



สถานเอกอัครราชทูต
ณ กรุงพนมเปญ

ข่าวสารนิเทศ

Press Release

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Royal Thai Embassy
No. 196 Preah Norodom Boulevard,
Sangkat Tonle Bassac,
Khan Chamkar Mon,
Phnom Penh.

Tel. (855-23) 726 306 Fax. (855-23) 726 303 e-mail: thaipnp@mfa.go.th, thaipnp_protocol@mail.camshin.net

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The Current Situation in the Southern Provinces of Thailand

With regard to the recent clashes between Thai security forces and militants on 28 April 2004, the Royal Thai Embassy wishes to bring to the attention the facts as follows:

1. Around 05.30 hrs. on 28 April 2004, clashes took place between Thai security forces and groups of militants who launched coordinated attacks at 11 locations in Yala, Pattani, and Songkhla, resulting in 107 of the perpetrators killed and 17 others arrested. As for the Thai security forces, 5 were killed and 22 wounded.

2. The fighting continued at the Kresae Mosque in Pattani Province which the militants had taken over until 14.00 hrs. when the security forces entered the mosque and brought the situation under control.

3. It is believed that the perpetrators were linked to the group which carried out the January 4 raid on the military depot and also the group of 10 youths who were arrested earlier for plotting bombing attacks on 22 April in Narathiwat Province. It is also believed that the purpose of the recent attack was an attempt to seize weapons from government security forces and instigate instability. As armed militants had gone on rampage which threatened to undermine public security, the security forces were compelled to take decisive counter measures against the attackers in order to deal with the situation.

4. At the press conference on 28 April 2004, General Chaisit Shinawatra, Army Commander reaffirmed that the attackers were militants, group of youth headed by older leaders whose age ranged between 30-40 years old. General Chaisit noted that the perpetrators were under the influence of drugs and were instigated to resort to violence. It was disclosed that those arrested were subject to urine test and found to have taken drugs.

In connection with the above incident, the Royal Thai Embassy wishes to make the following clarifications:

1. The incident that took place has no connection whatsoever with international terrorism.
2. The incident and clashes are not in anyway related to sectarian and religious conflicts since the group of attackers were linked to the same group of 10 militants arrested earlier, which comprised both Thai Buddhists and Muslims.

3. The incident arises out of conflict of a domestic nature in the three provinces in the south, which have been incited by vested interest groups and illegal business activities.

4. The authorities are now obtaining more information, especially from the interrogation of the 10 youths arrested last week who gave information which have helped to identify the masterminds and key suspects and have given the authorities a clearer perspective on the situation.

30 April 2004