

Prayuth visits Khon Kaen, police raids Dao Din activists' house

written by กองบรรณาธิการ | June 21, 2017

KHON KAEN - Early this morning, police officers and soldiers searched the house of student activist group Dao Din in Khon Kaen. Three activists, who were awoken from their sleep, say that the authorities did not have a legal search warrant.

The raid occurred just hours before Prime Minister General Prayuth was scheduled to speak at Khon Kaen University.

At 6:30 a.m., about 30 police and military officers showed up at the house of the activists that is located next to the university. The authorities confiscated pamphlets that the group has been using in a protest campaign against a changes of the universal health care system.

"I asked the police to show me the court-approved search warrant, but the officer only let me see a search warrant that he was still writing himself," says Duangthip Khanrit from Thai Lawyers for Human Rights, who happened to be at the scene.



Thirty police officers and soldiers raided the house of the activists group Dao Din in Khon Kaen ahead of the prime minister's visit to the Northeast.

Military junta spokesman Winthai Suvaree told [Khao Sod English](#) that the central government did not order the raid. It was managed by the regional security forces, he said.

Khon Kaen City's police chief Chamlong Suwalak, who led the raid, told *The Isaan Record* that the search was related to an investigation of the protest movement against the government's proposed health care reform. But the authorities did not find anything suspicious and did not arrest anyone, Mr. Chamlong said.

The raid of the activists' house came only a few hours before the prime minister was expected to speak at Khon Kaen University. Mr. Prayuth is visiting the Northeast to promote the government's economic strategy, dubbed "Thailand 4.0." and follow up on the policy progress in the region.

Two women were detained and later released after they tried to petition the prime minister about their debt problems at the event in the morning.

In November 2014, the Dao Din student activists made national news when they interrupted a speech of the prime minister in Khon Kaen, protesting the military coup that toppled the elected Pheu Thai Party government.



Akhom Sributta (left), a member of the Dao Din student activist groups, woke up from his sleep this morning to find police and military officers searching the house of the group.

Mr. Chamlong said the today's raid was unrelated to the prime minister's visit. Instead, the

authorities have been monitoring the Dao Din activists for their involvement in the campaign against the amendments of the National Health Security Act.

Last Saturday, several activists groups from the Northeast derailed a public forum at Khon Kaen University on the health care reform, which is becoming an increasingly controversial topic.

Lieutenant Colonel Phitakphon Chusri of the 23rd Military Circle Command also joined the raid at the Dao Din house. But he told *The Isaan Record* that he was there only as an observer as the search was led by the local police.

Mr. Phitakphon is the officer who filed the royal defamation charges against Dao Din activists Jatupat Boonpattaraksa, or Pai Dao Din, for sharing a BBC Thai article about the current king. The activist has been jailed since December and has been denied bail several times.