

**JOINT STATEMENT CONDEMNING VIOLENCE AGAINST THE VILLAGERS “RAK BAN KERD”
(LOVE NATIVE LAND) ENVIRONMENTALIST GROUP IN LOEI PROVINCE, THAILAND**

For Immediate Release on 16 May 2014

On the night of May 15, 2014 continuing until dawn of 16 May, 2014, a group of approximately 100 unidentified armed men covering face reportedly used force to detain and attack the “Rak Ban Kerd” villagers who were on guard to block the trucks transporting the gold mine’s materials from passing through the village- Ban Na Nong Bong, Tambon Khao Luang, Wang Sa Phung District, Loei Province. The violent attack caused injury and harm to villagers. More than 20 are injured with at least 7 severely injured who have been hospitalised. Initially, in order to operate the transportation of materials from the gold mine, the armed men raided to arrest the villagers, had their hands tied, forced them to lie face down, physically assaulted, threatened with guns and obstructed the transfer of injured villagers to hospital. Subsequently, a number of trucks were able to transport the materials from the mine through the village.

The ENLAWTHAI Foundation (EnLAW) and the undersigned organizations strongly condemn the use of force and violence against “Rak Ban Kerd” villagers group which are unlawful, violate the rights to life and security and liberties of person fundamentally guaranteed by the Constitution as well as international human rights law, and threaten those exercising their rights as human rights defenders to protect the community’s way of life, the right to environment and the right to health.

To prevent the repetition of violence and setting legitimate social norms in Thai society, the EnLAW and the undersigned organizations call for the following actions;

1. The police and relevant local administrative authorities must urgently investigate into the violent assault and threats against the villagers and bring perpetrators and those involved to justice;
2. The relevant authorities must promptly provide effective remedies to the affected villagers;
3. The police and relevant local administrative authorities must take all measures to protect the community to ensure that such violent attacks, threats and violations of rights and liberties of the people will not repeatedly happen;
4. The Government and relevant authorities responsible for human rights protection must take all necessary measures to provide a systematic mechanism to protect human rights defenders.

ENLAWTHAI Foundation [EnLAW]
Human Rights Lawyer Association [HRLA]
Union for Civil Liberty [UCL]
Cross Cultural Foundation [CrCF]
Center for Protection and Revival of Local Community Rights [CPCR]
The Community Resources Centre (CRC)
Ecological Alert and Recovery - Thailand [EARTH]
Greenpeace Southeast Asia
Institute for Jurists and Human Rights Development [JUSTRIGHTS]