



An open letter to the Ambassador of Royal Thai Embassy in Berlin

An undercover agent suspect of Thai military appeared at a forum
of an art exhibition “documenta” in Germany

We, Thalay Association (thalay.eu), would like to inform you about an incident that happened on July 23, 2022, 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM, while we were co-organizing the forum “Churning Politics” with Baan Noorg Collaborative Arts and Culture, artist of documenta fifteen* at Documenta Halle (one of documenta fifteen’s venues in Kassel, Germany). This forum content was focused on politics in the Ramayana Epics in which some parts of the forum referred to the political situation of the Thai military regime in Thailand.

Between 3.00 PM - 4.00 PM, a crew-cut** man in black t-shirt, beige camouflage pants, black sneakers, green cap and a surgical mask walked onto the exhibition grounds at the venue, where the forum took place. The man was wearing earphones, looking at his phone with a gesture of typing messages with someone all the time. When we inquired, he said that he is a Thai student, who is studying in Berlin. He claimed to have travelled to visit the exhibition just for the day. Upon seeing the man, we could immediately notice – which every Thai activist would do, too – that his appearance resembled that of Thai soldiers, policemen or undercover government officers, who frequently turn up in disguise at protests or political activities***, often to suppress or hinder the exercise of freedom of expression or even to violently arrest and prosecute those with political views opposing the current regime****.

The behaviour of the aforementioned man was suspicious in the sense that he was constantly wearing earphones, chatting with someone on his phone and showed no interest in the exhibition but continuously kept recording videos of the forum, despite claiming to have travelled just to visit documenta for one day. Therefore, we believe that this is not a trivial matter which should be taken lightly.

To prevent such actions from going unnoticed, we hereby write this letter and we kindly ask the **Royal Thai embassy in Berlin** to investigate, whether the man is an agent of the Thai government or not, in order for everyone to be aware of. This sort of intimidation should not happen neither domestically, under Thai jurisdiction, nor abroad, especially in an art exhibition.

Our co-host “Baan Noorg” has already informed the curators and the artists in documenta fifteen about this incident beforehand.

THALAY Association, Germany
07.08.2022

*Baan Noorg Collaborative Arts and Culture, a non-profit organization that runs participatory art project, based in Thailand, is invited to be an artist group in documenta fifteen

**Thai military haircut used by Thai military and royal bodyguard:

<https://www.khaosodenglish.com/politics/2017/11/20/new-buzz-cuts-imposed-thai-police-soldiers>

***Men in crew-cut pressured on anti-government rally:

<https://www.khaosodenglish.com/news/crimecourtscalamity/2020/09/09/question-raised-over-cops-undercover-tactics-at-protest-sites/>

****Men with crew-cut hairstyles shadowing Thai activist in Cambodia before he disappeared:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/6/4/embargoed-story-thai-activist-still-missing-in-cambodia>