

Thailand 2024 Human Rights Report

Executive Summary

There were no significant changes in the human rights situation in Thailand.

Significant human rights issues included credible reports of: arbitrary arrest and detention; serious restrictions on freedom of expression and media freedom, including censorship; and significant restrictions on workers' freedom of association.

Authorities took some steps to investigate and punish officials who committed human rights abuses. Official impunity, however, continued to be a problem.

Insurgents in the southernmost provinces committed human rights abuses and attacked government security forces and civilian targets; authorities investigated and prosecuted such actions.

Section 1. Life

a. Extrajudicial Killings

There were no reports the government or its agents committed arbitrary or unlawful killings during the year.

There were reports of killings by both government and insurgent forces in

connection with the conflict in the southernmost provinces.

On June 25, Roning Dolah, a human rights activist working on rehabilitation support for torture survivors, was shot and killed by unidentified assailants at his home in Pattani Province. The following day, Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC, the political arm of the military) Region 4 issued a statement expressing condolences but did not announce a full criminal investigation. On July 3, the Duay Jai Group, Cross Cultural Foundation, the Civil Society Assembly for Peace, the Network of People Affected by Special Laws, the Patani Human Rights Network Organizations, and Pakkamol Sririrat issued a joint statement voicing concern that Roning's killing might have been in retaliation for his advocacy work. As of November, it was unclear whether the killing was under investigation.

b. Coercion in Population Control

There were no reports of coerced abortion or involuntary sterilization on the part of government authorities.

c. War Crimes, Crimes against Humanity, and Evidence of Acts that May Constitute Genocide, or Conflict-Related Abuses

Internal violence continued in the ethnic Malay Muslim-majority southernmost provinces. Frequent attacks by suspected insurgents and

government security operations stoked tension between the local ethnic Malay Muslim and ethnic Thai Buddhist communities.

The emergency decree in effect in much of the southern border provinces of Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat provided military, police, and some civilian authorities significant powers to restrict some basic rights and delegated certain internal security powers to the armed forces; the decree also provided security forces broad immunity from prosecution. Martial law, imposed in 2004, significantly empowered security forces in the southernmost provinces.

Human rights groups accused government forces of extrajudicial killings of persons suspected of involvement with the insurgency. According to the nongovernmental organization (NGO) Deep South Watch, as of August there were 72 raids by security forces, but no deaths; Duay Jai recorded the deaths of seven suspected insurgents and one government security force member for the same time period. Government officials insisted the suspects in each case resisted arrest, necessitating the use of deadly force, a claim disputed by the families of the suspects and human rights groups.

According to Deep South Watch, as of September violence resulted in 93 deaths and 272 injuries in 475 incidents. The main targets of insurgent attacks were government security forces, including police, military, and armed security volunteers, but civilians were also attacked.

On August 1, security forces killed three suspected insurgents in a shootout in the Khok Pho district of Pattani, after a six-day standoff. The suspects had outstanding warrants for insurgent activities. The regional ISOC spokesman said that during the standoff, religious leaders, local leaders and officials attempted to persuade the suspects to surrender.

On March 3, an insurgent group launched a combined bombing and shooting attack against a military unit traveling in Si Sakhon District of Narathiwat Province. Two officers were killed and injured in the attack. The group was returning to base after investigating a March 2 attack at a different military base.

Section 2. Liberty

a. Freedom of the Press

The constitution provided for freedom of expression, including for members of the press and other media. This right, however, was restricted by laws and government actions. The government imposed legal restrictions on criticism of the government and monarchy, harassed antigovernment critics, monitored media and the internet, and blocked websites.

The lèse majesté prohibition made it a crime, punishable by a fine or three to 15 years' imprisonment for each offense, to criticize, insult, or threaten the king, queen, heir apparent, or regent. The law also allowed citizens to

file lèse majesté complaints against one another, which could result in criminal penalties.

On September 17, Suchard Sawadsri, a well-known writer, was accused of sedition and violating the Computer Crimes Act after sharing a video clip titled “10 things people do not know about Section 112 (royal defamation law),” originally posted by the NGO iLaw. The suit was filed by the ultraroyalist King Protection Group.

