

# Thailand: Regime Assassinates Protest Leader on Eve of Sham Elections

By [Tony Cartalucci](#)

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*Peaceful protests turn deadly as regime unleashes “red shirt” enforcers and heavily armed assassins.*

*Regime gunmen assassinated celebrated NGO worker, activist, and protest core leader Sutin Taratin Sunday, during a brazen broad-daylight drive by shooting amid a melee between protesters and armed “red shirt” regime enforcers.*

Protests were held across the country at polling stations in opposition to advance voting. [Forty-five out of fifty polling stations were closed](#) in Bangkok alone. Bangkok’s English paper, The Nation would report in its article, [“Thaksin’s big-time opponent latest victim of political violence,”](#) that:

Sutin Taratin, one of leaders of People’s Army to Overthrow the Thaksin Regime, has become the latest victim of political violence. He was gunned down Sunday outside the Bang Na advance voting station.

He was an non-governmental organisaton officer working for Local Development Institute (LDI) and he was close to former secretary-general of the State Enterprises Labour Relations Confederation Somsak Kosaisuk.

The assassination of Sutin Taratin came after the regime [and its supporters made explicit threats of armed violence](#) against any who opposed upcoming sham elections. TIME magazine on January 16 reported in their article, [“Bangkok Shutdown: Yingluck Supporters Prepare to Fight for Democracy,”](#) that:

As Thailand’s anti-government protests enter their fourth day, observers say prospects for violent confrontation are increasing, with reports of government supporters stockpiling weapons in case of Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra’s ouster.

According to the Bangkok Post, radical members of the Red Shirts — diehard champions of Yingluck and her notorious brother Thaksin Shinawatra — are readying a cache of arms in case the 46-year-old premier is forced from office by either military or judicial intervention.

The paper quoted a Red Shirt source as saying “There are strong anti-coup and anti-court sentiments among the red-shirt mavericks who are familiar and

experienced with weapon use.”

The very next day, the attacks began. The first [was a grenade attack on peaceful marches lead by protest leader Suthep Thuangsuban](#), which killed one and injured 39. Suthep Thuangsuban was only 30 meters away from the blast, indicating it was a likely assassination attempt. Protesters would then storm the abandoned building where the attack originated to uncover what appeared to be a weapons cache and a safehouse, just as TIME described. Another twin grenade attack took place at Bangkok’s Victory Monument, along with nightly drive-by shootings up until the regime announced a “state of emergency” citing their own terror campaign as justification.

### **Regime’s Murder & Mayhem in Defense of Sham Elections**

## EMERGENCY MEASURES

The caretaker government's imposition of the emergency decree has empowered the premier to issue the following regulations:

- To arrest and detain persons suspected of having a role in causing and instigating the emergency situation.
- To summon any person to report and give a statement.
- To seize arms, goods, consumer products, and chemical products suspected to play a part in the emergency situation.
- To issue a warrant for searches, to remove and demolish buildings, structures or obstructions.
- To inspect letters, books, printed matter, telephone communications or any other means of communication.
- To prohibit any act or to implement any act to maintain public security and safety.
- To prohibit any alien person from leaving the country.
- To request a report of purchase, sale, use or possession of any arms, goods, medical, consumer, chemical products and equipment.
- To prohibit any people from blockading roads.
- To order the use of military force to assist officials or police in controlling a serious situation.
- To be careful in any operation not to cause trouble to people.

Source: The caretaker Government **POST**graphics

With a “state of emergency” announced, the regime is now free to openly wield authoritarian power, and will continue to do so in the lead up to [sham elections on February 2, 2014](#), and well beyond.

In the wake of the decree, the regime [has summoned entertainers](#) who have participated in recent anti-regime protests as well as [declared 31 businesses “blacklisted”](#) for allegedly supporting the ongoing opposition. The regime has also continued its campaign of terror directed at both protesters and their leaders. The result is a one-party election (all major opposition parties are boycotting it) carried out under an authoritarian decree being actively used to intimidate and silence the opposition, amid a campaign of systematic terror

and assassinations putting it on par with sham elections in [Saddam's Iraq](#), or [Kim Jong III's North Korea](#).

