



Regional Office for South-East Asia

Press Statement

United Nations Human Rights Office Highly Concerned by Violence at Protest Sites

BANGKOK (21 February 2014) - The United Nations Human Rights Office for South-East Asia (OHCHR) expressed deep concern about the violence that erupted between anti-government groups and the police near the Phan Fah Bridge in Bangkok on Tuesday.

On the morning of 18 February 2014, after police attempted to negotiate with protestors to clear the road of barricades and other parts of the protest site, scuffles escalated with a grenade thrown and shooting at the police. Although all the details are not yet clear, it appears that a well-armed group associated with the anti-government protests quickly escalated the violence with the use of live ammunition. It also appears that police responded, shooting with live ammunition. Reports indicate that the violence led to five deaths and more than 70 people injured.

It is alarming that armed clashes with high powered weaponry can occur in the middle of Bangkok and put at risk the safety of both peaceful protesters and ordinary people who may be in the vicinity. OHCHR calls on anti and pro-government sides to disassociate themselves from armed groups, and refrain from any form of violence. OHCHR calls on leaders of both sides and security forces to ensure the safety of those genuinely engaging in peaceful demonstrations, and to make sure that all sides strictly comply with the law.

OHCHR further calls upon the authorities to carry out a prompt, full and impartial investigation to establish the facts and to ensure accountability for this and other similar violence incidents that have occurred over the past months. Such steps need to be taken urgently to reduce the likelihood of further such deadly incidents.

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