

# Thai Protests: Fake Elections are Unacceptable.

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*The Western media portrays the current political unrest in Thailand as “elite vs. rural poor” struggle between Thailand’s establishment and the political machine of Thaksin Shinawatra which it claims is “democratically elected” and therefore “legitimate.” It repeatedly reminds readers of how Thaksin’s opposition has failed to win in elections against his “populist policies,” popular among his rural supporters whom he has “given a voice to.”*

The latest from Reuters for example, in their article titled, “[Thai protest leader wants 12 months to push through reforms](#),” states:

Thailand’s eight-year political conflict centres on Thaksin, a former telecommunications tycoon popular among the rural poor because of policies pursued when he was in power and carried on by governments allied to him when he was ousted.

Thaksin, who lives in self-imposed exile to escape a jail sentence for abuse of power, gained an unassailable mandate that he used to advance the interests of big companies, including his own. He has dismissed the graft charges as politically motivated.

Ranged against him is a royalist establishment that feels threatened by his rise and, in the past, the military. Some academics see him as a corrupt rights abuser, while the urban middle class resent what they see as their taxes being spent on wasteful populist policies that amount to vote-buying.

However, there is something else Thaksin Shinawatra did that is equally as popular among his supporters that the Western media rarely mentions, and a source of enduring fear amongst those who can see past his vote-buying populist schemes – Thaksin’s rarely mentioned dismal human rights record – in fact by far the worst in Thai history – no one else even comes close.

Despite 3,000 Mass Murdered, Thaksin is “Elected” Back into Power

In 2003, starting in February and over the course of 3 months, some 2,800 people (approximately 30 a day) would be extra-judicially murdered in the cities and countrysides of Thailand as part of Thaksin’s “War on Drugs.”

Accused of being “drug dealers,” victims were systematically exterminated based on “hit lists” compiled by police given carte blanche by Thaksin. It would later be determined by

official investigations that over half of those killed had nothing to do with the drug trade in any way. Human Rights Watch (HRW) would confirm this in their 2008 report titled, "[Thailand's 'war on drugs'](#)," a follow up to the much more extensive 2004 report, "[Not Enough Graves](#)."



Image: "The Thai Gov'ts War on Drugs: Dead Wrong. Stop the Murder of Thai Drug Users." During Thaksin Shinwatra's 2003 "War on Drugs" it wasn't only drug users who were brutally, extra-judicially murdered in the streets, but over 50% of the 2,800 killed during the course of 3 months, were completely innocent, involved in no way with either drug use or trade.

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While Thaksin's opponents saw a dangerous despot rising in their midst, the pointless brutality was wildly popular amongst Thaksin's voting base. In an Economist op-ed titled, "[Thailand's drug wars: Back on the offensive](#)," it reveals:

Faced with soaring methamphetamine abuse, Mr Thaksin ordered the police to draw up blacklists of suspected traffickers and "to act decisively and without mercy".

The Economist would also go on to say (emphasis added):

On the streets of Khlong Toey, the largest slum in Bangkok, there is nostalgia for Mr Thaksin's iron-fisted drugs policy. The 2003 crackdown drove up prices, smashed trafficking networks and forced addicts into rehabilitation programmes. In drug-ravaged communities, where the ends tend to justify the means, that was enough to turn Mr Thaksin into a hero.

The Economist finishes its op-ed by lamenting that the then military-led government which ousted Thaksin in 2006, had not kept up Thaksin's abhorrent, extrajudicial campaign of mass murder:

You might expect a military junta with sweeping powers to have kept up the fight against such illicit activity. Anti-narcotics officials say that drug seizures have risen since the military coup in September 2006.

Not only does the Economist attempt to defend mass executions outside of any semblance of law – even executions of people who had admittedly nothing to do with the drug trade, it verifies for readers that the military institution within Thailand that removed Thaksin from power in 2006 was not interested in abusing its sweeping powers for an equally grotesque “popular” policy.

The voters who continuously return Thaksin and his proxy regime to power clearly do not grasp basic concepts like “trials” and the “presumption of innocence until proven guilty,” yet for those who do, and who have raised their voices and [taken to the streets recently against this regime](#) are expected to simply “shut up,” “sit down,” and remain hostages to the tyranny and crimes against humanity of Thaksin’s supporters.

