

# "The Cost of Rebellion: The Thai State's Crackdown on the Reimagination of Democracy"

**Dr. Bencharat Sae Chua, Mahidol University**

**Tuesday, 22 February: 6 pm PST, 9 pm EST**

**Wednesday, 23 February: 9 am ICT, 11 am JST, 1 pm AEDT**

Register for lecture: <https://bit.ly/3I8C3zU>

**Abstract:** This lecture discusses the youth-led pro-democracy movements in Thailand since 2020 and explores how they have changed the Thai political landscape by challenging the hegemonic power of the monarchy that has dominated the Thai cultural and political spheres for decades. Almost two thousand people have been charged, many of them arbitrarily detained, for participating in the demonstrations which spread across the country during the last two years. They have protested even during the height of the pandemic and asked challenging questions about the monarchy despite the risks. Not only have the movements defied the authoritarian regime, they have also questioned the underlying cultural values that have provided the foundation for unjust social relationships and the restriction of civil and political rights.

The lecture will highlight the state's retaliation against these outspoken protesters. By sharing their stories, the judicial harassment they face, and other forms of intimidation, the limits and possibilities of the imagination of democracy and justice in Thailand will be brought to light. The lecture will also discuss how their courageous campaigns for democracy, and the public learning about the struggles of the last two years, have broadened the Thai imagination of democracy and human rights.

**Bio:** Bencharat Sae Chua is a lecturer at the Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies, Mahidol University. Her research interests include the culture of human rights, social movements, and citizenship rights. With the recent political conflict in Thailand, she also focuses on the contention over the meanings of democracy and human rights, and the state of human rights under authoritarian regimes.

The **THINKING RIGHTS, WRITING JUSTICE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA** online lecture series is a project of the Justice in Southeast Asia Lab (JSEALab). The JSEALab is part of a five-year initiative on Social Justice housed in the Center for Southeast Asian Studies and the Human Rights Program at UW-Madison. Idea exchange and public-facing events aim to foster collaboration in and beyond the university. Follow the JSEALab on Twitter/Facebook or check the website [<https://seasia.wisc.edu/sjsea-project/jsealab>] for the full schedule and links to register.



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