

Child and Youth-led UPR Report
Joint Submission to the 53rd session of the UPR Working Group,
2-13 November 2026
(5619 words)

Methodology: the group of children and youth developed the report through the following

1) Workshop 1: From 30 to 31 August 2025, the group of children and youth participated in a first workshop to support their activities as child human rights defenders (HRDs). In the workshop, they learned about the UPR and how to undertake data collection (Workshop 1). During the workshop, they identified the main human rights issues that are of concern to children, when acting as HRDs.

2) Data collection: During the workshop 1, children developed a survey to collect data from peers on the four issues of concern. The survey was launched from 15 December 2025 to 8 February 2026, collecting a total of **89 responses**, of which **63 were completed** by respondents who provided informed consent to participate, comprising **51 child activists under 18 years of age** and **12 parents or caregivers** of child activists. The remaining 26 entries reflect incomplete sessions where respondents did not proceed past the consent screen. Respondents ranged in age from **13 to 17 years** and represented a diversity of backgrounds and identities, including: **12 indigenous or ethnic minority youth, 14 LGBTQIA+ youth, 4 migrants or refugees, 15 children from low-income households, and 9 children from rural or remote areas**. Respondents were reached through youth community groups (28), child and youth council networks (24), child activist and human rights defender groups (19), schools and clubs (18), and peer networks (15).

3) Workshop 2: From 21 to 22 February 2026, a second workshop was organized to collectively analyse the survey findings and develop the content of this UPR submission (Workshop 2). The workshop brought together **29 child and youth participants**, of whom 11 had also attended Workshop 1.

4) Final review and validation: A taskforce of child and youth volunteers met on 3 April 2026 to review and validate the final draft of the report.

Introduction

This child and youth-led submission presents the lived experiences of children and youth HRDs in Thailand and outlines systemic barriers to the enjoyment of their rights. Drawing on primary data and consultations, it identifies cross-cutting challenges from the perspective of child and youth HRDs across five key areas: freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association; the right to participation of children and youth; equality and non-discrimination; protection of children and youth from violence and bullying in schools; and the right to nationality and legal identity.

1. Freedom of Expression, Peaceful Assembly and Association

Situation and Concerns

Based on primary data collected through the survey, 52% of respondents stated that expressing opinions or advocating rights is difficult. 61% reported encountering barriers to both assembly and association, and 45% had been prevented by adults from expressing

opinions on social or political issues. Among those who reported being obstructed, 93% felt that speaking out was difficult or that no one listened, 67% were prohibited from participating in public activities, and 60% indicated that such restrictions stemmed from adults' concerns about potential consequences for their families or educational institutions.

The data also revealed significant intra-group disparities among children. LGBTQIA+ respondents comprised 22% of survey participants, indigenous peoples 19%, and children from remote areas 14%. These groups reported facing barriers to expression.

Child and youth HRDs articulated three clear priorities for State action, . most notably, 69% called for the enactment or strengthening of legislative frameworks to specifically protect CHRDs. 66% called for the integration of human rights education into formal school curricula. Additionally, 59% called for the institutionalization of safe spaces and sustained financial support for civil society organizations working on child and youth human rights defender protection.

From this data, children and youth HRDs collectively identified the following key structural root causes;

1. **Overbroad laws and disproportionate penalties producing a chilling effect on** Children's and youths' rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, association, and civic participation continue to be restricted in law and practice. Relevant legislation includes Sections 112 (lèse-majesté) and 116 (sedition) of the Criminal Code, the Public Assembly Act, the Computer Crimes Act, and security laws enforced in the southern border provinces, including the Martial Law Act, the Emergency Decree, and the Internal Security Act.

This legal framework is reflected in practice. For example, the Melayu Raya 2022 gathering (4 May 2022, Pattani Province), a peaceful cultural event with child and youth participants, illustrates this pattern: nine organisers and participants were subsequently prosecuted under Section 116, criminal association, and conspiracy charges, reflecting the criminalisation of legitimate cultural expression as an alleged national security threat.

