



Statement of the Child Rights Coalition Thailand following the dissolution of the protest in Bangkok on October 16, 2020

The Child Rights Coalition Thailand (CRC) offers its solidarity to children, youth, students and other people who participated in the protest at Pathumwan Intersection in Bangkok, Thailand on 16 October 2020, which law enforcement officials used violence to disperse. It is deeply regrettable that the state has taken measures that violate the rights of people through actions that could endanger protesters, including children and youths. Such actions could escalate the situation and risk further violence.

The rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly are enshrined in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, as well as in international human rights treaties to which Thailand is a state party, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (the Convention). Children have the right to freely and peacefully express their opinions on all matters that affect them. Children have the right to freedom of expression, including to seek, receive and impart information and opinions. The Convention furthermore guarantees children's rights to freedom of association and peaceful assembly.

CRC Coalition Thailand, which includes 48 child rights organizations, urges the Government and all other actors to create a safe environment, and to protect the rights of children and youth to meaningfully participate in discussions affecting their futures and to express opinions. This should apply everywhere children spend their time, whether in the family, at home, school, in the wider community or at the national level. Children in Thailand are using the protests to speak directly to the authorities who are ultimately responsible for upholding and protecting their rights. No one has a right to try to prevent children from exercising their rights. Violence is never the solution to any problem, but rather perpetuates violence and embeds it deeper into society in the long run.

As adults, we have a responsibility to listen to what children are trying to tell us, not try to suppress it through threats and fear. Moreover, involving children and youth in the process of problem solving and national debates in a sincere and meaningful way is in itself a way to protect children's rights.

We urge all stakeholders to do everything to minimize the risks facing children participating in protests, and to provide training to relevant actors to ensure the protection of children and youth. All stakeholders must also respect children's right to peaceful assembly and to make their voices heard on issues that affect their community and the country as a whole.

CRC Coalition Thailand

17 October 2020