



Buddhist Peace Fellowship

Chicago Chapter

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Wednesday 9 August 2006

His Excellency Thaksin Shinawatra
Prime Minister of Thailand
Government House
1 Phitsanulok Road, Dusit
Bangkok, Thailand

RE: VIGIL OUTSIDE THE ROYAL THAI CONSULATE, CHICAGO, IL, CONCERNING THE MURDER OF PHRA SUPOJ SUVACANO, SEEKING PROMPT INVESTIGATION & JUSTICE

Your Excellency –

More than a year has passed since the brutal June 17, 2005 murder of Phra Supoj Suvacano, the Abbot of Mettadhamma Forest Sanctuary Dhamma Center in Ban Huay, Fang District, Chiang Mai. In that time, your government, the Ministry of Justice, and the Police Department have done virtually nothing to resolve the case. You have given only vague and empty promises, without any sign of genuine attention to the case and the many others like it. Members of the worldwide Buddhist community are deeply saddened and shocked by the murder and the government's lack of interest in finding justice.

We understand that the acquisition of land surrounding the Dhamma Center has for some time been sought by a group of "local influential businessmen," some with links to the cross-border drug trade, and that this group has previously attempted to frighten away the monks living there with threats of violence. On June 17, 2005, Phra Supoj was brutally stabbed to death in the Dhamma Center's compound. More than a year later, a thorough and credible investigation of the murder has not occurred. In fact, local police appear frightened to pursue the killers.

Given the fact that this incident may be connected to "influential persons" — those operating in the murky interstices among business, hardball politics, and organized crime — it is feared that the case may never reach resolution and Phra Supoj's murderers may never be brought to justice. We the undersigned individuals, urge the Thai government to find those responsible and see that justice is done according to the laws of Thailand. We also urge you to pursue the killers of the many environmentalists killed during the term of your government. We further urge the government to deal effectively with local organized crime in order to insure the safety of monks, conservationists, and local villagers who resist the expansion of commercial interests that are destroying the environment in Fang District (Chiang Mai Province), and indeed throughout your once beautiful country.

As a publicly declared follower of the Buddha's teaching, we encourage you to apply those teachings for the benefit of all beings in Thailand, not only the wealthy and powerful. Four months after Phra Supoj's murder, we continue to watch the progress of this case closely and look forward to the day when the Thai government acts swiftly, responsibly, and justly in this matter.

Sincerely yours,

See attached signatures.