As of August, 37 cases were pending from charges filed following 2020 youth protests, including eight lèse majesté cases in northern provincial courts; four of these cases involved freedom of expression on an online platform, including the highly publicized case of Arnon Nampha.

Physical Attacks, Imprisonment, and Pressure

On August 16, Prawit Wongsuwan, a high-ranking political party leader, assaulted a woman reporter, grabbing her head when she questioned him at a live broadcast of parliament voting for a new prime minister. The assault was caught on video and was under investigation as of year’s end.

Journalists reported digital harassment hampered their work because of its effects on their personal life and mental health.

Censorship by Governments, Military, Intelligence, or Police

Forces, Criminal Groups, or Armed Extremist or Rebel Groups

The government owned all broadcast frequencies and leased them to private media operators, allowing the government to exert indirect influence on media. Laws allowed the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission to suspend or revoke the licenses of radio or television operators broadcasting content deemed false, defamatory to the monarchy, harmful to national security, or unnecessarily critical of the government. Authorities monitored the content of all media, including international media. Local practice leaned toward self-censorship, particularly regarding anything that might be seen as critical of the monarchy or members of the royal family.

According to media reports, on September 14, ISOC attempted to ban Puangthong Pawakapan's book *Infiltrating Society: The Thai Military's Internal Security Affairs*, originally published in an academic journal in 2021. ISOC criticized the book as misleading, claimed the author lacked qualifications and expertise in security matters, and urged an end to the book's distribution. On September 23, media reported Chulalongkorn University canceled a forum that was to launch the Thai-language version of the book. On September 25, however, Puangthong announced on Facebook the university granted permission for the book launch and the forum was held on September 27.

Media observers noted a generational gap among media workers, with self-

censorship more common among older media representatives, who were reluctant to report on sensitive issues, especially regarding the monarchy, compared to younger media workers.

Filmmakers reported fear of retribution when creating movies and entertainment, leading to self-censorship.

The Deep South emergency decree empowered the government “to prohibit publication and distribution of news and information that may cause the people to panic or with an intention to distort information.” It also authorized the government to censor news it considered a threat to national security.

b. Worker Rights

Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining

The constitution stated that a person shall enjoy the liberty to unite and form an association, cooperative, union, organization, community, or any other group. The law provided workers the right, in private-sector and state-owned enterprises (SOEs), to form and join independent trade unions. The law allowed two types of labor union: the house or company union and the industrial union. A house or company union required workers to be with the same employer; an industrial union required workers to be in the same sector, but they could work for different employers. Committee members

of all unions had to be Thai citizens. Seasonal workers who had no permanent employer could not form a union. Migrant workers could join, but not form, a union. Civil servants could assemble as a group, provided that such assembly did not affect the efficiency of national administration and continuity of public services and did not have a political objective.

The law provided a framework for binding collective bargaining for private-sector employers but not for civil servants. The law provided for the right to strike and the Labor Relations Committee – which consisted of representatives of employers, government, and workers groups – was mandated to protect employees from antiunion discrimination and unfair treatment. Subcontracted workers, even if doing the same job as permanent workers in the same factory, could not join the same union because they were classified as belonging to the service industry, while full-time workers came under the manufacturing industry. The inability of subcontracted and full-time workers to join the same union limited unions' ability to bargain collectively together. Short-term contract workers were less likely to join unions, fearing antiunion retaliation in the form of nonrenewal of their contracts. Labor advocates claimed that many companies employed subcontracted workers to undermine unionization efforts.

Migrant worker participation in unions was low due to language and literacy barriers, limited understanding of legal rights, frequent changes in

employment status, membership fees, restrictive union regulations, and segregation of citizen workers from migrant workers by industry and by zones (particularly in border and coastal areas) as well as due to migrants' fears of losing their jobs or work permits due to their support for a union. Large concentrations of migrant workers were employed in industries such as construction and fishing and in geographic areas including Mae Sot and Tak Province where no unions operated. General societal suspicion of migrant workers, including among citizen union members and among individuals in positions of power, was a barrier to migrant workers' ability to organize.