Apart from these restrictive laws, the Child Protection Act, intended to protect children, has been used to exclude them from public assemblies by framing participation as "at-risk" behaviour. In practice, such measures cause harm and lead to self-censorship among children and youth.¹

2. **Cultural norms that subordinate children to adult authority, structurally** exclude children from meaningful participation in public and civic life. These norms are not merely attitudinal but are structurally embedded across core social institutions, including the family, educational establishments, and political structures. Child and youth HRDs have described being told, when expressing political opinions: *"Adults scold us and ask why we're getting involved. Politics is not for children. Many adults don't understand the issues. We speak but aren't heard. Our ideas are rejected."*²
3. **The absence of safe spaces for student expression within educational institutions.** Many schools actively suppress student expression to avoid reputational

¹ Amnesty International Thailand and Child Rights Connect. *Report of the UPR Consultation Workshop on Child and Youth HRDs: Empowering Child HRDs in Thailand Project*. Bangkok, February 2026, p. 10-11.

² Amnesty International Thailand and Child Rights Connect. *UPR Consultation Workshop Report*, p. 9.

consequences, leaving educational environments without conditions conducive to free expression or political participation of students.

4. **Insufficient child rights awareness among law enforcement officials, compounded by the absence of effective oversight and accountability mechanisms.** Many police and military personnel have received no training on children's rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association; among those who have, implementation remains inconsistent. In the absence of enforceable sanctions and independent oversight, children exercising their rights face officials uninformed of child rights standards, disproportionate legal penalties, and justice processes that fail to uphold the best interests of the child including arrests and prosecutions inconsistent with the principle of deprivation of liberty as a last resort and the requirement to protect children's dignity. This is illustrated by the case of a 17-year-old detained by approximately 11 vehicles of security forces at his home in Narathiwat Province on 17 February 2026, shortly after returning from school, on alleged connection to a bomb attack.

Legal and Policy Framework

- **Criminal Code, Section 112**, which provides that any person who defames, insults, or threatens the King, Queen, Heir-Apparent, or Regent faces imprisonment of 3 -15 years per count, with no special exemptions or mitigating provisions for child offenders.
- **Criminal Code, Section 116** on the offence of sedition, carrying a maximum sentence of 7 years' imprisonment, uses broad and vague language such as "to cause unrest or disaffection among the people" which permits arbitrary interpretation by officials.
- **Computer Crimes Act B.E. 2560 (2017), Section 14** imposes criminal penalties for disseminating online content that may affect national security.
- **Public Assembly Act B.E. 2558 (2015)** contains no specific provisions recognising children's right to peaceful assembly.
- **Emergency Decree on Public Administration in Emergency Situations B.E. 2548 (2005)** grants officials broad powers to control and disperse assemblies without adequate oversight and contains no provisions specifically recognising or protecting children's rights during states of emergency.
- **Internal Security Act B.E. 2551 (2008) and the Martial Law Act B.E. 2457 (1914)** grant security forces powers to detain individuals and restrict rights without ordinary judicial process, which in practice leaves children and youth particularly the southern border provinces, without adequate protection.
- **Child Protection Act B.E. 2546 (2003)**, lacks explicit safeguards to ensure children's rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, creating scope for restrictive interpretation in practice.

Recommendations

1. The state must review, amend, or repeal laws that restrict freedom of expression and peaceful assembly and association within 2 years, and ensure that children, youth, and the public are not prosecuted or restricted for exercising these rights, including in online spaces.
2. The state must review, amend, or repeal special security laws; namely Martial Law, the Emergency Decree, and the Internal Security Act within 3 years, to ensure conformity with its international human rights obligations.

3. The state must enact legislation to protect HRDs, particularly children and youth, as soon as possible, with sanctions for harassment, intimidation, and reprisals.
4. Ministry of Education must mandate human rights education, with particular emphasis on freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association, as a compulsory subject at all education levels within 2 years.
5. The state must ensure that relevant authorities including security agencies and law enforcement officials at all levels receive mandatory and recurring human rights training on children's rights, to freedom of assembly and association, subject to annual performance evaluations as an accountability mechanism.
6. The state must establish safe spaces for dialogue to contribute to decision-making and public affairs between relevant authorities and children and youth at least annually, with public reporting on outcomes.

2. The Right to Participation of Children and Youth

Situation and Concerns

Based on primary data collected through the survey, 62.5% of respondents reported that they had very little or almost no opportunity to participate in decisions affecting their own lives. Meanwhile, 60% indicated that adults "sometimes listen," but do not take any action based on those views, and only 30% felt that their opinions genuinely influenced decision-making processes.

The level of participation decreases significantly as governance moves further away from children's immediate environments. While 82% of respondents reported participation at the school level, this drops 44% at the community level and 26% at the district or provincial level. This sharp decline suggests that structural barriers intensify at higher levels of decision-making, where policies with the greatest impact on children's rights are determined.

