

# Thailand Color Politics: Thaksin Regime Turns on its Own Supporters

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Regime sends “red shirt” enforcers to threaten farmers and their families for protesting 6 months of unpaid subsidies – smashing the myth of “rural support.”

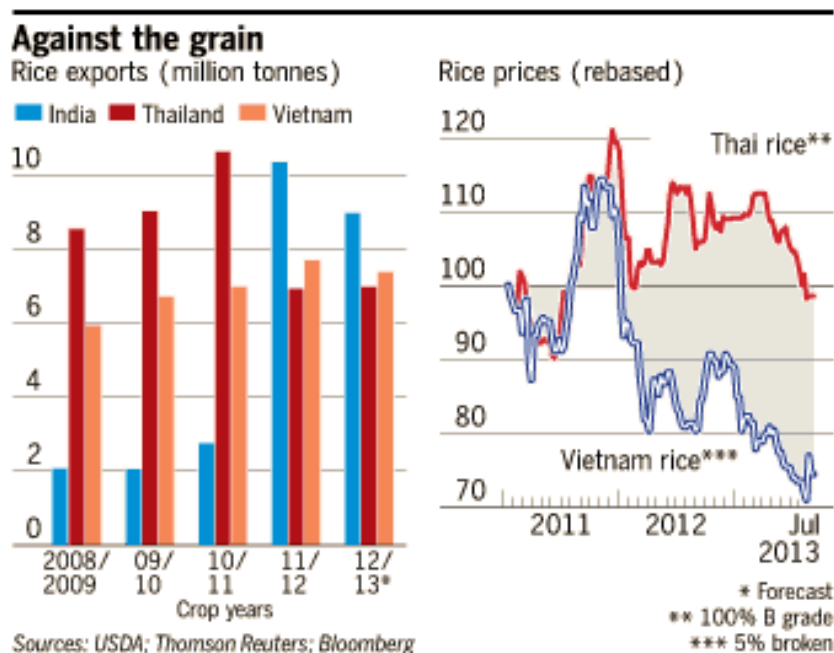


Image: Rice scheme has left industry & farmers in shambles.

While the US, UK, and others across the West [attempt to sell upcoming sham elections in Thailand as upholding “democratic values,”](#) the regime overseeing the one-party self-mandate in a climate of [regime-sanctioned terrorism](#), political intimidation, and [a “state of emergency,”](#) has begun turning on its own supporters – mainly farmers.

[Farmers began blocking roads across the country](#) in response to unpaid rice subsidies that are now half a year late. Thaksin Shinawatra promised 40% + over-market prices for rice as part of vote-buying populist policies that propelled his nepotist appointed sister into power in 2011. Since then, the rice-buying scheme has collapsed in scandal, corruption, and bankruptcy with government warehouses literally collapsing from the weight of rotting rice left unsold for months.

Unable to sell the rice to nations that have turned to other rice-producers over concerns of [downward spiraling quality](#), the regime attempted to sell bonds. The sale failed to raise even half the cash necessary to pay farmers who already [had promised rates slashed and delayed](#).

As protests began to spread across the north and northeast of Thailand, considered Thaksin Shinawatra and his regime's stronghold, and with other farmers headed to Bangkok to join the "[Occupy Bangkok](#)" campaign, the regime has begun turning its [notoriously violent "red shirt" enforcers](#) on the farmers – most of whom, according to the BBC, AFP, Reuters, and others constituted the regime's support base.



Image: Rice farmers in Phitsanulok province were threatened by regime "red shirts" to end their protest. Often cited [by the Western media in their "class divide" narrative](#), it is now clear the nation's farmers were simply used to get Thaksin Shinawatra back into power, and that the violence and intimidation usually reserved for his political opponents is now being turned on them in the wake of being cheated by his vote-buying rice subsidy scam. Rice farmers have already turned in their rice, but have not been paid for it for half a year – in other words – they were robbed. (Photo by Chinnawat Singha)

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In Bangkok Post's article, "[Farmers end protest in Phitsanulok](#)," it states:

In an emotional address to protesters, Mr Chatree said both local red-shirts and community leaders tried to pressure him to end the protest, on orders from high-level officials.

The red-shirts threatened to hurt his family if he continued to lead the rally seeking money for unpaid farmers including for himself, he said.