To register a union, at least 10 workers were required to submit their names to the Department of Labor Protection and Welfare within the Ministry of Labor. Many unions had only enough members to form a union but not enough to bargain collectively with employers. The law required unions to have 20 percent of workforce membership to bargain collectively. The law did not protect union members against antiunion discrimination by employers until their union was registered. NGOs explained that employers often used the time between when workers submitted their labor union application and when the ministry reached out to the employers to confirm their employment to dismiss the employees.

According to the Ministry of Labor, there were more than 1,000 registered labor unions in the country, although approximately half were inactive

because employers fired their leadership. The law required union officials be full-time employees of the company or SOE and prohibited permanent union staff.

In SOEs the law allowed only one union per enterprise, and if an SOE union's membership fell below 25 percent of the eligible workforce, regulations required dissolution of the union. The law restricted formal links between SOE unions and their private-sector counterparts because they were governed by two separate statutes. SOEs operated in various sectors of the economy: banking, rail and air transportation, airports, marine ports, and postal services.

The law allowed employees at workplaces without a union to submit collective demands if at least 15 percent of employees were listed as supporting that demand. In September migrant workers in a fishery business in Samut Sakhon sought to organize their colleagues to present their employer with a collective demand but reportedly encountered barriers to doing so including language barriers and fear of employer retaliation. The large size of the workforce – 20,000 to 30,000 employees in total – also meant that organizers were required to obtain thousands of worker signatures to meet the 15 percent threshold.

Employees in private enterprises with more than 50 workers could establish “employee committees” or “welfare committees.” Welfare committees were nominated by employees or employers and their termination was not

protected by law. Employee committees were nominated by labor unions or in elections and their termination required judicial order. The law prohibited employers from obstructing committee work. Union leaders often joined employee committees to avail themselves of the additional legal protection. According to an NGO, migrant workers could be part of a welfare committee, which had less legal protection.

The law required unions to call a general meeting and obtain strike approval from at least 50 percent of union members for any strike. Unions claimed this effectively limited the right to strike because many factories used shift workers, making it difficult to attain a quorum.

The government could block private sector strikes it deemed as having national security implications or negative repercussions on the population at large, which could be appealed in the Court of Appeals. Strikes and lockouts were prohibited at SOEs, and penalties for violations included imprisonment, fines, or both.

The law protected employees and union members from criminal or civil liability for participating in negotiations with employers, initiating a strike, organizing a rally, or explaining labor disputes to the public, except when such activities caused reputational harm. Reputational damage charges were used to intimidate union members and employees, and employers used lawsuits to intimidate or silence critics in multiple instances.

Labor courts or the Labor Relations Committee could decide complaints of unfair dismissal or labor practices and could require compensation or reinstatement of workers, including union leaders, with wages and benefits equal to those received prior to dismissal. Unregistered associations, community-based organizations, and religious groups often represented the interests of migrant workers but had no legal standing to bargain with employers on their behalf. NGOs reported few cases where migrant workers' collective demands were successful in effecting change, particularly along the border areas.

Companies deterred union membership and activity by removing union leaders and acting against union members. A June appeal filed by a union leader at a plastics manufacturing factory alleged her former employer fired her and other leaders in retaliation for their efforts to organize workers at the factory. As part of the same sequence of events, the company imposed a written exam requirement on workers following their participation in union activity, which the workers understood to be a tactic to deter them from joining the union. Membership in the union declined precipitously in the wake of these and similar actions by the company.

Employers engaged in similar retaliatory actions to deter collective action by employees even outside the context of formal union activity. For example, according to a labor leader who also served as an advisor to a labor court, there were numerous cases in which employers fired or reassigned workers

to undesirable locations in response to worker demands for a change in their pay or working conditions.

Labor rights advocates reported that judges and provincial labor inspectors often attempted to mediate cases, even after labor rights violations requiring penalties were found. In 2023 a bus manufacturing company fired two union organizers, and a tripartite government commission determined that the terminations amounted to unlawful retaliation. The employer appealed. Rather than issue a ruling, the court mediated the appeal between the parties, making clear that it would not compel the employer to reinstate the organizers and discouraging the organizers from seeking such a remedy. In August the mediation resulted in an agreement that the employer would pay the organizers damages but would not rehire them, which had the effect of deterring union activity by other employees in the workplace. Following the case, union membership at the company reportedly shrank from approximately 400 workers to 75.

