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Thailand: Military leaders must end growing repression six months after coup

As authorities in Thailand state that they have no immediate plans to lift martial law six months after the military took power in a coup, Amnesty International calls for the lifting of restrictions and an end to the repression that has deepened in the country under martial law.

The organization is concerned that denying human rights is becoming the status quo. In recent weeks, authorities have continued to use martial law powers that have already led to hundreds of arbitrary arrests, and scores of unfair military trials without the right to appeal, as well as torture and other human rights violations.

As a consequence of paralysing restrictions under martial law, originally announced as a strictly temporary measure, hundreds are facing or may face penalties – including imprisonment – for peacefully exercising their human rights including to freedom of expression and assembly.

Authorities are also using existing legislation to penalize individuals for acts of peaceful self-expression and are serially denying the legal right to bail to increasing numbers of individuals held under Thailand's lèse majesté law, Article 112 of the Penal Code, which allows for up to 15 years imprisonment for acts deemed to insult the King, Queen, Heir Apparent or Regent.

Amnesty International urges the authorities to reverse the damage of the last six months, by allowing people to express their opinions and protest peacefully; restoring constitutional human rights guarantees; repealing all repressive legislation and withdrawing penalties absurdly handed down in the name of security for peaceful acts of dissent.

The organization further calls on the authorities to uphold Thailand's international legal obligations by ending the use of military tribunals for civilians, and delivering justice and reparations for those who have been affected by human rights violations, including arbitrary detention, torture and enforced disappearances.