



Victory for Justice! Court Acquits Journalist & Human Rights Defender Asmadee Bueheng in Landmark Case in Thailand's Deep South – Continued Support Crucial for Grieving Mother

Dear all,

I hope this email finds you well.

We are pleased to share an important victory update following our previous urgent appeal regarding the trial of Asmadee Bueheng, a citizen journalist and human rights defender in Thailand's Deep South.

On February 24, 2025, the Pattani Provincial Court acquitted Asmadee Bueheng of all charges related to resisting and obstructing officials while reporting on an extrajudicial killing. The court ruled that there was insufficient evidence to support the allegations, reaffirming the principle of presumption of innocence.

This verdict is a significant win for press freedom, human rights defenders, and civic space in Thailand, where independent journalism continues to face legal threats and intimidation. While this ruling provides hope, the fight against the criminalization of journalists and HRDs continues.

Key Takeaways from the Verdict:

- ✓ All charges against Asmadee were dismissed due to lack of evidence.
- ✓ This decision sets an important precedent for journalists and human rights defenders facing legal harassment in Thailand.

Asmadee was represented by human rights lawyer Atiwat Sengkuy and supported by Protection International.

We extend our deepest gratitude to UN agencies, diplomatic missions, human rights organizations, and press freedom advocates who monitored this case, amplified concerns, and stood in solidarity with Asmadee. Your vigilance played a critical role in ensuring due process and protecting fundamental freedoms.

While we celebrate this victory, continued advocacy remains crucial to prevent further legal harassment against HRDs and journalists in Thailand.

Continued Support Needed for Ms. Maeda Sani

Sadly, in the case of the first defendant, Ms. Maeda Sani, she pleaded guilty and was represented by the Muslim Attorney Center.

The court sentenced her to 1 year in prison and a 10,000 THB fine. However, given that she had no prior criminal record and cooperated with the investigation, the court reduced the sentence by half, resulting in 6 months in prison and a 5,000 THB fine.

The prison sentence was suspended for 2 years, meaning she will not serve jail time unless she commits another offense within that period.

It is important to highlight that authorities should not have prosecuted her simply for wanting to retrieve her son's body for a proper Muslim burial. This action violates the Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of Potentially Unlawful Death (2016), particularly Article 15, which emphasizes the rights of families to receive the bodies of deceased persons for burial in accordance with their cultural and religious practices, unless there are compelling legal reasons to withhold them.

We will explore possible ways to support her further.

Thank You for Your Continued Support

Please feel free to reach out should you require further details or wish to discuss next steps in strengthening press freedom and civic space.

In solidarity,

Bee

Protection International Thailand