There were reports from unions and NGOs that employers attempted to negotiate terms of reinstatement after court orders were issued, offering severance packages for voluntary resignation, denying reinstated union leaders access to work, or demoting workers to jobs with lower wages and benefits.

Employers sometimes filed lawsuits against union leaders and strikers for trespass, defamation, and vandalism. Private companies also continued to

threaten or pursue civil and criminal lawsuits against NGOs and journalists as well as workers.

Union leaders and worker advocates reported threats to their personal safety from employers and business groups for their organizing activity. For example, after conducting a series of interviews with fishing vessel employees, a worker advocate received several threats through Facebook. A member of the National Fisheries Association of Thailand reportedly invited the advocate to a one-on-one meeting at their office and threatened the life of the advocate.

In September, the fisheries association published and circulated a notice online warning members to be discreet when sharing information with NGOs because these NGOs were purportedly misusing information received from members to attack the fishing industry.

Police and other officials were at times complicit in suppressing labor activism.

Forced or Compulsory Labor

See the Department of State's annual *Trafficking in Persons Report* at <https://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report/>.

Acceptable Work Conditions

Wage and Hour Laws

The minimum wage varied by province; it was above the government-calculated poverty line in all provinces. It did not apply to employees in the public sector, SOEs, platform work such as app-based driving and delivery services, and seasonal agricultural sectors. In April the Ministry of Labor issued new regulations that extended the minimum wage, working hour limitations, and partially paid maternity leave to domestic workers, a group previously excluded from these protections.

The maximum workweek by law was 48 hours, or eight hours per day over six days, with an overtime limit of 36 hours per week. Employees who engaged in “dangerous” work, such as in the chemical, mining, or other industries involving heavy machinery, could work a maximum of 42 hours per week and could not work overtime. Petrochemical industry employees could not work more than 12 hours per day but could work continuously for a maximum period of 28 days.

Civil society groups reported it was common to find wage, hour, and overtime violations in the agriculture, construction, and fishing sectors. The mobility of fishing boats and the uncertainty of catching time made overtime common in the fishing industry. Advocates reported that employees often worked 18-hour days and received time off only during

periodic short stays at shore. Onshore employees in the fishing industry, such as warehouse cleaners, often received a piece-rate that yielded daily earnings below the applicable minimum wage. Workers who staffed the piers frequently worked 10 to 12 hours per day without overtime pay.

Farming and agricultural sites in remote areas made labor inspections harder. In some agricultural workplaces, including shrimp farms, employees reported working up to 90 days without a day off. Forced labor for sub-minimum wages was also a concern in both fishing and agriculture, particularly in migrant-heavy workplaces.

High-profile allegations of wage and hour violations arose in other sectors as well. In January more than 130 Burmese garment workers filed a court appeal alleging violations of minimum wage, overtime, and safety and health requirements, as well as unsafe employer-provided housing and withholding of employee travel documents by management. The case remained pending at year's end.

In April the government amended the Labor Protection Act to support remote workers and regulate arrangements between the employer and employee to ensure access to social security and other welfare. Employees who worked from home also had the right to “disconnect,” meaning the right to refuse all communication with the employer after the end of normal working hours.

Occupational Safety and Health

The law established occupational safety and health (OSH) standards that were appropriate for the main industries. The law required safe and healthy workplaces, including for home-based businesses. The law prohibited pregnant women and children younger than 18 from working in hazardous conditions. The law also required employers to inform employees of hazardous working conditions prior to employment. The law did not grant workers the right to remove themselves from situations that endangered health or safety without jeopardy to their employment. The government conducted investigations following complaints. If labor inspectors determined there was a violation, they generally would issue an order to the employer and fine them.

Ministry of Labor regulations provided for a workers' compensation plan covering workplace accidents and injuries, but these did not cover vendors and domestic workers. Labor union leaders reported that compensation for work-related illnesses was rarely granted because it was often difficult to prove the connection between a work hazard (for example, chemicals used in agriculture) and worker illness.

