



Regional Office for South-East Asia

Press Statement

United Nations Human Rights Office concerned about violent clashes in the context of political demonstrations

Bangkok (04 February 2014) - The United Nations Human Rights Office for South East Asia (OHCHR) today expressed concern about a confrontation between anti-government and pro-election groups on 1 February near the Laksi District Office which involved the use of firearms. The incident reportedly left eight individuals injured.

Since beginning monitoring on 13 January 2014, OHCHR has been alarmed to see individuals at protest sites with weapons, including firearms. At the same time, explosives and guns have been used against the protest groups by unknown perpetrators. OHCHR is highly concerned that this situation could lead to further outbreaks of serious violence and armed confrontations. OHCHR calls on all sides to refrain from carrying weapons or resorting to violence.

While welcoming the restraint used by law enforcement officials in relation to crowd control in the past weeks, OHCHR also stresses the government's responsibility to investigate and hold to account those responsible for Saturday's violence. OHCHR also calls on all sides to fully cooperate with such investigations.

While stressing the significance of the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly as essential cornerstones for democracy, OHCHR reminds all parties that an exercise of such rights also carries responsibilities to respect others' human rights. People should be free both to peacefully express their opinions and to exercise their right to vote.

On 1 and 2 February 2014, OHCHR visited Chatuchak, Dingdaeng, Donmuang, Laksi, Lat Phrao, Phaya Thai, Ratchathewi, Saimai and other locations in Bangkok Metropolitan region, observing the situation in the run up to and during the elections.

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