Detention Before Judgment

As of January 2026, at least **55 people** were detained in political cases, mostly under lèse-majesté charges.

**In 2025, only 18 of 189 bail applications were approved.** Pre-trial detention has become routine.

For many, punishment begins long before any verdict.



## Prison Conditions and Political Prisoners

In 2025, political prisoners were held within the same prison system as others, where structural constraints limit access to healthcare, communication, and education.

TLHR documented **that prison transfers and restrictive visitation disrupted family contact and legal defense, affecting detainees' well-being.** These conditions reflect systemic challenges in Thailand's prison system.



## Severe Punishment for Dissent

In 2025, courts continued to impose extreme sentences for political expression. Human Rights Lawyer Arnon Nampa was sentenced to more than **29 years** in prison, while Busbas received a combined sentence of **54 years** under Section 112. In the royal motorcade case, the Court of Appeal overturned trial court acquittals and imposed sentences of up to **21 years.** The Supreme Court later denied bail.



## Reporting Bans by Courts

Courts continued to restrict public scrutiny of political trials. **At least 11 cases were subject to courtroom reporting bans,** including lèse-majesté proceedings. These restrictions have created an increasingly risky environment for independent trial monitoring and human rights documentation. For TLHR, documenting violations now carries heightened exposure to accusations of contempt of court—turning observation itself into a legal risk.



# TLHR's Impact on Thailand's Human Rights Landscape

Throughout 2025, TLHR continued its core work across litigation, documentation, and advocacy, responding to immediate needs while building long-term strategies to defend the rule of law.

## Litigation

TLHR's 13 in-house lawyers, together with 75 network lawyers nationwide, provided legal assistance at every stage—from investigation to the highest courts. Many cases lasted for years; some ended in acquittal, others did not.

Our work is measured not only by verdicts, but by whether people can face the process with dignity, rights protected, and voices intact—because standing on principle matters.

In 2025, TLHR's highlighted legal support included:



### **Student Hairstyle Case** (final victory)

The Supreme Administrative Court struck down the 1975 ministerial regulation on student hairstyles, affirming that state control over appearance violated personal freedom and failed to respect gender identity.



### **Paul Chambers Case** (case dismissed)

TLHR provided legal assistance in a Section 112 case that ended in a non-indictment order, citing the absence of evidence linking Dr. Paul Chambers to the alleged content.



### **Murray Hunter Case** (ongoing)

TLHR provides legal representation to Murray Hunter, an Australian journalist indicted for his reporting and analysis on human rights conditions in Malaysia. The case reflects growing concerns over transnational SLAPP tactics used to silence research, journalism, and cross-border scrutiny.

# Human Rights Documentation & Legal Advocacy

TLHR’s human rights documentation remains a central public record of political cases in Thailand. The database is widely used by Thai and international media, researchers, and human rights mechanisms—not only to track numbers, but to preserve facts, patterns, and lived experiences that might otherwise be erased: facts, patterns, and human stories from political cases across Thailand. Together with advocacy, this work helps write and preserve history for the next generation—so society can learn, demand accountability, and build conditions where these violations do not happen again.

In 2025, TLHR’s highlighted documentation and advocacy were:



## Documentation Learning Space

TLHR transferred specialised skills in human rights documentation and courtroom trial observation to the public, enabling participants to apply these tools directly in monitoring justice processes.

[Click to view](#)



## “Feathers on the Scale”: the Life and Experiences of Human Rights Lawyers Who Work to Serve the People

Through storytelling, Feather on the Scale shared lived experiences of human rights lawyers and opened space for young people to see rights-based lawyering as a possible—and necessary—path.

[Click to view](#)



## Rights Review Website

TLHR launched Rights Review as a public database for UN-communications on Thailand, using visualised data to track cases and reveal patterns of human rights violations.

[Click to view](#)

# TLHR as an Organization

In 2025, TLHR enhanced its organizational capacity to maintain its rigorous frontline human rights efforts by **investing in emerging leaders**.

By expanding leadership internally, TLHR promoted a new generation from within, fostering an environment where the young generation can actively shape the organization's direction and future. This strategic transition not only strengthened institutional coordination but also fortified a shared commitment to democratic values.

