

Jailed “Pai Dao Din” slams Prayuth’s questions

written by กองบรรณาธิการ | July 6, 2017

Khon Kaen student activist Jatupat Boonpattaraksa is a fierce opponent of Thailand’s military government. He has been jailed on royal defamation charges for more than five months. On a visit in prison, *The Isaan Record* asked him to answer the prime minister’s controversial questions about the next elections.

In his weekly television address on May 26, Prime Minister General Prayuth Chan-ocha prompted a number of questions about the yet-to-be-announced national elections. He invited citizens to give their answers at government offices across the country in an unusual approach to gather public opinion.

Mr. Jatupat, who goes by the nickname Pai, is a law student at Khon Kaen University and a prominent member of the Dao Din group, a small student organisation that has been protesting Thailand’s military junta since it took power in a coup against an elected government more than three years ago.



The prime minister’s questions are “terrible” says Khon Kaen activist Jatupat Boonpattaraksa, who has been jailed for sharing a BBC article about the new King on social media.

In December last year, Mr. Jatupat was arrested for sharing a biography critical of the new King published by BBC Thai on social media. In February, a court in Khon Kaen indicted him on charges of Article 112 on royal defamation and violation of the Computer Crime Act.

The 25-year-old activist has been refused bail ten times. He was unable to personally accept the 2017 Gwangju Prize for Human Rights in South Korea. The prestigious award recognizes individuals or organizations who have made major contributions to the struggle for Human rights, democracy, and peace in Asia.

Critics of the government say that the royal defamation law and the Computer Crime Act are used to silence political dissidents.

This week, the military government proposed to further tightened control over free speech with new regulations [on social media commentary](#).

The Isaan Record interviewed Mr. Jatupat at the Khon Kaen Special Correctional Institution after the prison authorities refused to let him answer the prime minister's questions in writing.

1. Do you think the next election can lead to a government that will follow the concept of good governance?

Mr. Jatupat: There is no correct answer [to this question.]

2. What shall be done if the next elections do not lead to good governance?

Mr. Jatupat: A coup d'état. If there any problems in Thailand, there's always a coup by the military. And in every coup, they claim that they're solving the country's problems. Thailand will never go forward because of the military coups.

3. Elections are important for a democracy. But they are not the sole determinant of the country's future and other matters, such as whether a country has a strategy or undergoes reforms. True or false?

Mr. Jatupat: There is no correct answer [to this question.]

4. Do you think that politicians who behaved inappropriately in the past should get the chance to seek office again. If yes, what should happen if these politicians cause problems. Who should then solve the problems and by what means?

Mr. Jatupat: If politicians who behave inappropriately run for election that just let the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) [the military's junta official name, editor's note] stage a coup again to solve the problem.

This question, number four, is terrible because it is phrased in a way to support the work of the NCPO.



Mr. Jatupat is being held at the Khon Kaen Special Correctional Institution as his trial has been dragging on for over five months. The Khon Kaen Provincial Court rejected his bail requests ten times.