The Bangkok Post would also report:

Several tearful farmers shouted angrily that they had no money to buy food or to send their children to school because the government has failed to pay them for rice sold under its subsidy scheme. They said the situation had also forced them to borrow money from loan sharks.

Rice farmers on Tuesday agreed to end their rally at the Indochina intersection

in Muang district after a two-day protest demanding the caretaker government pay them for crops pledged under the government's subsidy scheme.

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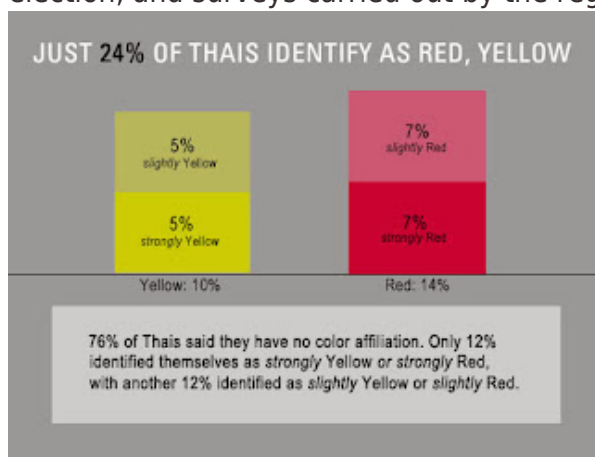
Thailand's English paper "The Nation" would also report in their article, "[Unpaid rice farmers allege intimidation as protest ends](#)," that:

A protest by farmers that lasted for days at the Indochina intersection in Phitsanulok has ended in tears. After claiming they had been pressured by intimidation, the farmers dispersed Tuesday evening and had no idea when long-overdue payments from the government's [rice-pledging scheme](#) would arrive.

"We don't know what to do next," Siraprapha Kukhong, 49, one of the protest leaders, said yesterday.

Another protest leader, Chatree Ampoon, could not be reached for comment following reports that [red shirts](#) and officials had intimidated his wife over his participation in the protest. "She called him about the threats she faced. He was overwhelmed and cried. Many of us cried with him," Siraprapha said.

Thaksin Shinawatra and his "red shirt" enforcers turning on the very people who put them back into power is being described by some as a "new low," however it was hardly unexpected. The myth of "rural support," and "majority" the regime and its Western backers peddle is easily dispelled by both the regime's performance in 2011's general election, and surveys carried out by the regime's own Western backers.



It was in 2010 that the [Asia Foundation](#) conducted its "national public perception surveys of the Thai electorate," (2010's [full .pdf here](#)). In a summary report titled, "[Survey Findings Challenge Notion of a Divided Thailand](#)." It summarized the popular misconception of a "divided" Thailand by stating:

"Since Thailand's color politics began pitting the People's Alliance for Democracy's (PAD) "Yellow-Shirt" movement against the National United Front of Democracy Against Dictatorship's (UDD) "Red-Shirt" movement, political watchers have insisted that the Thai people are bitterly divided in their loyalties to rival political factions."

The survey, conducted over the course of late 2010 and involving 1,500 individuals, revealed however, a meager 7% of Thailand's population identified themselves as being "red" Thaksin supporters, with another 7% identifying themselves only as "leaning toward red."

For Thaksin Shinawatra and his proxy regime, it has only lost support since the 2010 survey was conducted. In the 2011 elections, despite being declared a "landslide victory," according to [Thailand's Election Commission](#), Thaksin Shinawatra's proxy political party received 15.7 million votes out of the [estimated 32.5 million voter turnout](#) (turnout of approx. 74%). This gave Thaksin's proxy party a mere 48% of those who cast their votes on July 3rd (not even half), and out of all eligible voters, only a 35% mandate to actually "lead" the country.

