

---

## THE POWER OF THAI DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST THE ROYAL FAMILY

Hendra Maujana Saragih<sup>1</sup>, Suhayatmi<sup>1</sup>, Muhammad Zulham<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of International Relations, Faculty of Social & Political Sciences  
Universitas Nasional Pancasila Jakarta Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Department of Defence Manajement, Faculty of Defence Management, Universitas  
Pertahanan

Email: [hendra.maujana@civitas.unas.ac.id](mailto:hendra.maujana@civitas.unas.ac.id), [suhayatmi@gmail.com](mailto:suhayatmi@gmail.com),  
[mzulham712@gmail.com](mailto:mzulham712@gmail.com)

### *Abstract*

**Abstract** : Thailand has a long history of political riots and protests, but the pro-democracy actions that took place for most of 2020 and are continuing today are the biggest actions in Thai history. The wave of actions bearing the 'Three Fingers' symbol began in February 2020 after the Thai Raksa Chart, the most outspoken opposition political party, was suspended by the Constitutional Court. This freeze is considered by democracy activists to increasingly benefit the ruler of the military junta, Prime Minister Prayuth Chan Ocha. There were at least 10 demands made by the demonstrators, among others, urging the ruling government to step down immediately, demanding amendments to the military product constitution which is not pro-people, immediately holding fair and fair elections, and pressing for reform of the monarchy that has ruled Thailand for decades. The demonstrators were worried that Thailand would again be trapped in an absolute monarchy system as it was before 1932, where the king held full power as head of state as well as head of government. In recent months, demonstrators have taken to the streets to resist resistance. Although the pro-democracy activists were responded to, the demonstrators, who were mostly students, students, and youth ranks, fearlessly continued to embrace to pressure the royal family. Actions against the monarchy like those of the country's demonstrators were both courageous and surprising. Why not, since birth in the realm of the body, Thai citizens have been instilled to love and obey the monarchy unconditionally and are instilled to be afraid to do things that are against or just talk about the royal family. However, the anger, disgust of the Thai people towards the feudal behavior of the royal family who are busier with self-interest coupled with the Military Junta ruling regime that is not pro-people makes their patience limit is on the limit.

**Keywords:** Pro-Democracy, Kingdom of Thailand, Monarchy, Military Junta

---

Submission	:	Feb, 11 <sup>th</sup> 2020
Revision	:	April 18 <sup>th</sup> 2021
Publication	:	May 28 <sup>th</sup> 2021

---

---

## INTRODUCTION

Amid world concentration, including countries in Southeast Asia grappling with the COVID-19 Pandemic, Thailand is facing a very serious domestic problem that has drawn the attention of the international community (Tantrakarnapa, 2020). The democratic life of this country is again in turmoil, marked by a massive wave of actions that have continued since February 2020 until now (Kitchanapaiboon, 2020).

This action was a form of anger from the people over the political and government situation which was deemed not pro-people. Since 2014, Thailand has been controlled by the military junta led by Prime Minister Prayuth Chan Ocha after forcibly overthrowing Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra who was then in power.

The disappointment of the Thai people has peaked with the government's efforts that are considered slow in handling COVID-19, while King Maha Vajiralongkorn is considered by the Thai people to have fun in other countries as a haven. The king of the Chakri dynasty who has ruled for 238 years, is judged without thinking about the fate of his people by spending time at his residence in the Bavarian Alps with all his luxuries at a time when Thailand is suffering from a serious economy. King Maha Varjilangkorn, who has the title Rama X, just arrived in Thailand on October 20, 2020, even after massive demonstrations took place over the last few months (Chakraborty, 2020).

Indeed, during his reign, the King mostly lived in Germany and handed over the management of the country to the Military Junta, which the Thai people considered to be arbitrary. That is why, apart from challenging the monarchy reform, the ongoing wave of demonstrators was also aimed at opposing the government of Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-cha as the leader of the Military Junta. The demonstrators urged Prime Minister Prayuth to resign from his post. (Tempo: 2020)

Initially, the demonstration was only held at university and college campuses in Thailand and then spread to all parts of the country with a period of increased activity for all ages. Except for the hardline supporters of the monarchy, known as Royalists, most of the Thai people agree with the demonstrators that the monarchy is the target of reforming Thai institutions. The demonstrators also demanded the annulment of the Lese Majeste law, a legacy of feudalism, which has been in effect until now, which prohibits insulting or simply criticizing the king's policies. The demonstrators demanded that the king immediately transfer the ownership of the property and wealth of the palace from private to the property of the people whose numbers are predicted to reach tens of billions of dollars, and several units of the army and other powers inherent in him as the ruling king. (CNBC: 2020)

