Political Prisoners and Prison Conditions

UPR Pre-Session on Thailand

Freedom Bridge

Issues

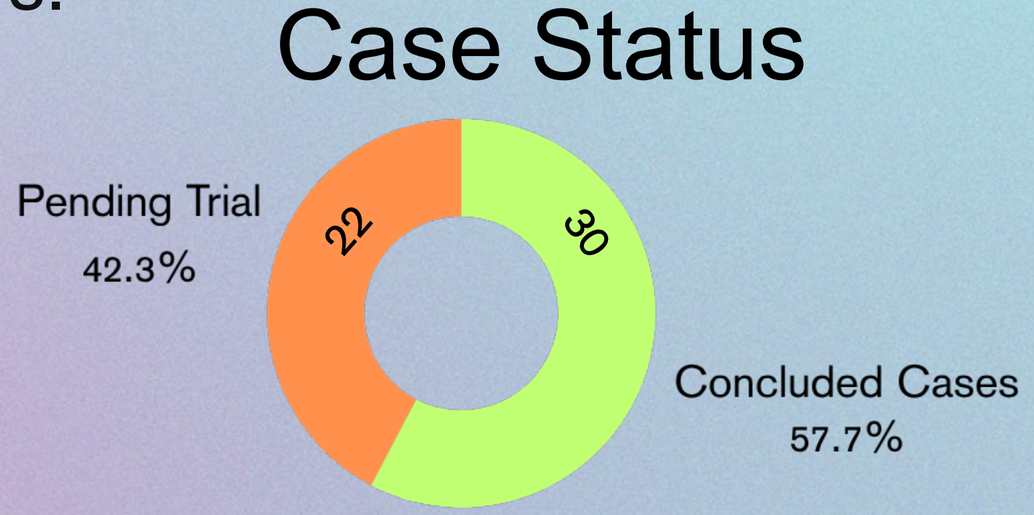
1) Arbitrary Detention

2) Restrictions on Prison Visits and Correspondence

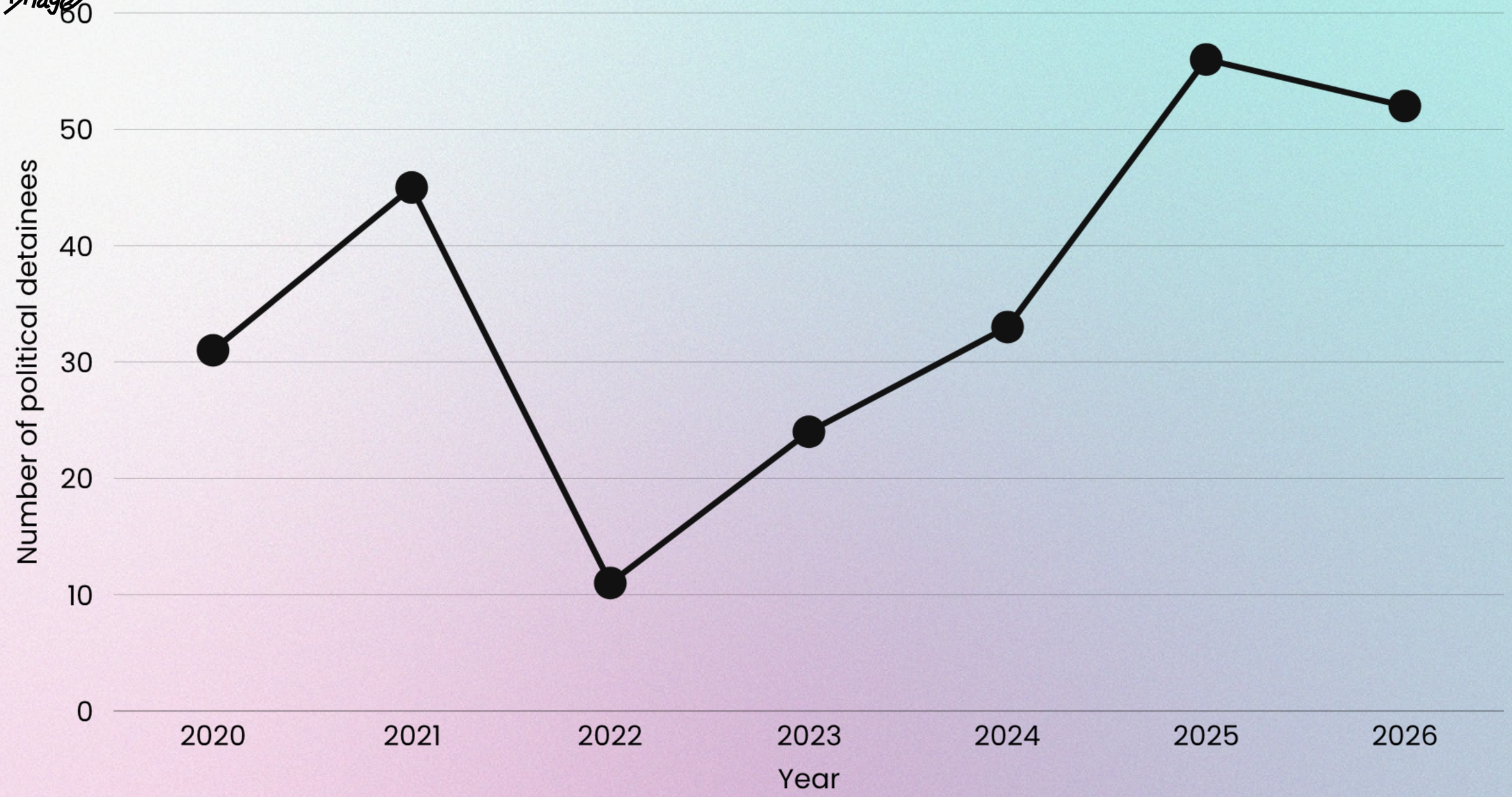
3) Access to Healthcare

Issue I: Arbitrary Detention

- 4 recommendations on the issue of arbitrary detention: Noted
- 52 political prisoners, 35 of them are charged with monarchy-related law. Almost half are held in pre-trial detention. 25 of them are facing sentences of 10 to 50 years.



Number of Political Prisoners



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2025

91.1%

of bail applications denied

214 denied of 235 applications

Law student Aukit had at least 10 bail requests denied despite repeatedly citing the need to sit his final exams to graduate. He has been detained for 2 years and 6 months.

Arnon Nampa, a human rights lawyer imprisoned since September 2023. He has submitted 113 bail applications. All have been denied.

Instrument of Restraints

Ankle shackles are used on inmates, including political prisoners and those held in pre-trial detention, and are not removed during court appearances.

“The edges of the chain are hard and sharp, causing wounds at the ankle. I cannot take full strides like a normal person, and when walking, the friction causes intense, burning pain.”

“Some prisoners who cannot bear the pain have to use rope to tie the chain up, or bend down to lift it while walking —moving in a manner resembling a monkey.”

Recommendation

01 Immediately release all individuals detained solely for the peaceful exercise of the rights to freedom of expression and freedom of peaceful assembly, including children, and withdraw all related charges.

