

THAILAND UPDATE

Independent committees to steer national reform process

- On 29 June 2010, the Thai Cabinet approved the establishment of two committees to work on the reform process with the aim of addressing structural problems related to economic and social disparity, as part of the Government's reconciliation plan.
- The Committee on Reform Strategy, chaired by former prime minister Anand Panyarachun, will focus on drawing up strategies, measures and processes for reform, as well as formulate recommendations to be presented to the Government and the public for consideration and implementation.
- The Committee on Reform Assembly, chaired by Dr. Prawes Wasi, will concentrate on promoting participation of all sectors of society. Towards this end, it will set up an assembly at the national level and support setting up of assemblies on specific issues and localities as appropriate. Both committees, which will work together without government interference, will carry out their tasks over the next three years.

Emergency Decree revoked in 5 provinces

- On July 6, 2010 the Thai Cabinet decided to revoke the use of the Emergency Decree on Public Administration in Emergency Situation B.E. 2548 in five provinces which are Si Sa Ket, Nan, Kalasin, Nakhon Pathom and Nakhon Sawan.
- The use of the Emergency Decree has necessarily been extended for another three months in Bangkok and eighteen other provinces.*

Independent Fact-finding Commission for Reconciliation

- On July 7, 2010 the Independent Fact-finding Commission for Reconciliation, chaired by Prof. Dr. Kanit Na Nakorn, was set up as part of the Thai Government's 5-point reconciliation plan.
- The eight members whom were selected as part of the Commission are Mr. Kittipong Kittiyarak, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Justice; Associate Professor Dr. Jutharat Ua-amnoey, lecturer at the Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University; Associate Professor Dr. Decha Rangkhawan, Director of the Center for Research and Development in Criminology and Criminal Justice, Thammasat University; Mr. Pairote Polaphet, Secretary-General of the Union for Civil Liberty; Mr. Manich Sooksomchitra, Senior Editor of Thairath Newspaper; Professor Dr. Ronnchai Kongsakon, Department of Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine and Deputy Director of Ramathibodi Hospital; Mr. Somchai Homlaor, Chair of the Human Rights Committee, Lawyers Council of Thailand; and Associate Professor Dr. Surasak Likasitwatanakul, Dean of the Faculty of Law, Thammasat University.
- The Commission would uphold the core principles of independence, honesty, transparency, integrity and diversity of areas of expertise, based on these following three concepts:
 1. Truth seeking: to uncover and establish the truth and facts with regard to political violence, violations of human rights, loss of lives, physical and psychological injuries, and poverty and other damages;
 2. Conflict prevention: to create understandings and provide short-term remedies as to prevent the recurrence of violence and losses; and
 3. Restoration: to rehab and heal Thai society, organizations, institutions and individuals through restorative justice and social justice as to promote long-term reconciliation.
- The Commission aimed to complete its work within a limit of two years, with a progress report admitted to the Cabinet every six months. The scope of work would be wider than judicial process and covers a broader range of issues.
- The Commission may require foreign experts with possibility of utilizing the United Nation (UN)'s experts, although it would not amount to UN involvement in the Commission's work.
- The public may expect concrete results, a tangible process - for example, after six months of its official establishment.

* The 19 provinces in which the Emergency Decree remains in effect are: Bangkok, Nonthaburi, Samut Prakan, Pathumthani, Ayutthaya, Chonburi, Chiangmai, Chiangrai, Lampang, Khon Kaen, Udon Thani, Chaiyaphum, Nakhon Rachasima, Ubon Ratchathani, Nong Bua Lampoo, Mahasarakham, Roi-Et, Sakon Nakhon, and Mukdahan.