Responding to the increasingly active pro-democracy movement, the Thai Military Junta, as the regime in power, did not remain silent by immediately imposing an Emergency Decree which called for a ban on the action. Under the pretext of "maintaining peace and order" and physical distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic, the decree prohibits large

gatherings, limiting groups to a maximum of four people. This was done to suppress peaceful action with the monarchy as the target of the decree. The enactment of the emergency decree announced on local television media was triggered by demonstrators bravely confronting the royal entourage from which the decree was issued. (BBC: 2020) The crowd, who were forced to retreat by the officers on duty, showed a three-finger action as a sign of respect as well as a symbol of protest when the Queen was in a group of vehicles that circled the city of Bangkok. The decree will take effect from 04:00 a.m. local time on Thursday, October 15, 2020. (Bangkok Post: 2020)

However, the decree did not deter the demonstrators, although many of them were arrested. Even today, the wave of demonstrators' actions continues, the spirit of pro-democracy continues to burn. (Bangkok Post: 2021) In Thailand, criticizing the king with his monarchy is something that is considered taboo. People who violate it can be brought to court and charged under the Lese Majeste Law with a sentence of 3-15 years imprisonment. Prime Minister Prayuth has emphatically said the government allows demonstrators to rally but has occasionally criticized the monarchy because it is an act beyond borders. But in reality, the Thai demonstrators' power continued to put pressure on the royal family. (CNBC, 2020)

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Discussing Thailand's volatile political situation is incomplete if you don't know the history of one of the countries in Southeast Asia. Thailand was originally known as a country known as Siam. Siam itself is the Roman language of Siyam, which is the name of the neighboring countries for about 40 centuries for this country in the form of a kingdom. After the arrival of the Europeans, Siam was then translated as Thai, in a country known for its Sunga Chopraya, which is more commonly known as Muang Thai. (Flegge 2007: 9).

In 1939 the government of this country announced the use of the Thai name as an official name internationally. Thailand is a country with an ideology of liberalism that adheres to a constitutional monarchy government system with the King as the head of state while the government is led by the Prime Minister. (Tyrell Hebercon, 2018) Since October 13, 2016, King Maha Vajiralonkorn was asked as the ruler of the Thai monarchy to replace his father Bhumibol Adulyadej, who passed away.

A constitutional monarchy is one of the systems applied in government in various countries in the world. In this system, the authority of the head of state originates from or is legally bound or limited by the constitution or legislature. That is why, in a country that adheres to a constitutional monarchy system, the government is led by a Prime Minister.

On the other hand, absolute monarchy or absolutism as a doctrine is a form of monarchy in which the king holds the highest autocratic authority under heredity. The absolute

monarchy has the principle that the king's power can move freely without being bound or limited by written law, legislature, and even prevailing customs.

However, the popularity of absolute monarchies declined substantially after the French Revolution, which promoted a theory of democratic governance based on popular sovereignty. This departs from the many powers of the monarchy having legislative bodies and other government bodies that are weak or just symbolic so that, they can be changed or dissolved just like that by the king arbitrarily.

In the historical records of mankind's centuries, we can see a portrait of the absolute monarchy in the Kingdom of Ancient Egypt where the Pharaoh dynasty held absolute power over the country and claimed to be a living god who was fully trusted by its people for 6 centuries. (Nuraini, 2020: 11) In Mesopotamia, many rulers of Assyria, Babylon, and Sumeria were also absolute kings. In ancient and medieval India, the rulers of the Kingdoms of Mauraya, Satavhana, Gupta, Chola, and Chalukya, as well as other small and bedsar kingdoms were considered absolute kings. In the Khamer Empire, the kings were called 'Devaraja' and 'Chakravatin' (Kings of the world), and exercise absolute power over the empire and its people.

Throughout the Chinese Empire, there were also many emperors and even one empress, or Wu Zetin who held absolute power through the direct mandate of the solar system. Thus in the Pre-Columbian era in America, there was an Inca empire ruled by Sapa Inca who was believed to be the core god, sun god, and absolute ruler. Korea under the Jeseon dynasty and the short-lived empire was also an absolute monarchy.

