Hello everyone. My name is Pathomporn. I am the Program Lead and Founder of Freedom Bridge, an organization that provides material and psychosocial support to political prisoners and their families, and that monitors prison conditions. I also speak as a family member of a political prisoner myself.

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Today I will focus on three issues: arbitrary detention, restrictions on prison visits and correspondence, and access to healthcare.

[Slide 3]
Issue 1: Arbitrary Detention

Thailand noted four recommendations addressing the issue of arbitrary detention.
As of August 2026, there are 52 political prisoners, 25 of them are facing sentences of 10 to 50 years. 35 of them are charged with monarchy-related law. Almost half are held in pre-trial detention.

[Slide 4]
Since 2020, the number of political prisoners has risen steadily. This reflects the prosecution of people who joined protests or voiced political opinions, both on the street and online.

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Bail denial rates for political prisoners exceed 90 percent, even when detainees pose no flight risk.

Take the case of Arnon Nampa, a human rights lawyer imprisoned since September 2023 for peacefully calling for monarchy reforms. He has submitted over a hundred bail applications since his detention. All have been denied. He has now spent more than one thousand days in Bangkok Remand Prison.

[Slide 6]
Furthermore, Ankle shackles are also routinely used on inmates, including political prisoners and pre-trial detainees, and are not removed for court appearances. This causes physical injury and pain, and it undermines the presumption of innocence.

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Therefore, we recommended that the Thai government:

1. Release all individuals detained solely for the peaceful exercise of the rights to freedom of expression and freedom of peaceful assembly.
2. Ensure that pre-trial detention is used only as an exceptional measure of last resort, and guarantee the right to bail in line with Articles 9 and 14 of the ICCPR.
3. Amend Section 21 of the Penitentiary Act to bring the use of instruments of restraint into conformity with international human rights obligations.

[Slide 8]
Issue 2: Restriction on Prison Visit and Correspondence

In the previous cycle, the government accepted two recommendations on prison reform and conditions. Beyond consistent poor hygiene and general conditions, I want to highlight the exercise of discretion by prison authorities beyond what the law provides, particularly around visits and correspondence.

Several prisons refused or restricted visits from lawyers. The prison cited that once their case was concluded, there was no further need for legal consultation. Some lawyers were redirected to visit as family members, and were only allowed 15 nutes in a non-confidential room.

At least ten prisons across the country restrict visitation to blood relatives only. This exceeds what the law actually requires. In many of these prisons, the same ten-person list also determines who may deposit money or send and receive letters, which further isolates prisoners from friends and support networks outside their immediate family.

[Slide 9]
Therefore, we recommend that the Thai government

1. Establish and enforce a national standard guaranteeing the right of all prisoners, including those with concluded cases, to confidential, unrestricted, and timely access to legal counsel.
2. Ensure prison practice complies with existing regulations that permit non-blood relatives to visit.

[Slide 10]
Issue 3: Access to Healthcare in Prison
The lack of timely and emergency healthcare resulted in the death of a human rights activist, Netiporn, who had been on a hunger strike while being held in pre-trial detention. She was only 28 years old.

The wait time for inmates to receive treatment from a doctor can range from 3 days to one month. For example, in the case of one detainee who suffered a stroke, with full left-side paralysis, he had to wait for 8 days before being transferred to the Department of Correction Hospital.

Mental healthcare in prisons was largely limited to the prescription of sedatives and was accessible only for inmates with obvious symptoms. Some prison staff even hand out pills that are already crushed, which can decrease their efficiency, to prevent inmates from selling them.

[Slide 11]
Therefore, we recommended that the Thai government:

1. Ensure that all prisoners, including political prisoners and pre-trial detainees, have timely access to healthcare, including emergency care and mental healthcare, in line with the Nelson Mandela Rules.

[Concluding Statement]
Before I close, I want to leave you with one family.

Jirawat is serving six years for sharing three Facebook posts about the monarchy. He has been in prison since June last year. The court refused him bail because it believed he might flee—though he had come to every hearing, with an electronic tag on his ankle.

His wife has stage four cancer. It has spread to her liver. Her doctor told her she had less than 2 years left. She asked us: “If I die before he gets bail, who will our child live with?”

Their daughter is seven years old. Her father was sentenced on her fifth birthday.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are not asking you to speak only for the people inside. Speak for the ones waiting outside.

Thank you.