

Klong Sai Pattana Community – combating forced evictions and violence

Thailand

November 2014 – present

The Klong Sai Pattana community in Krabi Province, Thailand, are engaged in a struggle with a palm oil producer, Jiew Kang Jue Pattana Co. Ltd., which stands accused of illegally occupying the community's land and using it for cultivation. The company has responded to community opposition to this 'land grab' with further forced evictions, intimidation, violence and, in the case of four local EHRDs, killings.

In November 2014, Thailand's Supreme Court ordered Jiew Kang Jue Pattana Co. Ltd to leave the land that is had illegally occupying. However, no action was taken to enforce the judgement.

Indeed, an official from the Agricultural Land Reform Office (ALRO) official went as far as to suggest that the execution of the judgement would actually harm the Klong Sai Pattana community, which are portrayed as being 'dependents' of the palm oil company (as oppose to the rightful owners of the land.)

In March 2015, the Sub-committee on Land Rights and Forestry of National Human Rights Commission of Thailand conducted an inquiry into the issue. However, despite the fact that the Chair of the Sub-committee confirmed that the Klong Sai Pattana community are human rights defenders, and despite the Sub-committee's call for relevant authorities to return the land to its rightful owners, the authorities have maintained their position that the Klong Sai Pattana community are in the wrong, and that the land belongs to Jiew Kang Jue Pattana Co. Ltd.

The community has gained advocacy support from Protection International, which has made statements calling ARLO's move to label the community as 'encroachers' unjust. A photography exhibition of those land and environmental defenders murdered in Thailand was also shown internationally, and covered by the international media.

On 15 July 2016, Krabi Provincial Court found that the members of the Klong Sai Pattana community were indeed not dependents of the palm oil company, and therefore do not have to leave their land.

However, contrary to the court's decision, the provincial ALRO officer in Krabi continues to insist that the Klong Sai Pattana community must leave, and is now threatening to use Article 44 of Thailand's Interim Constitution.