Civil society groups attributed unsafe working conditions in part to government failure to affirmatively investigate or monitor workplace safety until after a major accident occurred and received significant press coverage.

Wage, Hour, and OSH Enforcement

The Department of Labor Protection and Welfare was responsible for enforcement of wage, hour, and OSH law and regulations. Inspectors had the authority to make unannounced inspections and issue orders to employers to comply with the law. If an employer failed to comply with the order within a specified period, inspectors had a duty to refer the case for criminal law enforcement and could impose penalties. Fines for wage, hour, and OSH violations were commensurate with those for similar crimes, such as fraud or negligence; however, their potential criminal penalties (imprisonment) were less than those for fraud or negligence.

NGOs reported government entities performed some training on occupational safety and health in the year. The Ministry of Labor cohosted a series of OSH seminars with an NGO in the eastern part of the country beginning in November.

According to civil society groups, the number of inspectors was insufficient to enforce compliance and enforcement of inspectors' recommendations remained low. OSH experts actively identified unsafe work conditions, but the numbers of OSH experts and inspections were insufficient; most inspections only took place in response to complaints. The Ministry of Labor did not track the application of sanctions through the courts and did not have information on whether penalties were applied against violators.

Civil society groups reported in 2023 that the government did not track data necessary to ensure occupational safety. For example, the government did not systematically report data on the number, nature, or location of workplace injuries and the extent to which employers made required payments to the social security fund so that injured workers could obtain compensation. The law established fines and imprisonment for minimum wage noncompliance. The government did not effectively enforce minimum wage, overtime, and holiday-pay laws in small enterprises, in certain geographic areas (especially rural or border areas), or in certain sectors (especially agriculture, construction, and sea fishing). NGOs also reported inconsistent enforcement of wage law resulted in widespread irregular or delayed payment of wages, illegal wage deductions, and illegal recruitment fees for migrant workers.

Regulations on migrant labor limited the maximum charges for recruitment fees, but effective enforcement of the rules was hindered by the lack of documentary evidence of underground recruitment, documentation fees, and migration costs.

Migrant workers also faced withholding of documents and contracts in the Thai language, which many did not understand well. Only in the fishing sector were employers required to provide employees with written versions of employment contracts.

The International Transport Workers Federation reported, based on surveys

of fisheries workers in the country, that vessel inspections did not adequately identify, report, or require the correction of violations, which were widespread, and that the mostly migrant crewmembers were not interviewed privately or with interpretation. The federation reported fishing crews faced widespread violations of wage, hour, and OSH law and regulations, notably including prolonged working hours, insufficient rest periods, and illegally prolonging time at sea.

The Labor Protection in Fishing Work law required workers in fisheries to have access to health care and social security benefits and that certain vessels provide adequate living conditions for workers. As of November, key implementing regulations related to work hours and age limits were pending. Government regulations required registered migrant fishery workers to buy health insurance and vessel owners to contribute to the workers' compensation fund. Migrant fishery workers holding a border pass were eligible for accident compensation.

NGOs reported many construction workers, especially contracted or subcontracted workers and many migrant workers, were not in the social security system or covered under the workers' compensation program because their employers failed to register them or did not transfer the payments to the social security system.

Workers for online mobile delivery services were not protected under labor laws, as they were considered a "partner" rather than an employee.

The country's informal sector was estimated at approximately half of GDP. Labor laws largely did not apply to the sector.

c. Disappearance and Abduction

Disappearance

There were no reports of enforced disappearances by or on behalf of government authorities.

The family of Karen rights activist Porlajee “Billy” Rakchongcharoen, abducted and killed in 2014, filed a new lawsuit against the National Park, Wildlife and Plant Conservation Department on April 4 following the dismissal of murder charges in 2023.

Prolonged Detention without Charges

The constitution prohibited arbitrary arrest and detention and provided for the right of any person to challenge the lawfulness of their arrest or detention in court. The government generally observed these requirements, although there were arbitrary arrests and detentions in security and political cases.

The Deep South emergency decree, which gave the government authority to detain persons without charge for a maximum of 30 days in unofficial places of detention, remained in effect in 15 districts.