Although 83% of respondents stated that all children have equal opportunities to participate, 63% simultaneously acknowledged that, in practice, these opportunities remain insufficient. This contradiction points to the prevalence of tokenistic or symbolic forms of participation that children perceive and accept as equality, despite lacking meaningful engagement. One child reflected this dynamic candidly: "In school, the decision-makers are usually not students, but teachers and adults."

When asked what is needed to enable meaningful participation, 88% of respondents called for accessible and equitable participation channels, 73% wanted to be able to express their views on issues directly affecting their lives, and 52% emphasized the need for safe spaces for free expression.

From this data, children and youth HRDs identified the following key structural root causes;

1. **The existing legal and policy frameworks are insufficient to guarantee children's right to participate in practice.** Participants express concerns that the legal framework fails to adequately ensure this right. The right is not incorporated into the basic curriculum and is not widely known, leaving children and youth without awareness of the rights they are entitled to exercise in decision-making processes affecting their lives.
2. **Participation mechanisms remain under adult control.** Children's views are collected but not followed up or implemented in any meaningful way. Survey results indicate that

spaces for participation remain concentrated at the school level and diminish markedly at the broader societal level. Even in forums where children participate directly, their voices are frequently overlooked and not acted upon. For example, the Children and Youth Council of Thailand at both national and local levels, whose activities remain largely determined by adults and government agencies.

3. **Social values treating children as lacking decision-making capacity are deeply embedded in institutional systems and culture.** These values are reflected both in adult attitudes that do not open space for or give weight to children's views, and in the limited capacity of civil servants working in child and youth-related fields, who lack understanding and skills to facilitate genuinely meaningful participation
4. **Children in vulnerable situations are systematically excluded from participation mechanisms** including indigenous, ethnic minority children, stateless children, and children in remote areas remain excluded from existing participation mechanisms due to language barriers, legal status, and access to information. The voices of those most affected are thus absent from policy processes. As a result, children do not believe they can affect genuine change. There is a risk of reluctance to speak out on social issues, and children's right to participation continues to be violated in practice without remedy.³

Legal and Policy Framework

- The National Child and Youth Development Promotion Act B.E. 2550 (2007) has established more than 8,778 child and youth councils nationwide and mandates the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security to convene assemblies under Section 19(10). However, the scope of activities remains largely limited to volunteerism and cultural initiatives, without granting genuine decision-making power in policy processes.
- The Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand B.E. 2560, under Section 71, provides for the protection and assistance of children and youth, but does not explicitly recognize their right to participation.
- The Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551 (2008) and the Learning Standards and Indicators (Revised Edition B.E. 2560 (2017)) incorporate elements of children's right; however, children and youth have expressed concerns regarding the effective integration and practical application of this content in teaching and learning processes.

Recommendations

1. The state should adopt legislation or establish a policy framework and institutional mechanisms, within two years, to ensure the meaningful participation of children and youth in policymaking processes affecting them, and mandate all relevant government agencies at all levels to establish or strengthen child and youth participation mechanisms.
2. The Ministry of Education should provide training teachers and educational personnel on children's rights, particularly the right to meaningful participation supported by annual evaluation and monitoring, to ensure effective implementation.

³ Amnesty International Thailand and Child Rights Connect. *Report of the UPR Consultation Workshop on Child and Youth HRDS: Empowering Child HRDS in Thailand Project*. Bangkok, February 2026, p. 10. issues 2

3. Ministry of Education should establish institutional mechanisms within the education system to enable children and youth to participate in the development and revision of curricula, with at least 30% representation of children and youth.
4. The Ministry of Social Development and Human Security should adopt measures to support the operational and policy independence of child and youth organizations, and ensure annual public reporting on the integration of children's views in policy decisions.
5. Ministry of Education should require all educational institutions to establish student consultation processes and ensure safe spaces for dialogue between adults and children and youth, with clear feedback-tracking mechanisms and public reporting at least annually.
6. The State should adopt legislation or policy frameworks ensuring the systematic application of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) in all policies and development projects affecting indigenous and ethnic communities, with FPIC processes designed and implemented to guarantee the accessible, inclusive, and meaningful participation of children and youth, taking into account ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity.

3. Equality and Non-Discrimination

Situation and Concerns

Primary data collected through the survey reveals a pervasive pattern of discrimination experienced by children and young people in Thailand. 77% of respondents reported that they or someone they knew had experienced discrimination, with 69% indicating that such incidents occurred frequently.