02 Ensure that pre-trial detention is used only as an exceptional measure of last resort, based on an individualized assessment of necessity and proportionality, and guarantee the right to bail in line with Articles 9 and 14 of the ICCPR.

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Issue II: Restrictions on Prison Visits and Correspondence

- 2 recommendations on the issue of prison conditions: Accepted
- Prisoners who have concluded cases face restrictions on lawyer visits in some facilities.
- The lawyers are redirected to visit as a family member with a 15-minute limit time.
- At least ten prisons across the country restrict general visitation to blood relatives only. This exceeds what the law actually requires.

Recommendation

01 Establish and enforce a uniform national standard guaranteeing the right of all prisoners, including those whose cases have concluded, to confidential, unrestricted, and timely access to legal counsel.

02 Ensure prison practice complies with existing regulations that permit non-blood relatives to visit, and issue clear directives to limit the excessive discretion prison officials currently exercise to restrict visitation.

Issue III: Access to Quality Healthcare

- A 28-year-old human rights defender, died in custody on 14 May 2024, while held in pre-trial detention under the lèse-majesté law.
- The waiting time for inmates to receive treatment from a doctor can range from 3 days to one month, even for life-threatening cases.
- Mental healthcare in prisons was largely limited to the prescription of sedatives

Recommendation

01 Ensure that all prisoners, including political prisoners and pre-trial detainees, have timely access to healthcare equivalent to that available in the community, including emergency care, mental healthcare, and continuity of treatment for pre-existing conditions, in line with the Nelson Mandela Rules.