



A Historic Step Forward: Indigenous Land Rights Recognised in Northern Thailand

Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact

4th April 2025

The Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) extends its heartfelt congratulations and solidarity to the Network of Indigenous Peoples in Thailand, Assembly of Community People Living in Forest and allied networks for their historic milestone in the struggle for land rights in Northern Thailand.

The mass encampment protest, which brought together over 10,000 indigenous people and forest-dependent communities in front of the Chiang Mai Provincial City Hall from 24 March to 2 April 2025, marks a significant chapter in the decades-long movement for recognition, justice, and dignity. Led by the Assembly of Community People Living in Forests, the Network of Indigenous Peoples in Thailand, and the Northern Farmers Federation, this mobilisation powerfully exposed the persistent inequities in land access and the violations stemming from state-imposed forest conservation laws that disregard rights and Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).

With over 1.8 million people living in areas overlapping with protected areas and conservation zones—facing more than 30,000 legal cases—the protest was a direct response to the Royal Decrees passed in November 2024 under the National Park Act and the Wildlife Protection Act, threatening to further erode the rights and livelihoods of indigenous and forest communities.

This mobilisation is rooted in a long history of struggle, dating back to the 1998 land rights demonstration which resulted in a Cabinet Resolution that has remained largely unimplemented. After years of unfulfilled promises and increasing encroachment on ancestral lands, affected communities once again rose to demand justice and the rollback of laws that undermine their rights.

Thanks to their persistent advocacy, six key demands were accepted by the Cabinet, including:

1. The establishment of a joint Law Amendment Committee to review unjust conservation laws with equal representation from public and government sectors.
2. Urgent surveying of land tenure under the 29 October 2024 Cabinet resolution, and issuing of order appointing representatives from community organizations, experts, and non-profit organizations to the Community Land Titling Coordination Committee (CLTCC.) within seven days.
3. Swift action on citizenship status issues under the Cabinet resolution of October 29, 2024 within April 2025.
4. Formal verification of land tenure rights for forest communities.
5. Accelerate the process of submission of the Amnesty Bill (for those unduly affected under current policies) to the Cabinet and expedite the process at the earliest.

6. Assurance that all these demands brought before the Cabinet have been accepted and will be implementation.

This achievement is a testament to the strength of collective organising, inter-community solidarity, and the unwavering spirit of indigenous and marginalised peoples.

AIPP proudly stands with the Network of Indigenous Peoples in Thailand, Assembly of Community People Living in Forest and all involved networks. We remain committed to supporting their continued efforts to reclaim and protect their rights, territories, and ways of life.

We highly appreciate the Thai government's political wisdom and decision, which will go a long way in addressing the well-being of Indigenous Peoples in Thailand. We believe that the government will honour its commitments in full and ensure that future policies uphold the rights of Indigenous Peoples in accordance with international human rights standards.