Thaksin’s Human Rights Abuses Don’t End With the “War on Drugs”

The following year (2004) would see the [Tak Bai incident](#) which involved 85 protesters killed in a single day in Thailand’s deep south. Ironically, while Reuters portrays the anti-regime’s proposal for an appointed government to replace Thaksin’s criminal regime as being unprecedented, after Tak Bai, many in the south demanded likewise. When the Bangkok Post reported this, [Thaksin condemned the newspaper](#) for “damaging international confidence in Thailand’s democratic system.”

One might argue however, that a “democratically elected government” that discards basic human rights such as trials, the presumption of innocence until proven guilty, and the use of proportional force against protesters, is not a democratic system in the first place, with elections nothing more than a manipulated facade to veil naked despotism.

Additionally, during Thaksin Shinawatra’s first term in office, beginning in 2001, even [Amnesty International](#) is forced to admit:

During Thaksin’s first term (January 2001 — January 2005), eighteen human rights defenders were assassinated and one was disappeared. Although arrests have been made for some of the murders, many of the cases remain unresolved.

Thaksin also crushed dissent, particularly across the media. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) wrote in its report, “[Attacks on the Press 2004: Thailand](#),” that (emphasis added):

Populist Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra’s press freedom record has been less than stellar since he took office in 2001. His political and financial interference, legal intimidation, and coercion continued to have a chilling effect on critical voices in the Thai press in 2004.

Critics accuse Thaksin and his administration of creeping authoritarianism, cronyism, and blurring the lines between business interests and politics. Local journalists told CPJ they routinely receive phone calls from government officials trying to influence editorials and reporting. They said Thaksin’s powerful government and his allies often threaten to withdraw advertising from publications in retaliation for negative articles. As a result, local journalists

said, self-censorship has increased dramatically during the last four years.

The decision of executives at the Bangkok Post to remove Veera Prateepchaikul, editor of the influential English-language daily, is a direct example of such interference, local sources said. His reassignment in February stunned and outraged the local press and was a major blow to the Bangkok Post staff, which sent a letter of protest to management. Veera, who goes by his first name, is also president of Thailand's journalists' union, the Thai Journalists Association.

Veera Prateepchaikul continues to this day to speak out against the Shinawatra regime with his recent, and [very cogent critique of the current regime](#) headed by Thaksin's nepotist-appointed sister, Yingluck Shinawatra, titled, "[Yingluck can't duck responsibility for protest fatalities](#)." In it, he calls on the regime's proxy, Yingluck, to step down after violence triggered by regime militants claimed the lives of now 5 people.

The Straight Times reported in its article, "[Press freedom 'eroded under Thaksin'](#)," that:

The ruling party and its allies and supporters now control a significant chunk of Thailand's television and radio media, either directly or indirectly, say analysts.

The article describes how members of Thaksin's regime were systematically buying out media interests even while holding office. This obvious conflict of interest was compounded by suits the regime brought against news editors for "libel" – merely censorship by lawsuit.

It is very clear to see why Thais have amassed in the streets [calling for the complete "uprooting" of the Shinawatra regime](#). From human rights, to freedom of the press, to the immense corruption, incompetence, and wrecking ball abandon exhibited by the regime, its removal is a matter of survival for Thailand.

The fact that people continuously vote a 3rd world monster like Thaksin Shinawatra and his proxies back into power, time and time again, is proof positive that the current election process, and the electorate itself is is unqualified and poses a direct threat to the future of Thailand. Considering the crimes against humanity Thaksin already has managed to carry out with substantial opposition before him, one can only imagine the dystopia that will unfold should he ever succeed in returning himself fully to power and eliminating completely his opposition.

What is perhaps more difficult for some to understand, is why the West continues [to portray such a regime as "democratically elected," "legitimate," and its detractors](#) as being the source of the current crisis. [A quick glance at Thaksin's extensive foreign ties](#), however, makes it crystal clear – he is just the latest in a long line of brutal dictators coddled by the West because of his capitulation to their corporate-financier interests.

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