Provisions of the Deep South emergency decree permitted detention of persons arrested without a warrant for up to seven days. The decree made it very difficult to challenge a detention before a court. Under the decree, detainees had access to legal counsel, but there was no assurance of prompt access to counsel or family members, nor were there transparent safeguards against the mistreatment of detainees.

On June 27, the NGOs Wartani and Duayjai reported authorities apprehended four Muslim villagers during a raid in Bannang Sata district of Yala. The villagers were released on June 29. Authorities reportedly did not conduct an investigation of the group or inform them of the grounds for their detention.

Lengthy pretrial detention was a problem, especially in sensitive political cases. During the year, political detainees were denied bail by courts even though legal requirements for bail were met. Activists and human rights defenders who were granted bail were often subjected to restrictive bail conditions, including a ban on posting anything online. The NGO Thai Lawyers for Human Rights reported that of the 109 bail applications it submitted between January and June for individuals charged with *lèse majesté*, only five were granted.

Lawyers raised concerns regarding the practice of simultaneously charging a suspect using several laws in national security cases; this could lead to lengthy pretrial detention for insurgency-related suspects in the Deep

South.

Netiporn “Bung” Sanesangkhom, a political activist charged with lèse majesté, died on May 14 while in pretrial custody. On January 27, after her bail was revoked, she started a 110-day hunger strike that she ended shortly before her death. On May 15, the Department of Corrections promised an investigation following allegations that a delayed or inadequate response to her deteriorating condition led to Bung’s death. The law required an autopsy and inquiry within 30 to 90 days of death. The Department of Corrections reported the death was determined to be from natural causes, but did not share autopsy results publicly. Her death sparked an outcry and calls for reform of the judicial system, which allowed activists to be denied bail and held in pretrial detention for long periods for nonviolent offenses.

d. Violations in Religious Freedom

See the Department of State’s annual *International Religious Freedom Report* at <https://www.state.gov/religiousfreedomreport/>.

e. Trafficking in Persons

See the Department of State’s annual *Trafficking in Persons Report* at <https://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report/>.

Section 3. Security of the Person

a. Torture and Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

The constitution stated, “torture, acts of brutality, or punishment by cruel or inhuman means shall not be permitted”; however, there were credible reports government officials employed such practices. An emergency decree in effect in the three southernmost provinces of Yala, Narithiwat, and Pattani since 2005 effectively provided immunity to security officers for actions committed in those areas during the performance of their duties. The decree was lifted in 11 districts in the Deep South (the three provinces noted above plus four districts in Songkhla Province) in 2023 but remained in effect in 15 districts in the region.

The Prevention and Suppression of Torture and Enforced Disappearance Act provided guidelines to prevent and punish torture and enforced disappearance.

Representatives of NGOs and legal entities reported police and military officers sometimes tortured and beat suspects to obtain confessions, and newspapers reported numerous cases of citizens accusing police and other security officers of brutality.

There were reports police abused and extorted prisoners and detainees.

Few complaints alleging police abuse resulted in punishment of alleged offenders, and numerous investigations into alleged security force abuses lasted years without resolution.

Impunity for security and other officials was widely reported. On July 11, a joint investigation panel made up of officials from the Department of Special Investigation and the Office of the Attorney General concluded an investigation into Phanya Khongsaenkham's claims he was tortured by police officers from the Sa Kaeo Provincial police station. Police were attempting to extract a confession for the murder of his wife in January. Two officers were identified as suspects, and the results of the investigation were forwarded to the National Anti-Corruption Commission. The case was one of the first to be investigated under torture prevention legislation.

On August 24, victims and immediate family members filed suit in Narathiwat Provincial court against seven former government officials accused of murder, attempted murder, and unlawful detention in connection with the deadly dispersal of a protest in Tak Bai District in 2004, in which 78 demonstrators were killed and hundreds injured. The court scheduled witness examinations for September 12, but none of the defendants appeared in court, and on October 25, the statute of limitations expired, preventing further legal action. On September 18, the Office of the Attorney General announced it had completed its initial deliberations and was moving forward with a second case related to the incident alleging

intentional homicide against eight individuals, who were mostly low-level soldiers at the time of the protests. One individual, former Fifth Infantry Division Major General Chalermchai Wirunpeth, was charged in both cases. None of the defendants appeared in court.