In this modern era, countries that still maintain absolute monarchy with the king as the supreme ruler include Brunei Darussalam, Eswatini, Oman, Saudi Arabia, the Vatican, and the United Arab Emirates while Thailand has shifted from absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy since 1932. However, today the fact that the constitutional monarchy power is considered by the Thai people is experiencing a setback is why the wave of demonstrations taking to the streets continues.

### **Feudalism Concept**

As a country that adheres to a constitutional monarchy system, apart from recognizing the king as the leader of the country, Thailand is controlled by the Prime Minister as the executor of the government. (Kemlu, 2020) King Maha Vajiralngkorn is the supreme ruler of Thailand who is the heir to the throne from his late father King Bhumibol who died in 2016.

The nobility that flowed in King Maha Vajiralangkorn made him the heir to the throne who became a legacy for the practice of feudalism that was still maintained for hundreds of years. Feudalism is a system of government in which the leader is usually a nobleman. According to KBBI, the meaning of feudalism is a social or political system that gives great power to the aristocratic group. Still, according to KBBI, feudalism was

also a social system in Europe in the Middle Ages which was marked by a great power in the hands of landlords. According to Sigit Djamiko (2013) in his book *Social Philosophy (from Feudalism to Free Markets)*, the term Feudalism comes from the Latin "feodom" which means fief. Thus, the term feudalism is defined as a society that is governed by the fief system, with legal and political powers. which is widespread among people who have economic power. In this book also, it is explained that feudalism means that the aristocracy occupies an effective electoral position over land. (Siti Salmi; 2018)

## **METHOD**

To understand the phenomenon of what the research subjects experienced, in this case, the Thai demonstrators' efforts to suppress the work-family as a socio-political dynamic that occurred in Thailand, the writer used qualitative research methods. As mentioned in his book Miles, Matthew B and A. Michael Huberman. (2009) use descriptions through primary and secondary data collection and do not use data sources in the form of numbers. These data are arranged through sentences that come from words. (Miles, Matthew B dan A. Michael Huberman: 2009).

In this digital era, there are so many reference sources available, but the author of course only chooses sources that are credible in maintaining validity. For this reason, the writing team chose sources in digital format from sources published by trusted sites including Kemlu.go.id, Bangkok Post as a credible Thai local media, and others. The data collected from various sources are then processed using language skills and observations so that this paper can be presented as a scientific work.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Thailand A Modern Monarchical State Under Military Junta Control**

#### **a. Monarchical Power Hides behind the Catchall Article Lese Mejeste Law**

The power of demonstrators against the Royal Thai family continues to be intensively carried out, they call for the power of King Vajiralongkorn, who since he was a teenager prefers to live abroad rather than in his own country to be immediately limited. While Thai citizens are struggling to live and materialize against the COVID-19 pandemic, the King and his family are securing themselves in Germany. The family could not be protested because they took refuge behind the Lese Majeste law. The Lese Majeste is an catchall article that effectively acts as a "king's shield" to silence anyone who crosses over as well as political opponents of the military regime in Thailand. Lese Majeste will reward anyone who dares to insult the king, queen, and all his relatives with the threat of imprisonment of 3-15 years.

Even though they adhere to the ideology of liberalism, in reality, the values of feudalism in Thailand are still very well preserved. This can be seen from the fact that the king

must be placed on an honorable throne that is lauded and upheld without blemish and holy disgrace from criticism, let alone being defiled. No one should be able to accuse or take action in protest against the King's policy. For example, a Thai citizen was sentenced to 5 years in prison for commenting on a king who likes to marry and divorce because it is considered to damage the good name and insult the royal family. (Tempo, 2021)

In Thailand, the Lese Majeste has become a very effective legal instrument in suppressing the 'voices' criticized by political opponents of the ruling military regime. Every citizen who deals with Lese Majeste, is certain that he will not be able to escape the punishment based on the complaint offense against the unclear article "protector of the king".

According to the UN Commission on Human Rights (HAM), investigative cases against people suspected of engaging in "insulting the king" activities as stipulated in the Lese Majeste law have more than doubled in size in the past 12 years. Of the increase, only four percent were released later. Although the UN opposes the Lese Majeste implementation which is considered excessive, the military junta does not flinch on the pretext that the Lese Majeste is a form of sincere respect for the Thai people, as well as legal protection for the king and monarchy.

