

July 2009

Project Title: Seminar on International Human Rights Standards for Thai Judges

Date: 19-30 November 2007

Location: Nottingham

Unit: Short Courses and Training

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Project Summary

In 2007, HRLC developed and organised a two-week residential human rights training programme for 40 high level judges from the Judiciary of Thailand, designed around different thematic areas related to international human rights law and the criminal justice process, supported by practical study visits to key legal institutions in the UK. The Seminar was funded by the Office of the Judiciary of Thailand.

Objectives

The Seminar aimed to provide participants with advanced specialized knowledge on:

- the international human rights regime as well as specific civil and political rights, such as freedom from torture, freedom of expression and the right to a fair trial;
- human rights standards addressing particularly vulnerable groups, such as women, children and refugees;
- human rights pertaining to the adjudication of criminal justice, ranging from the relevant standards for arrest, search and seizure and pre-trial detention to fair trial rights, imprisonment and sentencing;
- the British criminal justice system and the criminal law process within the UK;
- International Criminal Law and implementation of the Rome Statute.

Participants

The Seminar was attended by 40 participants who were selected through a national competition conducted by the Office of the Judiciary of Thailand. The delegation comprised high-level professionals working in different branches of the Judiciary, including Criminal Courts, Courts of Appeal, the Court of Justice, Central Labour Court and Provincial Courts.

Activities

The Seminar included academic study of different civil and political rights relevant to the criminal justice process and human rights standards protecting particularly vulnerable groups, such as women, children and refugees. The classroom sessions were supplemented by study visits to British criminal justice institutions, the Nottingham Crown Court and Magistrates' Court and HMP Nottingham.

Method

The Seminar method was highly participatory: lecture-style presentations introducing the seminar topic were followed by interactive discussions. The sessions were designed

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in a method that encouraged involvement of and discussion amongst the participants, e.g. by making extensive use of case studies and group work.

Speakers

The Seminar sessions were conducted by twelve academics and practitioners, all of whom are renowned experts in their respective fields and had previous experience in participating in human rights training courses. Some of the speakers are former or current members of human rights bodies of international organisations and national governments:

- Professor David Harris, former Member of Committee of Independent Experts, European Social Charter
- Professor Michael O'Flaherty, currently Member of the UN Human Rights Committee
- Professor Patrick Thornberry, currently Member of the UN Committee Against Racial Discrimination
- Professor Dirk van Zyl Smit, former member of the National Council on Correctional Services in South Africa

Outcomes

- 16 theoretical sessions on international human rights standards conducted by renowned experts in international human rights law
- Three study visits to key institutions of the British Criminal Justice system
- Special Talks by:
 - Judge Bruno Simma, Judge at the International Court of Justice
 - Sir Colin Campbell, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Nottingham
 - Vincenzo Raimo, Director International Office of the University of Nottingham
 - Sir Colin Campbell, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Nottingham
 - Social event with distinguished British legal professionals from Paragon Law and the Nottingham Law Society