Prisons, Voices and the Pandemic: Challenges in Ensuring the Wellbeing of Excluded Communities in Thailand

Date : Monday, 19 July 2021
Time : 10.00 am – 11.15 am (Singapore time)

About the Webinar

In May 2021 Thai prisons recently gained widespread attention during the country’s third wave of Covid-19 infections. Several thousands of Covid-infected cases have been reported from prisons around the country. In one of the main prisons in Bangkok, the infection rate has been as high as 95% of its total number of detainees.

What happened in Thai prisons not only reflect the health conditions among the prisoners but also how inequality and exclusion can affect one’s rights to health while incarcerated. Prisons in Thailand are known for their over-crowding, poor living conditions and limited health care services. Most importantly, the voices of the prisoners are often unheeded, because they are not given the same rights as citizens and have limited avenues for expression. Their plight during the current pandemic has been kept away from public scrutiny as visitors to prisons are banned.

Using Thai prisons as a case example, this presentation examines the implications of political inequality on the wellbeing of excluded communities in Thailand, especially in times of crisis. It argues that recognition of political equality is crucial for inclusive healthcare policies that contribute to public wellbeing.

About the Speaker

Dr Bencharat Sae Chua is a Lecturer at the Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies, Mahidol University, Thailand. Her research interest is on the culture of human rights, social movements, and citizenship rights. With the recent political conflicts in Thailand, she also focuses on the contention over the meaning of democracy and human rights, especially among the civil society sector. She has been engaging in the pro-democracy movements and closely monitor the state of human rights in authoritarian regime.