

Oral Statement submitted to the 49th Regular Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council

Introduction

The purpose of this statement is to recommend improvements to internet freedoms in Thailand.

Statement

Research evidence shows the use of the Penal Code, the Computer Crime Act, and the Emergency Decree have shrunk internet freedoms in Thailand.

Additionally, the Anti-Fake News Centre's labelling as fake news criticism of government mismanagement of the COVID-19 pandemic, and Information Operations (IO) by the military to discredit critics, further negates freedom of expression online.

Collectively, these measures have been utilised to remove or block content, harass and prosecute individuals, and create an atmosphere of fear, leading to a wide practice of self-censorship among media and internet users.

Recommendations

Asia Centre recommends that the Thai government:

- Amend or repeal vaguely-worded legislation.
 - Reduce harsh penalties.
 - Stop harassing and prosecuting individuals who criticise policy blind spots.
 - Refrain from pressuring tech companies to block and remove content.
 - Allow policy critics to voice their concerns.
 - Commit to recommendations made during the UPR
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