



Press Statement by PDRC Spokesperson Akanat Promphan: 16 Feb. 2014

Farmers' movement reaches critical juncture this week

(16 Feb. 2014) In light of the onset of mass rice farmer protests commencing in Bangkok tomorrow, 17 February 2014, PDRC Spokesperson Akanat Promphan highlighted the date's coincidence with caretaker Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra's asserted restarting of rice payment disbursements. He noted that Yingluck, like her cabinet, was continuing to feed mistruths to rice farmers by playing up the event.

“The issue is not when some payments will start,” criticized Akanat. “Rather, the heart of the matter is when will *all* payments be *completely dispersed*. Our rice farmers are waiting for a complete answer on all payments - not a partial non-answer on incomplete payments. However, instead of telling farmers the truth, Pheu Thai spokesperson Prompong Nopparit has alleged they have been incited to demonstrate against the government when their demands are sincerely borne out of frustration with Yingluck. How can he insult the farmers like this when at least 9 have committed suicide due to Yingluck's failures? And without a single apology from the government?”

Since it would be impossible to pay all farmers tomorrow, the next time Yingluck announced rice payments Akanat challenged her to indicate: (1) the date when 100% of the rice payments would be completed; and (2) the exact method of disbursement.

Observing that the farmers' movement would reach a critical juncture this coming week, Akanat reiterated the PDRC's readiness to act as a platform to ensure that the farmers' demands for payment and justice were heard. “We stand ready to shield the farmers, to ensure they are able to safely demand the money Yingluck owes them. To this end the PDRC will be intensifying the pressure on the caretaker prime minister and individual cabinet members to show responsibility for the calamities they have caused in Thailand and continue to amass.”
