

## **Authorities to strengthen enforcement against demonstrators' unlawful acts**

On 17 April 2010 at 20.30 hrs., Colonel Sansern Kaewkamnerd, Spokesman of the Centre for the Resolution of the Emergency Situation (CRES), briefed the press on the outcome of the CRES meeting chaired by General Anupong Phaochinda, CRES Assistant Director, earlier in the evening.

Firstly, the CRES will be ordering all checkpoints to conduct intensive operations and strictly enforce the law, particularly with regard to demonstrators who intend to congregate in the Ratchaprasong area, which is considered to be unlawful. The CRES will provide enough personnel at each checkpoint to ensure that each checkpoint will be able to enforce all relevant orders and regulations, as the security personnel cannot keep on being flexible without enforcing the law.

Secondly, five additional persons, including community leaders, community radio station managers, and leaders of motorcycle queues, have reported to the CRES in accordance with the summons issued under the Emergency Decree. He also clarified that individuals reporting under the summons will not be subject to arrest; the intention of this action is to question each individual's involvement in the demonstrations.

Thirdly, on the issue of arrest warrants issued to Red Shirt leaders, concerning which the latter have announced that they will turn themselves in to the authorities on 15 May, Colonel Sansern pointed out that the police can still arrest these individuals on sight, since they have continued to defy the law and demonstrate unlawfully in the Ratchaprasong area. He also pointed out that Arisman Phongruangrong had earlier announced that he would turn himself in on 1 April but has not yet done so. Therefore, the announcement by the Red Shirts is not an indication that they will actually do so.

Finally, noting a report that the demonstrators plan to set up another stage on Silom Road, Colonel Sansern said that, in the view of the CRES, the existing stage and traffic blockage of the Ratchaprasong intersection has already caused enough difficulty and disruption to the public, and hence another stage in Silom or any other area will not be allowed.

Earlier on 17 April, Colonel Sansern also commented at another press conference regarding the appointment of General Anupong Phaochinda as Chief Official in charge of dealing with the emergency situation in place of Deputy Prime Minister Suthep Thaugsuban. He clarified that General Anupong would be responsible for handling issues related to the deployment and use of security personnel, and that the appointment is intended to shorten and streamline the line of command. As for the CRES, its structure remains unchanged. Deputy Prime Minister Suthep remains the Director of CRES in charge of overall efforts in dealing with the emergency situation as well as overseeing the implementation of CRES orders, with General Anupong reporting to him.

In addition, the CRES spokesman expressed concern about the war weapons which the demonstrators have not yet returned to the authorities. The possession of such weapons is prohibited by law and the Red Shirts continued possession of them could open opportunities for ill-intentioned people to obtain them and use them against the public. He observed that it would be helpful if the demonstrators would understand that the Ratchaprasong area is unsafe and dangerous, because there are a number of terrorists hiding in the crowd, and that by continuing to demonstrate there, innocent people are unwittingly providing cover to these terrorists. In this regard, the sooner innocent people stay away from Ratchaprasong area, the easier it would be for the authorities to isolate and prosecute these terrorist groups.

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