Six staff members were elevated to management positions—three from the legal team and one each from documentation, advocacy, and operations—expanding the executive management team to 13 members. This move was not simply a structural adjustment; it was a deliberate transfer of the human rights mission to those most engaged on the ground, ensuring its continued advancement.

At TLHR, we believe that empowering the young generation is essential for sustaining our mission. Enduring human rights advocacy relies on committed individuals who lead with conviction and persist in the pursuit of justice.



# Personnels:

As of 31 Dec 2025, TLHR comprises:

**7 board members**

**39 staff members** (Litigation, Documentation, Advocacy, and Operations teams)

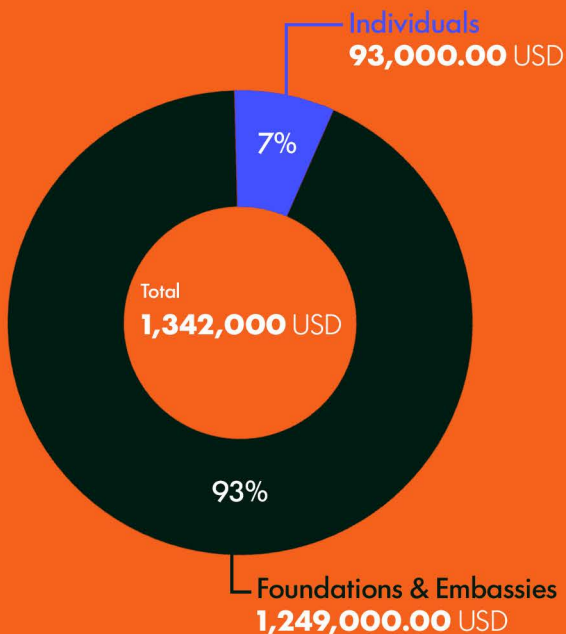
**75 network lawyers** across Thailand

**10+ consultants** supporting strategic operations

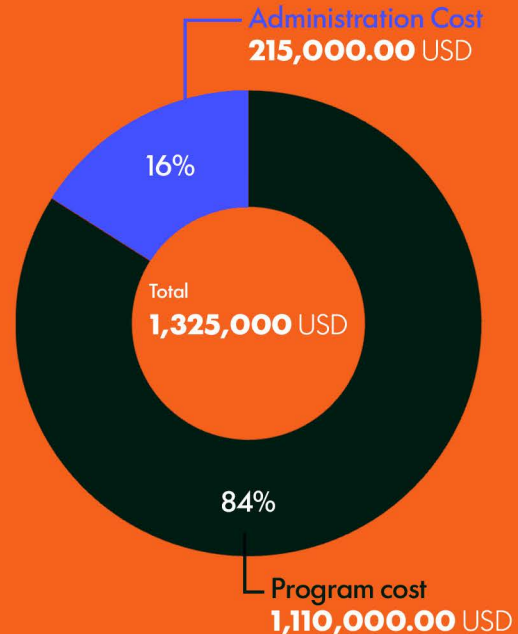


# Financials:

Total Donation 2025  
Donation Amount (USD)



Total Expenditure 2025  
Expense Amount (USD)



# Justice does not move on its own. It is carried.

Thank you for helping TLHR carry the work forward. Continued support allows us to stay, defend, and document—when it matters most.

## 1) Credit Card

An easy way to support TLHR by credit card, either as a one-time donation or through ongoing monthly support for human rights defense. [Click here](#) to donate

## 2) Benevity

For supporters working at global firms or tech companies. Check if your employer matches donations through Benevity. Your \$50 could become \$100 for human rights defense in Thailand.

## 3) Bank Transfer

Suitable for supporters with Thai bank accounts and international supporters.

Please use the details below for overseas transfers.



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กรุงศรี

Bank Name : **Bank of Ayudhya PCL**

Branch : **Thanon Phahonyothin 26 (Elephant Building)**

Branch Code : **0395**

Bank Address (Branch) : **3300 Phahonyothin Chom Phon Jatujak Bangkok 10900**

Bank Address (Head Office) : **1222 Rama III Road, Bang Phongphang, Yan Nawa, Bangkok 10120 Thailand**


Account Name : **RIGHTS FOR JUSTICE FOUNDATION**

Account Number : **800-9-54209-4**

Currency : **THB**

Swift Code : **AYUDTHBK**



 or scan the QR code  
via a Thai banking application.