

**Research Title** The Research Project to develop recommendations on the promotion and protection of human rights defenders

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**Year** 2022

### **Abstract**

This research project aimed to study the problems, obstacles, and challenges related to certifying, supporting, and protecting the work of human rights defenders in Thailand. and to make recommendations for certifying, supporting, and protecting the work of human rights defenders. The research employs qualitative research methods, including document study, in-depth interviews, and focus group meetings.

The research findings revealed that harassment against human rights defenders in Thailand manifests in various forms, including assassinations, enforced disappearances, physical harm, Judicial harassment, delegitimization, digital surveillance, and more. Notably, Thailand lacks specific legislation designed to protect human rights defenders. Although the 2017 Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand guarantees certain rights and freedoms, its practical application for protecting human rights defenders remains unclear. Instead, Thailand's existing laws create an unsafe environment for the work of human rights defenders, often being used to threaten and prosecute them. These include the Public Assembly Act of 2015 and the Computer Crimes Act of 2007, which frequently contain vague provisions facilitating the restriction of human rights. In terms of protection mechanisms for human rights defenders in Thailand, the research identified a lack of monitoring and early warning systems for risks and threats. There is also a deficiency in urgent response mechanisms, and the existing protection measures are insufficient and incomplete. While there are laws mandating compensation for those whose human rights have been violated, such remedies are not comprehensive. and perpetrators of violations often go unpunished, posing a significant obstacle to victims and their families in accessing compensation.

As a result, the research offers recommendations for the development of a mechanism to protect human rights defenders in Thailand. It advocates for the guarantee of the state's obligation to respect, promote, protect, and fulfill the rights of human rights defenders through the constitution and law. Additionally, it suggests the establishment of a national agency for the protection of human rights defenders to ensure independent and flexible work and to prevent harassment. The creation of a protection system, including surveillance and an early warning system, is proposed to assess and respond to both normal and urgent cases. The fight against impunity is also emphasized, including following up on investigations and prosecuting cases of violations or harassment of human rights defenders. The research also recommends that businesses consider adopting the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights as a framework for their work.

**Keywords:** Human rights defenders, protection mechanisms, safe and enabling environment, freedom of expression, Judicial harassment.