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## **State Enterprises Workers' Relations Confederation of Thailand (SERC)**

# **Protect Thailand Labour and Human Rights Defender Andy Hall**

**For more information on this statement, please contact Mr. Savit Kaewvarn (General Secretary, SERC) on +66 863 361110 (Thai language only)**

The State Enterprise Workers' Relations Confederation of Thailand (SERC) is an employee's confederation combining 45 state enterprise and private sector labour unions with a total membership of over 200,000 employees. SERC prioritises worker and human rights protection and promotion in both national and international arenas. The situation regarding violations against worker and human rights in Thailand continues increasingly to be in danger, with every day seeing more negative developments, deterioration and new forms of violations. Thai union leaders and Thai unions, alongside huge numbers of migrant workers, are living and working in Thailand together, led by SERC, and are struggling to cope with all these kinds of violations.

Recently, the prosecution against worker rights defender Mr. Andy Hall arose. Andy has for almost a decade campaigned genuinely and tirelessly for migrant workers in Thailand and actively worked with SERC as our voluntary international advisor. Since SERC has worked with Andy, we found out that he is very effective in his work and he is also always committed to following up every situation regarding violation against migrant workers that is brought to his attention, as well as cooperating with every stakeholder inside the country and overseas who is willing to cooperate with him. In many situations over the years, Andy has been forced to publically disclose violation cases where employers of migrant workers, both Myanmar, Cambodian and Laotian, violated the law and human and labour rights of workers. Those disclosures have increasingly frustrated some employers, government officials and politicians.

However, the campaigns for migrant worker rights led by Andy Hall are always straightforward. He has always aimed to campaign without any intention of destroying or punishing anyone. The objective of his work is solely to protect worker and migrant rights so as to promote the treatment of these workers in accordance with international standards. Indeed, Andy's work has benefitted every stakeholder involved including governments, employers, factories and particularly migrant workers themselves. Andy Hall has worked tirelessly with SERC and the Migrant Worker Rights Network (MWRN), the latter which he assisted in forming and empowering, in campaigning on violations against worker rights in many factories. Indeed, many factories which Andy has engaged have been much cooperative to improve rights violation situations.

His tireless work to stop systematic exploitation against migrant workers in Thailand has now obstructed the unlawful activities of Natural Fruit Company Ltd., a company producing and exporting fruit juice and canned fruit, part of the larger NatGroup. Andy has been prosecuted in criminal cases of defamation and under Thailand's Computer Crimes Act by Natural Fruit. Moreover, he is also facing prosecution in a civil case for 300 million baht damages. The prosecution cites harm caused by the public dissemination of his research for Finnwatch, a Finnish organization working for consumer protection. Finnwatch researched three factories in Thailand that produce goods and exports to Finland. In accordance with rules and regulations, the factories concerned must respect worker rights, legally hire employees as well as providing safety and occupational working conditions for all workers, migrant or otherwise.

SERC are very concerned with the prosecution of Andy Hall. This case will and has already created a negative impact on Natural Fruit Company Ltd and will also affect Thailand's exports to Europe and to other regions around the world. Even worse, this prosecution could potentially destroy Thailand's reputation even further as increasing violations against worker rights and human trafficking in Thailand are already being watched closely by the international community.

As an affiliate of International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), SERC has already submitted the letter to ITUC in requesting the assistance from ITUC to help Mr.Hall. And SERC will support and attempt to always protect Andy Hall and will campaign on worker rights and human rights for both Thai and migrant workers on a domestic and international level with the following demands:

1. The management of Natural Fruit Company Ltd. should drop their prosecutions against Andy Hall and change the company's direction to develop worker rights mechanisms.
2. The Thai Government should urgently act to resolve this case.
3. Domestic and international unions, NGOs, human rights advocates and media should cooperate in Thailand and overseas to campaign and protect all human and worker rights defenders in Thailand, including importantly at this time Andy Hall.

In Solidarity  
State Enterprise Workers' Relations Confederation of Thailand (SERC)  
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