The previous ruler of Thailand, King Bhumibol Adulyadej, who reigned for 70 years, is known as a king who lives simply and is even promoted as a very frugal president, even in using toothpaste. That is why when Thailand succeeded in becoming the economic engine in Southeast Asia, the investment value of the kingdom was doubled. Even when countries in Southeast Asia experienced a crisis in 1997/1998, Thailand remained strong. That is why "Amazing Thailand Year" was celebrated with great fanfare at that time (Penny Van Esterik; 2000)

For the Thai people, King Bhumibol Adulyadej is a popular, respected, and loved king figure because he is a wise figure. However, the situation changed when he passed away in October 2016 and was succeeded by his son. Maha Vajiralongkorn. (Charles F Keyes prologue: 2019)

King Maha Vajiralongkorn was different from his late father. He grew up in a boarding environment at British schools and Military Academy in Australia. As an adult, he was known as a king who had many wives and concubines. The 68-year-old king is now accompanied by his fourth wife and spends more of his days in Germany. During his stay in Germany, the King had two military units under his command and changed laws to allow him to control the government even when he was abroad. Since the throne of power rests in the hands of King Maha Varjilankorn, Leste Majeste has been increasingly used against political opponents or those who oppose the Military Junta led by PM Prayuth Chan Ocha.

Prime Minister Prayuth Chan Ocha came to power as leader of the Thai Military Junta through a military coup in 2014. The coup action carried out by the Thai military was successful after being colored by political turmoil that lasted for months. In a statement broadcast on television at the time, General Prayuth Chan-Ocha, who at that time served as Commander of the Armed Forces of Thailand, stressed that he would restore public order and immediately carry out political reforms.

### **A Land of Coup Drama**

Military coups in 2014, not the first to happen in Thailand, have happened many times before. Military coups, both bloody and bloodless, have become an inseparable part of the history of politics and government in this country. There have been at least 11 times the takeover of power by gun owners since the Siamese Revolution of 1932. The Washington Post records a list of coups from time to time that occurred in Thailand on October 24, 2014, as follows;

#### **1932 Coup**

The Siamese Revolution is known to history as the bloody coup and became a turning point in Thai history. The coup was carried out by the 'Four Musketeers', a group of military members who overthrew King Prajadhipok. This coup also marked the end of the absolute monarchy and transformed into a constitutional monarchy, where the King is no longer the head of government and the appearance of the Prime Minister.

#### **1933 Coup**

Again, the military carried out a coup action by overthrowing Phraya Manopakorn Nititada, the first Prime Minister who was appointed after the Bloody Siam Revolution coup in 1932. Phraya Manopakorn was later replaced by Phraya Phahon and remained as prime minister for five years.

#### **1947 Coup**

There was a coup action carried out by the military which overthrew the legitimate government. At that time the military force overthrew Rear Admiral Thawan Thamrongnawasawat, who was known to be often involved in many scandals and corruption. Furthermore, the reins of government leadership were controlled by the founder of the Thai Democratic Party, Khuang Aphaiwong.

#### **1951 Coup**

Unlike previous years, this coup was carried out in secret. At that time, King Bhumibol Adulyadej was in Lausanne, Switzerland. In smoothing the action, the military group appointed Commander-in-Chief Phibun Songkhram as prime minister.

### **1957 Coup**

The coup was triggered by accusations of fraud by Phibun Songkhram, who was re-elected as prime minister. A wave of actions occurred to protest against Phibun Songkhram's victory in several regions. Seeing the chaotic political constellation at that time, King Bhumibol was furious and finally, a coup was orchestrated by Commander Sarit Thanarat. Finally, Pote Sarasin was chosen as the executive of government duties to replace the one previously carried out by Phibun Songkhram.

### **1958 Coup**

Sarit Thanarat, as Thailand's military leader, returns to the coup. The coup is said to be a new authoritarian era in a country known as the white elephant country.

### **1971 Coup**

Unlike the previous coup actions, at that time, the coup was carried out by the internal government in power. Top military commander Thanom Kittikachorn staged a coup against his own rule which was followed by the dissolution of parliament. This was done as a strategy to suppress the communist power, which was growing rapidly at that time.