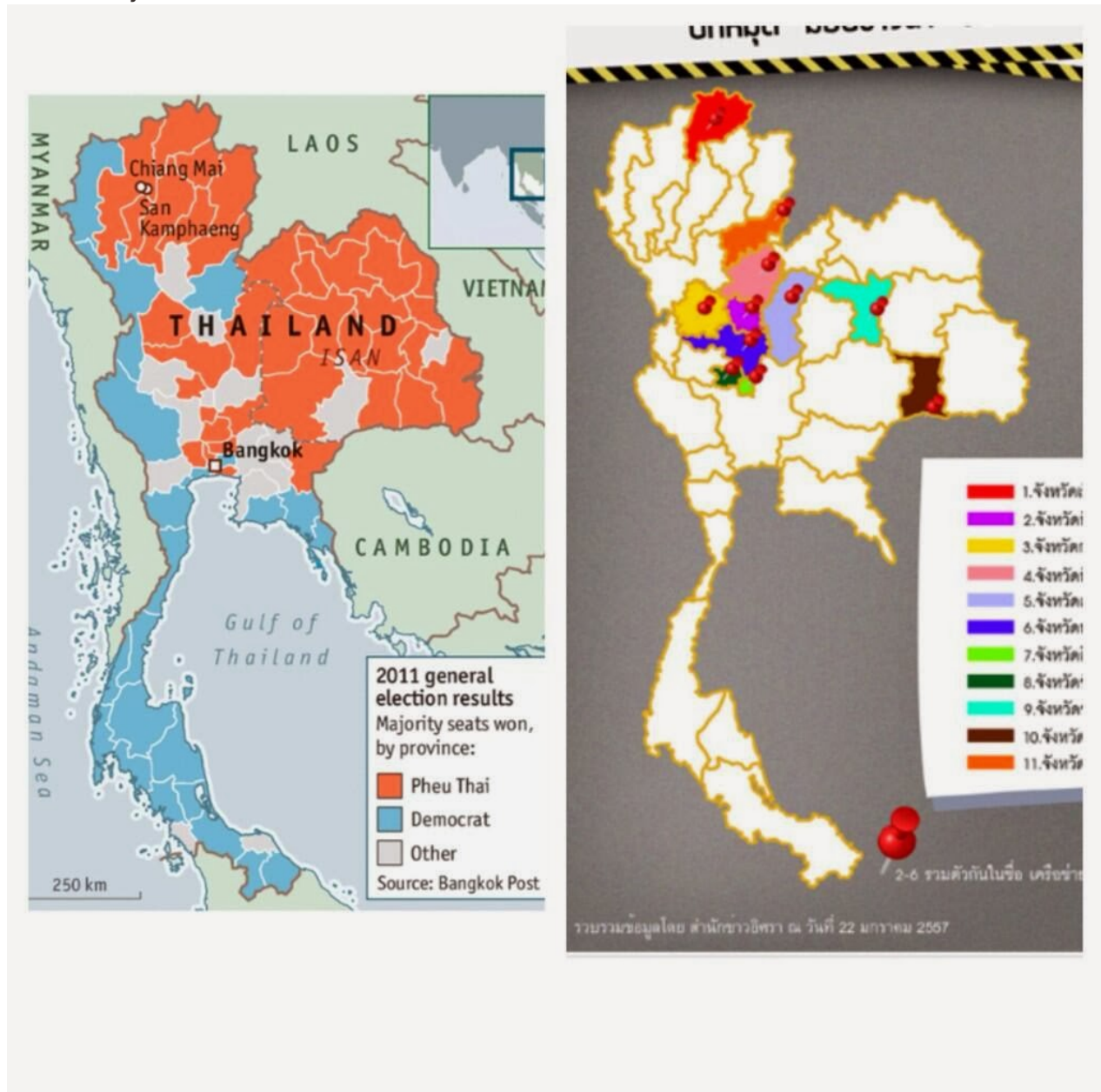


Image: (left) 2011's election results showing most, but not all northern provinces under Thaksin Shinawatra's proxy regime in red. (right) Provinces where rice farmers are now blocking roads in protest to Thaksin's vote-buying rice scam that has collapsed in bankruptcy and scandal – dousing the absurd "secession" theory [floated by the Economist](#) and others.

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The regime's true "support," an ever-shrinking group of violent "reds" whose extremism is being distilled through desperation, is all that is left – casting doubt on theories floated by both the regime and its Western backers over the prospects of "[civil war](#)" and "[secession](#)." What will transpire next will be an attempt to portray limited terrorism as "popular resistance" to whatever forces finally sweep Thaksin Shinawatra from power. For Thais, knowing this, and steeling against the counterstrike, will entirely disrupt it, leaving the regime's leadership exposed to well-justified, complete and utter uprooting.

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