**Rung Panusaya – THAILAND**

**Facing life in prison for demanding social reform**

Asked to describe herself, Panusaya “Rung” Sithijirawattanakul, says she’s “humble and quiet”. The student and amateur violinist was once shy, but today she’s a leading voice in Thailand’s youth democracy movement.

Rung – which means “rainbow” in Thai – became politically active while studying sociology and anthropology at university in the capital, Bangkok. She bravely took part in protests for social and political change throughout 2020. By August, she had become a protest leader. Watched by thousands, Rung called for equality, freedom of expression and – a highly sensitive topic in Thailand – the reform of the monarchy. This unprecedented act propelled her onto the national stage and the authorities branded her a troublemaker.

Rung continued to lead protests for constitutional and social reform. Accused of provoking unrest, she was arrested in March under a lèse-majesté law that outlaws criticism of the monarchy. She was imprisoned for 60 days during which she was diagnosed with Covid-19. The authorities denied her bail six times. In defiance, she went on a 38-day hunger strike and was released on 30 April 2021.

Rung faces dozens of charges against her and, if found guilty, life imprisonment. “Once you step into the prison; you will no longer feel that your humanity is still intact,” she says.

**Tell Thailand to drop all charges against Rung.**

Once a shy, quiet teenager, Panusaya – known as “Rung”, meaning “rainbow” – has become a leading voice in Thailand’s democracy movement. The university student, a vocal proponent for equality and the right to freedom of expression, opposes the use of the lèse-majesté law to silence government critics. In March 2021, the authorities jailed her for 60 days under this law. She went on hunger strike for 38 days and was released. Today, she faces dozens of charges against her and life imprisonment.

**Write to Thailand’s authorities**

Tell them to immediately drop all criminal charges against Rung and others arrested for protesting peacefully.

Prime Minister of Thailand

The Office of the Permanent Secretary

Government House

1 Nakhon Pathom Road

Dusit, Bangkok 10300

Thailand

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**Sample letter**

Panusaya “Rung” Sithijirawattanakul – Thailand

Prime Minister of Thailand

The Office of the Permanent Secretary

Government House

1 Nakhon Pathom Road

Dusit, Bangkok 10300

Thailand

Dear Prime Minister

Panusaya “Rung” Sithijirawattanakul is a promising university student who, like many other young people, has been peacefully protesting as part of Thailand’s democracy movement. She and her peers are campaigning for a society where public concerns are heard and acted upon – not silenced. Because Panusaya dared to publicly and peacefully call for change, she faces multiple criminal charges against her and the possibility of life in prison. The Thai authorities need to encourage and enable all people in Thailand to enjoy and exercise their human rights, including peaceful protest. I urge you to drop all criminal charges against Panusaya.

Yours sincerely

**Solidarity action**   
**Help Rung keep her spirit strong**

Send her your message of solidarity and hope. Draw pictures of rainbows (Rung’s name means “rainbow”) to accompany your message, take a photo, and post it to your social media, tagging Rung when you do. Then, mail your message to the address further below. Don’t forget to follow her!

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/panusaya.sithijirawattanakul>

Twitter: @PanusayaS

Instagram: @overttherainbow

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Thailand