### **1976 Coup**

The military carried out a coup against Prime Minister Seni Pramoj which was carried out twice and had failed in the previous 8 months. After successfully overthrowing the legitimate prime minister, Admiral Sangad Chaloryu in his press release declared himself the Head of Thailand's National Reform Agency in charge of regulating the applicable laws.

### **1977 Coup**

The military-led by Admiral Sangad Chalory staged a coup against Prime Minister Thanin Kraivichien. This coup claimed lives and as a result Thanin Kraivichien only served one year as prime minister.

### **1991 Coup**

The coup was triggered by the move by Prime Minister Chatichai Choonhavan who wanted to appoint the minister of defense. Tragically, the coup was carried out by the military when Chatichai was on his way to meet the King for permission. Prime Minister Chatichai is seen as having made moves that rival the military elite.



**2006 Coup**

The coup at that time killed Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra who was attending an event in New York. On 19 September 2006. The military unilaterally dissolved the government, revoked the 1997 constitution, and declared a state of emergency in the City of Bangkok.

**2014 Coup**

Thai Army Chief of Staff General Prayuth Chan-Ocha led a coup against Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra on Thursday, May 22, 2014. The previous coup was marred by turmoil between the two political camps in Thailand for several months. After the coup, Prayut Chan-O-Cha immediately appointed himself as the interim Prime Minister of Thailand. At that time, a wave of action took place in the capital Bangkok which urged Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra to resign because his government was accused of being just a puppet. Meanwhile, the real ruler is his older brother, former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, who exiled himself abroad after a military coup in 2006.(Washington Post, 2014)

Now, after 4 years of Prime Minister Prayuth as leader of the Military Junta, the demonstrators began to shake their power. They demanded Prayuth immediately resign for a fair and transparent election. However, Prayuth refused to back down. In fact, on the contrary, it responded strongly by carrying out a 'counterattack' by issuing an emergency decree on Thursday, October 26, 2020, which contained a ban on demonstrations on the pretext of creating peace and justice and preventing the spread of Covid-19. The regime he leads has also carried out repressive actions by detaining and forcibly arresting the leaders of the action. Thai police then arrested more than 20 protesters, including a pro-democracy student leader.(Okezone, 2020)

The Military Junta led by Prayuth Ocha ordered the chancellors of universities to prevent students from taking to the streets demanding monarchical reform. The regime also warned sternly that their demands could lead to a massacre. It was not enough to stop there, the emergency decree was issued because the demonstrators dared to block the royal vehicle group.

**The Power of the Three-finger Symbol**

The popular three-finger greeting colored the course of demonstrations that continued in Thailand for months. The demonstrations used the three-finger greeting as a separate symbol as a form of resistance against the Thai Government. The demonstrators, who are students and various community groups in Thailand, are often arrested by the military junta for waving three-finger greetings.

Prime Minister Prayuth's Thai military regime has arrested and jailed several students, including a demonstrator who gave a three-finger greeting. The term and usage of the

three-finger greeting are taken from the book and film *The Hunger Games*. The greetings thrown by Thai protesters at the royal motorcade this week have become a major symbol of resistance in the kingdom in recent years. Prime Minister Prayuth's Thai military regime has arrested and jailed several students, including a demonstrator who gave a three-finger greeting. The term and usage of the three-finger greeting are taken from the book and film *The Hunger Games*. The greetings thrown by Thai protesters at the royal motorcade this week have become a major symbol of resistance in the kingdom in recent years.

The three-finger greeting from the film *The Hunger Games* was used by Thai protesters as a symbol of protest. This symbol has been used by demonstrators since 2014. Several demonstrators also neutralized this symbol on social media by using the hashtag #HungerGames in 2014. From the stories in the film and book *The Hunger Games*, the people at that time protested against the authorities and wanted a revolution. This 3 finger greeting was later used as a symbol of revolution and opposing the ruler. This symbol has been used since 2014 in conjunction with the French Revolution phrase 'freedom, brotherhood, and equality.(BBC, 2014)

The public, especially the demonstrators, displayed this symbol to emphasize that Thailand's military-led government had broken the law. This comes after the military junta government banned public protests across Thailand. For citizens who resisted the coup, this movement has become an unofficial symbol of resistance to a military regime that suspended democracy and severely restricted freedom of expression. The three fingers of the hand have become a symbol for the call for political rights in a country led by one ostensibly as having the most sovereign power, namely General Prayuth Chan-O-Cha.