Elections held under these conditions are clearly indicative of a dangerous dictatorship, but are instead being defended by the West as a legitimate democratic process being obstructed by "anti-democratic militants." This is being done through a campaign of intentional and systematic omissions and distortions – [particularly in the BBC's coverage of the political crisis](#).

[BBC's latest report](#), in the wake of Sutin Taratin's assassination, briefly mentions the attack and skips past it, focusing instead on portraying the protesters as the violent aggressors. Jonathan Head of the BBC would state:

Thailand's protest movement has an image problem. It is commonly viewed outside Thailand as undemocratic. The movement's leader, Suthep Thaugsuban, even wrote a letter to US President Barack Obama this week pleading for more understanding of his goals. But the scenes of his supporters forcefully blocking people from voting won't help that negative image.

Of course, that "image problem" is owed entirely to the West's disingenuous coverage. Head would also claim in his article that:

Protesters, who started their campaign in November, want to install an unelected "people's council" to run the country until the political system is changed.

They [the protesters] say Ms Yingluck's government is being influenced by her brother, exiled former leader Thaksin Shinawatra.

Of course the protesters "say Ms Yingluck's government is being influenced by her brother," Thaksin Shinawatra, because both her own political party and Thaksin Shinawatra himself have openly and repeatedly admitted as much.

While Thailand is technically under the premiership of Thaksin's sister, Yingluck Shinawatra, by his party's own admission, Thaksin is still literally running the country. The election campaign slogan for the last general election in 2011 was literally, "Thaksin Thinks, Puea Thai Does," Puea Thai being his political party. Forbes would report in their article, "[Thaksin in Exile: Advising Sister, Digging for Gold](#)," that:

Regarding his behind-the-scenes role in the party and policy, he is not shy: "I am the one who thinks. Like our slogan during the campaign, Thaksin thinks, Pheu Thai acts."

The New York Times admitted in an early 2013 article titled, "[In Thailand, Power Comes With Help From Skype](#)," that:

For the past year and a half, by the party's own admission, the most important political decisions in this country of 65 million people have been made from abroad, by a former prime minister who has been in self-imposed exile since 2008 to escape corruption charges.

The country's most famous fugitive, Thaksin Shinawatra, circles the globe in his private jet, chatting with ministers over his dozen cellphones, texting over various social media platforms and reading government documents e-mailed to him from civil servants, party officials say.

The NYT piece would also report:

"He's the one who formulates the Pheu Thai policies," said Noppadon Pattama, a senior official in Mr. Thaksin's party who also serves as his personal lawyer. "Almost all the policies put forward during the last election came from him."

# Out of his country, but not out of power

**BANGKOK**

## Exiled former premier helps run Thailand using Skype and social media

BY THOMAS FULLER

Millions of people across the globe have cut the tethers to their offices and enjoy working from wherever they want. But the political party governing Thailand has taken the idea of telecommuting into an altogether different realm.

For the past year and a half, by the party's own admission, the most important political decisions in this country of 65 million people have been made from abroad, by a former prime minister who has not set foot in the country since 2008.

Thaksin Shinawatra circles the globe in his private jet, chatting with ministers over his dozen cellphones, texting over various social media platforms and reading documents e-mailed to him from bureaucrats, party officials say.

It might be described as rule by Skype. Or governance by instant messenger.

Mr. Thaksin was removed from power in a military coup six and a half years ago and remains in exile because of a conviction for abuse of power, a highly politicized case initiated by the coup makers. But that has not stopped him from helping run Thailand — by remote control.

Officially, his sister, Yingluck Shinawatra, is prime minister (he nominated her for the job in 2011). But from his homes in Dubai and London, from the gold mines he owns in Africa and during regular visits to nearby Asian countries, Mr. Thaksin, 63, has harnessed the Internet and mobile technology to create one of the most unusual and innovative ways of governing a country.

