

Title: Seminar for Thai Court Officials on International Human Rights Standards
Date: 16-27 February 2009
Location: Nottingham
Unit: Short Courses and Training
Core Staff: David Harris, Emilie Hunter, Agnes Flues
Funder: Office of the Judiciary of Thailand

Project Summary

In 2009, HRLC developed and organised a two-week residential human rights training programme for 46 court officials 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:

- To provide advanced knowledge on the international human rights regime in general as well as specific civil and political rights, such as freedom from torture and the right to a fair trial;
- To provide specialized knowledge on human rights standards addressing particularly vulnerable groups, such as women and children;
- To provide specialized knowledge on 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;
- To promote understanding of the British legal system by providing knowledge and practical insight into the criminal law process within the UK – through lectures and study trips to the prison in Nottingham and two courts;
- To equip participants with advanced knowledge on International Criminal Law and the Rome Statute.

Participants

The Seminar was attended by 46 participants who were selected through a national competition conducted by the Office of the Judiciary of Thailand. The delegation comprised 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 Leicester.

Method

The Seminar method was highly participatory: lecture-style presentations introducing the seminar topic were followed by interactive discussions. The sessions were designed in a method that encouraged involvement of and discussion amongst the participants, e.g. by making use of case studies and group work.

Speakers

The Seminar sessions were conducted by 18 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 Geraldine Van Bueren, original drafter of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Professor Dirk van Zyl Smit, former member of the National Council on Correctional Services in South Africa

Outcomes

- 19 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