The protesters who opposed the Thai kingdom who were arrested included human rights activist Anon Nampa, activist Prasit Krutharot and student leader Parit Chiwarak. The arrests of these activists made the demonstration even stronger in which demonstrators chanted "free our friends" and called the police "slaves to the dictatorship". This is of course very ironic with the statement of King Vajiralongkorn, on November 3, 2020, who said that he loved the Thai people and stated that Thailand was a country of compromise. It is not surprising then that the King's statement is considered by activists to be merely lip service and his policies so far have hurt the Thai people's sense of justice.

### **Petition to Pressure the King**

At a time when the Thai people are betting their lives against the Covid-19 pandemic which has caused the economic downturn, the King prefers to live in a land of people with all the facilities and luxuries. The Thai people were angry at the King's behavior, so

without fear of the rubber article Lese Majeste which had been considered sacred, they held a demonstration demanding Vajiralongkorn to step down from power.

It is known that King Vajiralongkorn, who reigned since 2016, since he was young, has mostly lived in Germany. When he was still the Crown Prince, King Vajiralongkorn was not well received by the Thai people themselves. This is because when he became the Crown Prince, the man who served as the King of Thailand was known to have a luxurious lifestyle, likes to marry and divorce, and has many concubines.

Violent protests against the king's behavior which the protesters deemed not praiseworthy realized it in the form of a petition. Saturday, October 17, 2020, the petition urged Germany to declare their persona non-grata status of King Maha Vajiralongkorn of Thailand. The petition has nearly 130,000 signatures. In the petition, the King of Thailand was criticized for staying more often in Germany, with his wives and concubines, than in Bangkok. This petition also appeared close to a wave of demonstrations by young people in Bangkok demanding that the Thai government be separated from the monarchy system.

The petition was written in Thai, English, and German, compiled by a Thai student in France. Even though it is blocked in Thailand, the petition is still accessible abroad. The petition comes after the German Foreign Ministry stated that King Vajiralongkorn should not be allowed to take care of politics in his country from the German sovereign territory. The protesters who are fighting on behalf of the people believe that the constitutional monarchy system, which was an absolute monarchy in 1932, has experienced a setback. The current constitutional government system is more influenced by the military, thus making democratic life in this country confined. Apart from the petition, pressure on the royal family, in this case, the king, was also contained in various demands, among others; Demanding the transparency of palace finances to be more accountable. The figure of King Raja Maha Vajiralongkorn as the heir to the throne of the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej, who died in 2016, is considered less transparent. Thai people think that King Maha Vajiralongkorn has a different style of leadership from his father. The late King Bhumibol Adulyadej was wiser and wiser so that the people respected him. Meanwhile, King Vajiralongkorn was known as a king who liked to live in luxury and extravagance. The total value of his wealth is estimated at the US \$ 60 billion or equivalent to Rp. 840 trillion. Even at the end of March, German media reported that King Maha Vajiralongkorn spent his money traveling around Germany using a private Boeing 737 to circle Hannover, Leipzig, and Dresden.

Rejected the king's decision to divert the ownership status of assets in the Crown Property Bureau (CPB) from royal ownership to private ownership. Why is that, because this diversion has made the king the richest man in Thailand. Such assets should be reserved for the interests of the people, not for the personal interests of the king. Not only is the richest person in Thailand, but King Maja Vajiralongkorn is also touted as the

richest king in the world. This is because he has access to one of the world's largest centers of royal wealth, a secret holding company full of stakes in Thai blue-chip companies and land in central Bangkok.(CNBC Indonesia.com, 2020)

The transfer of wealth is predicted to make King Maha Vajiralangkorn more wealthy when compared to the combined wealth of the Kings of Saudi Arabia, the Sultan of Brunei, and the British royal family. The assets are conservatively valued at the US \$ 70 billion. (CNBCIndonesia.com, 2020) Demonstrators demanded that the royal budget be reduced and the king's funds separated from the assets of the crown for fear of being used inappropriately by the King.

Not enough, the Thai people also demanded the abolition of the law that prohibited criticizing the kingdom until the ouster of Vajiralongkorn and PM Prayuth. The demonstrators are adamant that they will not back down, or run. They demand that Thailand's constitution be changed, Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha resigns, and elections are held. They are also worried that Thailand will return to the system of absolute monarchy as before 1932. The demonstrators also called for a boycott of Siam Comercial Bank, one of the largest banks in Thailand in which the king owns 23.4 percent of shares.