"We can contact him at all hours," said Charupong Ruangsawan, the interior minister and secretary general of Mr. Thaksin's Pheu Thai Party. "The world has changed. It's a boundless world. It's not like a hundred years ago when you had to use a telegraph."

To illustrate the point during an interview, Mr. Charupong took out his iPhone and scrolled through the list of Mr. Thaksin's phone numbers (Mr. Thaksin gives different numbers to different people, often depending on seniority).

"If we've got any problem, we give him a call," Mr. Charupong said.

The day-to-day governance of the country is carried out by Ms. Yingluck, who is genial, photogenic and 18 years younger than Mr. Thaksin. She cuts the ribbons and makes the speeches.

Ms. Yingluck has on occasion sought to play down her brother's role. Soon after taking office, when Mr. Thaksin joined the weekly cabinet meeting via Skype, reporters asked who was really the head of the government. Ms. Yingluck insisted that she was in charge and said that Mr. Thaksin had joined the discussion to offer "moral support."

But if there is one thing that allies and enemies of Mr. Thaksin agree on, it is that he is the one making the big decisions.

"He's the one who formulates the Pheu Thai policies," said Noppadon Pattama, a senior party official who also serves as Mr. Thaksin's personal lawyer. "Almost all the policies put forward during the last election came from him."

Sondhi Limthongkul, a leader of the "yellow shirt" movement that has taken to the streets many times to



JUMANA EL-HILOO/REUTERS

Thaksin Shinawatra, the exiled Thai leader, checking one of his cellphones in Dubai.

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Image: [The New York Times openly admits](#) that Thailand is currently run by unelected convicted criminal/fugitive Thaksin Shinawatra. Clearly any proxy government or elections in which it participates in are illegitimate by both Thai and international standards. [Thaksin's foreign ties](#) are what have afforded him impunity regarding an otherwise cartoonish, 3rd world dictatorship.

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There is no question that an accused mass murderer and convicted criminal hiding abroad from a 2 year jail sentence, multiple arrest warrants, and a long list of pending court cases, is illegally running Thailand by proxy. Being unelected, Thaksin Shinawatra is by all accounts a dictator, and his "government" a regime, [however cleverly they try to dress it up](#).

In this context, protesters blocking "elections" seeking to reinstall this illegitimate regime run openly by a convicted criminal wouldn't seem so unreasonable, perhaps justified - which is precisely why the BBC intentionally omits this fact.

And while regime supporters attempting to cast ballots during Sunday's advance voting was cited as an indication that the "majority" wants to vote, several facts should be kept in mind. Despite a larger number of eligible voters this year compared to 2011, those

registering for advance voting has actually declined ([2.6 million in 2011](#) vs. [2.1 million in 2014](#)). And even in 2011's elections, the final tally conducted in 2011 by [Thailand's Election Commission](#) showed that Thaksin Shinawatra's proxy political party received 15.7 million votes out of the [estimated 32.5 million voter turnout](#) (turnout of approx. 74% - voting is compulsory in Thailand). This gave Thaksin's proxy party a mere 48% of those who cast their votes on July 3rd (not even half), and out of all eligible voters, only a 35% mandate to actually "lead" the country.

## **Desperate Dictatorship & Western Backers Can Only Delay the Inevitable**

It is difficult to understand how there are people still claiming terrorism, assassination, plus draconian emergency decrees, plus nepotist criminal party leaders running in one-party elections, all somehow equal "democracy." It is much easier to see how they all add up to a dictatorship desperately trying to disguise itself as "democratic." With such brazen, dangerous, and quite deadly criminality infecting the highest levels of governmental power in Thailand, it is no wonder [unprecedented protests have taken to the streets](#), and will continue to do so until Thaksin Shinawatra and his corrosive effect on the nation has been uprooted completely and permanently.

Whatever the outcome over the next few weeks and months, resistance and awareness will only grow. If Thaksin manages to cling to power this time, he will only be all the weaker the next time around. The disadvantage of being deceitful and exploitative, is that eventually people will uncover the truth. Once these people wake up, they will not go back to sleep. Those with the truth on their side, also have time on their side - all they need is the patience to use it to their advantage.

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