

URGENT ACTION

FEARS FOR VILLAGERS AFTER ATTACK IN THAILAND

There are grave concerns for the safety of the 700 residents of Nanongbong village in north-eastern Thailand, after it was attacked by at least 100 unidentified armed men on 15 May. Some of the villagers were assaulted and detained for around six hours during the incident. It is believed that the attack is connected to opposition to the planned expansion of a local gold mine.

Villagers from Nanongbong village have reported that at 10pm on 15 May at least 100 men armed with metal sticks, knives and guns, entered their village in Wangsaphung District, Loei Province. The intruders attacked a checkpoint manned by villagers to stop trucks from leaving and entering the nearby Phutahpfa gold mining site. Around 30 villagers were forced to lie face down with their hands and feet bound for some six hours. During this time the intruders broke down a barrier built by the villagers to block access to the mine, and a convoy of trucks transported materials from the mine. The intruders assaulted and threatened the villagers with guns before leaving at around 4.30am. At this stage the identity of the armed intruders, some of whom were reportedly wearing masks, is unknown. The Superintendent at Wangsaphung Police Station has stated that police will investigate the attack, hold perpetrators to account, and launch a disciplinary probe into the lack of effective police intervention to stop it.

Those detained included the leaders of the People who Conserve Motherland (Khon Rak Ban Koed) group, which monitors the impact of the gold mining project and opposes its planned expansion. The attack follows reports of increasing threats and intimidation against the villagers in Nanongbong, believed to be as a result of their activities opposing the mine.

Please write immediately in Thai, English or your own language:

- ✓ Expressing concern for the safety of villagers from Nanongbong village following reports of attacks and threats against them, and demanding that they be provided with effective protection in accordance with their wishes;
- ✓ Urging the authorities to initiate an independent and effective investigation into the attack and ensure that suspected perpetrators are brought to trial in proceedings that meet international standards for fairness.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 30 JUNE 2014 TO:

Minister for Industry
Prasert Boonchaisuk
Ministry for Industry
Rama VI Road
Bangkok, Thailand
Fax: +66 2 202 3048

Salutation: Dear Minister

Minister for Natural Resources and Environment
Vichet Kasemthongsri
Ministry of National Resources and Environment
Pollution Control Department Building
92 Phohol Yothin soi 7
Phohol Yothin Road, Phayathai
Bangkok, Thailand, 10400
Fax: +66 2 278 8545
Email: rungtip.t@mnre.mail.go.th
Salutation: Dear Minister

Police Commissioner General
Adul Saengsinkaew
Royal Thai Police
1st Bldg, 7th Floor Rama I, Patumwan
Bangkok, Thailand, 10330
Fax: +66 2 205 3738
Salutation: Dear Commissioner General

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The company operating the gold mine, Tungkhum Limited (TKL), a gold exploration and mining majority owned by the Tongkah Harbour Public Company Limited, has filed criminal and civil charges, including a compensation claim for some 270 million Thai Baht (USD 8.3 million), against the villagers. A court ruling and arbitration in the case is expected on 3 June 2014.

Amnesty International has long-standing concerns for the safety of environmental activists in Thailand. Some 16 have been killed since 2002, and activists regularly face threats and intimidation in connection with their activities.

Name: Around 700 villagers from Nanongbong village
Gender m/f: Both

UA: 130/14 Index: ASA 39/006/2014 Issue Date: 19 May 2014