



# PRESS RELEASE

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### **Thailand's Anti-Trafficking Progress Exceeds U.S. State Department Criteria For Upgrade**

Washington, D.C. – With release of the U.S. State Department's 2014 Trafficking In Persons (TIP) Report expected next week, Thailand has worked closely with the State Department to satisfy all TIP office queries about on-going law enforcement action and statistics related to investigations, inspections, prosecutions and convictions in 2013. The efforts and progress made on this and other aspects, including trafficking prevention and victim protection, which help Thais and migrants alike, are contained in Thailand's country report submitted to the State Department.

"Thailand has made significant advances in combating human trafficking, working with our partners at home and abroad including neighboring nations, the U.S., the E.U., international organizations and NGOs to implement preventive measures, to protect and assist victims and, importantly, to bring human traffickers to justice. Human trafficking is one of the worst forms of human indignity and Thailand is committed to eliminating this inhumane exploitation," said H.E. Mr. Vijavat Isarabhakdi, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Thailand to the United States of America.

Thai law enforcement statistics show significant progress in investigations, prosecutions and convictions of perpetrators, including 674 trafficking investigations by Thai officials in 2013 – more than double from 306 similar investigations in 2012, 483 trafficking defendants prosecuted in the Thai judicial system in 2013 – five times more than 93 similar prosecutions in 2012, and 225 trafficking defendants convicted and punished for their crimes in 2013 – a more than four-fold increase from 49 similar convictions in 2012. Investigation of Thai officials alleged to be complicit in cases related to human trafficking noticeably increased in 2013. At least 33 police and 5 high-ranking police officials were either punished or are now under civil and/or criminal processes.

The significant rise in 2013 human trafficking law enforcement numbers is directly attributable to elevated inter-agency collaboration within the Thai government, Thai law enforcement, intensified actions and a standardized methodology for tracking and reporting data. In late 2012, Thailand launched a highly collaborative and coordinated anti-trafficking effort led by the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, National Anti-Trafficking in Persons Committee, Ministry of Labor, Department of Fisheries, Office of Attorney General, Department of Special Investigations, Royal Thai Police, Royal Thai Navy and Marine Police, as well as Ministry of Commerce and Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

"Thailand's demonstrated awareness, cooperation and progress in combating human trafficking in 2013 clearly exceeds the U.S. State Department's criteria for an upgrade on the 2014 TIP Report," stated Ambassador Isarabhakdi.

Thailand has pursued a national strategy based on the 5P's approach that encompasses Prosecution and Law Enforcement, Protection and Recovery, Prevention, Policy and Mechanisms to drive the policy, and Partnerships. In 2013, Thailand also ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and acceded to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

"Enhanced actions of the Thai Government in anti-trafficking prevention and enforcement have led to significant improvement of the TIP situation in Thailand. In particular, tangible and positive results over the course of this past year confirm Thailand's commitment to addressing this very complex problem and it also indicates that relevant agencies are working on the right track. Our effort is on-going and we shall continue to move forward towards the goal of ridding human trafficking from our country." said Director General Songsak Saichuea, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Thailand's progress in combating human trafficking, demonstrated by higher statistics and concrete results, is not only meaningfully greater than what the country had achieved in previous years, but also greater than progress made by other countries previously upgraded in the U.S. TIP report.

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