Demand the transparency of Thailand's 2020 national budget bill and an allocation of more than 29 billion baht (the US \$ 929 million) set aside for the monarchy. That is why in large-scale demonstrations, apart from taking to the streets, closing their ranks, they also put up a placard as a form of resistance. A Plaque was installed in the Royal Field adjacent to the Grand Palace or the king's palace. The content of the writing is something like this "This country belongs to the people and does not belong to the king."

## **CONCLUSION**

Thailand is indeed one of the rare countries in the world that still applies the lese majeste legal system, where anyone who criticizes the king, queen, heir to the throne, or a regional leader such as a regent can be dragged to iron bars with a sentence of up to 15 years. Activists and critics call this a limitation on freedom of speech. Countless citizens have been imprisoned because of their views on the royal family, activists have been arrested and even thought to have ended with the loss of their lives, while others chose to flee abroad and ask for political asylum in other countries for fear of returning to Thailand.

However, the era has changed, the slow handling of COVID-19 has become an anticlimax of Thai people's dissatisfaction with the government's performance, which has long been deemed not pro-people. The youth ranks who previously only focused on studying academically in schools and campuses were courageously in the line calling for pro-democracy. Efforts to suppress kajan families cannot be stopped, even the threat of violence does not dampen their heroic steps with the three-finger symbol as an identity

for their resistance to the chaos that has occurred in this country.

Demonstrations that began with demands to resign against Prime Minister Prayuth developed into demands to limit royal power, the demonstrators continued to try to pressure the royal family. Meanwhile, PM Prayuth as head of the Thai Military Junta in the extraordinary session of parliament on Monday, October 26, 2020, said he refused to resign. The question then is whether this massive action has a significant impact in creating the expected constitutional reforms. The biggest mass action in Thailand's history, spearheaded by youth ranks, is considered creative and technologically savvy with the use of social media, but the action, which is still ongoing, does not seem to have had a precise strategy because it did not have a main leadership while national reconciliation was initiated in parliament. the juntrugan is not clear.

## REFERENCE

- Bangkok Post, Protester's plan action after PM ignores deadline to quit, 25 Oktober 2020
- BBC Thai demonstrators 'using Hunger Games protest sign' Sophia Tran-Thomson reports
- Chakraborty, I., & Maity, P. (2020). COVID-19 outbreak: Migration, effects on society, global environment and prevention. *Science of the Total Environment*, 728, 138882.
- CNBC, Tensions remain high in Thailand, as protesters' deadline for leader to step down nears, 24 Oct 2020
- Kemlu.go.id Monarchy and Democracy of Thailand, May 18, 2020
- Keyes, Charles F. (2019). *The Thailand Buddhist Kingdom as Modern Nation-State*, Routledge, Newyork.
- Miles, Matthew B and A. Michael Huberman. (2009). *Qualitative Data Analysis Resource Book About New Methods*. Jakarta: UI Press.
- Nuraini (2020) *Mesopotamia and Ancient Egypt: The Beginning of World Civilization* published by the journal ar-raniry.ac.id
- Okezone.com Challenges the Government, Tens of Thousands Participate in Demonstrations in Bangkok, October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020
- Peleggi, Maurizo (2007) *Thailand The Worldy Kingdom* published by Reaktion Books. Ltd, London.
- Penny Van Esterik. (2000) *Materializing Thailand* published by Berg Publishers
- Siti Salmi (2018) *Feudalism of Leadership (Sociopolitical Review of the Community of Komodo, West Manggarai Regency)*
- Srichan, P., Apidechkul, T., Tamornpark, R., Yeemard, F., Khunthason, S., Kitchanapaiboon, S., ... & Upala, P. (2020). Knowledge, attitudes and preparedness to respond to COVID-19 among the border population of northern Thailand in the early period of the pandemic: a crosssectional study. WHO

South-East Asia journal of public health, 9(2), 118-125.

Tantrakarnapa, K., Bhopdhornangkul, B., & Nakhaapakorn, K. (2020). Influencing factors of COVID-19 spreading: a case study of Thailand. *Journal of Public Health*, 1-7.

Tyrell Haberkorn (2018) Dictatorship, Monarchy, and Freedom of Expression in Thailand, *The Journal of Asian Studies*

Washington Post 2014 History of Thailand Coup