The most prevalent forms of discrimination documented include mockery and the use of humiliating language, 76%; exclusion from peer groups, 58%; concealment of identity out of fear of censure, 48%; adults and teachers refusing to listen or using inappropriate language, 33%; and denial of equal opportunities to express oneself or participate in activities, 30%.

The survey further reveals a significant crisis of confidence in State mechanisms for child rights protection. When asked to rank actors most likely to provide support, children identified teachers, peers, and parents as the most trusted while 32.35% of respondents ranked State and government agencies last, reflecting a profound lack of trust in formal protection systems.

The data also highlights the heightened vulnerability of children facing intersecting discrimination, including children from low-income families (24%), LGBTQIA+ children (22%), and indigenous and ethnic minority children (19%).

Children and young people have articulated clear demands for State action: 78% called for comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation; 61% for safe spaces to speak and be heard; 58% for child-friendly complaints mechanisms and for State respect of cultural diversity, including that of indigenous peoples; 56% for education promoting respect for difference and campaigns against bullying; and 44% for legislative amendments genuinely recognizing indigenous peoples' rights.

From this data, children and youth HRDs collectively identified the following key structural root causes:

1. **The state lacks a comprehensive anti-discrimination law covering all groups.**
Thailand does not yet have a single anti-discrimination law that protects all groups,

despite the Gender Equality Act being in force. However, child and youth HRDs have identified that discriminatory laws and policies remain in place.⁴

2. **Accessible and child-friendly complaint mechanisms remain unavailable to children and youth whose rights have been violated.** Child and youth HRDs reflected that even when subjected to discrimination, they chose to remain silent or *"accept discrimination out of fear of losing friends,"*⁵ because *"in school, teachers are the ones in charge; if teachers themselves do not understand, do not listen, or treat students unequally, other students can also view us negatively."* This silence does not arise from consent but reflects the absence of institutional mechanisms that children can genuinely access. This problem is further compounded within the justice process, particularly in the southern border provinces where three special security laws are simultaneously enforced. There is no complaint mechanism through which child and youth HRDs can seek when their rights are violated through racial discrimination.
3. **Human rights, diversity, and cultural sensitivity are not integrated into the national education curriculum.** Participants noted that the education system does not sufficiently teach human rights, diversity, acceptance, and difference, which means that bias and discrimination in schools remain unaddressed at the structural level.⁶
4. **Deeply entrenched social prejudices based on ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender identity, and nationality continue to stigmatize children and youth from diverse backgrounds.** These prejudices are not isolated but are reproduced and amplified through mainstream institutions including media, which frequently portrays communities from the southern border provinces, indigenous peoples, and other ethnic groups without adequate cultural understanding, further entrenching stigma in broader society. They are similarly transmitted through the education system, including school policies such as dress codes that fail to accommodate diverse identities, leaving children and youth with non-mainstream identities vulnerable to ridicule, self-censorship, psychological harm, and difficulties in daily life.⁷
5. **Teachers lack adequate training on diversity and equal treatment, undermining children's safety and learning environments.** Participants observed that *"some teachers and adults in schools do not listen,"*⁸ reflecting a broader pattern in which teachers shape school norms and unequal treatment by teachers influences how students regard one another. Participants also raised concern that *"sometimes teachers themselves become the ones who bully children."*⁹ These observations indicate systemic gaps in preparing teachers to uphold children's rights and treat all students equally.
6. **The languages and cultures of indigenous peoples and ethnic groups remain unsupported within the mainstream education system.** Despite Thailand's significant linguistic diversity encompassing four regional dialects and the languages

⁴ Amnesty International Thailand and Child Rights Connect. *UPR Consultation Workshop Report*, p. 10. Issues 4.

⁵ Amnesty International Thailand and Child Rights Connect. *UPR Consultation Workshop Report*, p. 8.

⁶ Amnesty International Thailand and Child Rights Connect. *UPR Consultation Workshop Report*, p. 10. Issues 4.

⁷ Amnesty International Thailand and Child Rights Connect. *UPR Consultation Workshop Report*, p. 10. Issues 4.

⁸ Amnesty International Thailand and Child Rights Connect. *UPR Consultation Workshop Report*, p. 8. Issues 4.