On October 24, Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra stated that after consulting with the Office of the Council of State, it was not legally possible to extend the statute of limitations. She expressed deep regret over the incident and empathy for those affected and apologized on “behalf of the Thai government” for the deaths, which occurred during her father’s tenure as prime minister. On October 26, media reported a local official who had a warrant issued against him under the attorney general’s indictment order returned to work after taking vacation leave.

b. Protection of Children

Child Labor

See the Department of Labor’s *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor* at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/resources/reports/child-labor/findings/>.

Child Marriage

The minimum legal age for marriage was 17; anyone younger than 20 required parental consent to marry. A court could grant permission for children younger than 17 to marry. The government effectively enforced

the law.

In the Muslim-majority southernmost provinces, Islamic law used for family matters and inheritance allowed the marriage of girls after their first menstrual cycle with parental approval. While the minimum legal age to marry was 17, a Muslim younger than 17 could marry with a written court order or written parental consent, which was considered by a special committee of three members, including at least one woman, all with knowledge of Islamic law.

c. Protection to Refugees

The government generally cooperated with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration, and other humanitarian organizations in providing protection and assistance to refugees, asylum seekers, and stateless persons, as well as other persons of concern, although with many restrictions.

The country hosted more than 95,000 refugees and asylum seekers and generally provided protection against forced returns. Authorities permitted certain refugees and asylum seekers to resettle to third countries.

International observers were not granted meaningful access to some persons newly displaced by fighting or other violence in Burma; as a result, UNHCR was unable to determine whether returns of these persons to Burma were voluntary.

Provision of First Asylum

The law did not provide for granting asylum or refugee status, and the government had no system for providing legal protection to refugees.

During the year, the government introduced the National Screening Mechanism to identify foreign citizens or nonresident stateless persons in need of protection. The mechanism provided protection from refoulement for those approved, but did not confer legal status. Potential access to rights and services for those approved remained undetermined.

UNHCR screened asylum seekers; the government granted it varying levels of access to the estimated several hundred asylum seekers in immigration detention centers (IDCs) to conduct status interviews and monitor new arrivals. Access to asylum-seeker populations varied depending on the preferences of IDC leadership, as well as central government policy toward politically sensitive groups, notably Burmese.

Authorities allowed resettlement countries to conduct processing activities in IDCs and allowed humanitarian organizations to provide health care, nutritional support, and other assistance. The government periodically allowed UNHCR to monitor the status of approximately 88,000 registered Burmese refugees living in nine camps along the border with Burma. The government, jointly with UNHCR, operated a resettlement program for registered Burmese refugees in the nine camps.

The government facilitated third-country resettlement, including by private sponsorship, to multiple countries for official camp residents and other refugees and asylum seekers.

d. Acts of Antisemitism and Antisemitic Incitement

The Jewish population was estimated to be between 200 and 1,000. There were no official reports of antisemitic incidents. Community members, however, reported they chose not to file reports following incidents ranging from microaggressions to stalking and property damage because they believed police were generally insufficiently informed regarding antisemitism to properly respond to such reports.

e. Instances of Transnational Repression

Unlike in previous years, there were no reports authorities engaged in acts of transnational repression. Media reported authorities cooperated with other governments to facilitate their acts of transnational repression.

Extraterritorial Killing, Kidnapping, or Violence or Threats of Violence

On June 10, the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand (NHRCT) issued a report on nine cases of enforced disappearances and deaths of Thai political asylum seekers abroad. The Thai asylum seekers were residing in Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam between 2017 and 2021, and the report

concluded all were cases of enforced disappearance; two of the individuals were subsequently found dead. The NHRCT stated it believed Thai government officials were involved. It further noted the inefficient investigation and the lack of progress in prosecuting the perpetrators.

Knowing Cooperation with Other Governments to Facilitate Their Acts of Transnational Repression

In March police from Vietnam visited two areas in Thailand where ethnic minorities, including some Vietnamese-origin refugees and asylum seekers, resided. Thai police reportedly accompanied the Vietnamese officers and brought them to individuals' homes to encourage their return to Vietnam.