⁹ Amnesty International Thailand and Child Rights Connect. *UPR Consultation Workshop Report*, p. 6. Issues 1.

of numerous indigenous and ethnic groups. Central Thai continues to be imposed as the sole language of instruction nationwide, directly undermining children's rights to cultural identity and dignity.

Legal and Policy Framework

- **Section 27 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand** guarantees equality and prohibits unjust discrimination.
- **The Gender Equality Act B.E. 2558 (2015)** protects against discrimination because of gender expression; however, Section 17(2) still provides an exception to protection in cases invoking religious principles or national security.
- **The Child Protection Act B.E. 2546 (2003), Section 22**, prohibits unjust discrimination against children.
- **The Protection and Promotion of Ethnic Groups Act**, while representing Thailand's first legislative framework for the rights and cultural heritage of indigenous peoples and ethnic groups, defines "ethnic group" in Section 3 as "ethnic Thais" rather than indigenous peoples,

Recommendations

1. The state should expedite the enactment of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation covering all grounds, including ethnicity, religion, gender, socioeconomic status, and nationality, and revise existing laws and policies to ensure conformity with international human rights standards.
2. The state must repeal special security laws applied in the southern border provinces and other areas that give rise to discrimination and unnecessarily or disproportionately restrict rights and freedoms.
3. The state must establish accessible, transparent, and child-friendly complaint mechanisms for all forms of discrimination against children, staffed by specialists in child rights at every stage of the intake and adjudication process.
4. The State should integrate into the compulsory education curriculum mandatory content promoting respect for human dignity, equality, and non-discrimination across all grounds of diversity, including race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, culture and appearance.
5. The state must ensure that teachers and educational personnel receive human rights training, with particular emphasis on the prevention and redress of discrimination, subject to annual monitoring and evaluation.
6. The State should implement proactive public awareness measures through mainstream and social media to promote understanding of gender diversity and non-discrimination, and to counter stigmatization and hate speech.

4. Protection of Children and Youth from Violence and Bullying in Schools

Situation and Concerns

Primary survey data reveals significant concerns regarding safety and violence in educational settings., 54% of respondents reported feeling unsafe at school on some occasions, 46% had directly experienced bullying or violence, 21% were uncertain whether they had experienced

bullying or violence, and 28% perceived bullying as "normal" , reflecting a broader failure of duty-bearers to establish a culture of respect and non-violence in schools. Adults in positions of trust and authority were implicated in nearly half of all reported cases: 47% of affected children identified both children and adults as perpetrators, while 5% identified teachers or adults as sole perpetrators.

The most frequently reported causes of bullying, in descending order, were physical appearance and dress, 54%; family socioeconomic status, 34%; LGBTQ+ identity and unclear pronunciation of the Thai language, 20% each; gender expression and religion, 15%; and ethnicity or Indigenous identity, as well as statelessness, 12%.

Children's priority measures for schools included access to trained counsellors or mental health professionals, 74%; anonymous reporting channels with follow-up mechanisms, 59%; improvement of high-risk areas within school premises, including toilets and secluded corners characterized by limited adult supervision or restricted visibility, 57%; clear procedures for addressing perpetrators and providing remedies to victims, 54%; and, equally at 52%, child rights education and cyberbullying prevention programmes, and an end to all forms of violence by teachers and students alike. Respondents additionally proposed shifting adult attitudes that dismiss bullying as age-appropriate play, noting that genuine play should not cause pain or distress to a person.

From this data, child and youth HRDs collectively identified the following key structural causes:

1. **School mechanisms for reporting grievances are not independent, and** teachers and parents frequently neglect reports of violence against children, causing schools to fail as safe spaces for children. Participants shared direct experiences: *"I was bullied continuously, but when I told the teacher, they said we were just playing."* Internal school reporting mechanisms are not independent and confidential of school administration, leaving child victims without safe channels for complaints. Although many schools have established such mechanisms, children expressed concern that information shared with school personnel could be disclosed to parents without consent, creating further safety risks. This demonstrates that legislative reform alone is insufficient.

Apart from physical violence, increasing severity of cyberbullying has further exposed systemic gaps. Thailand lacks specific legislation on bullying prevention in educational settings and cyberbullying that provides clear definitions, proactive preventive measures, and school accountability mechanisms.

The State has taken steps to advance a draft amendment to the Penal Code establishing a clear definition of cyberbullying as a criminal offence; however, this amendment remained under executive and legislative consideration.

2. **Teachers and parents lack sufficient knowledge of children's rights and their** protection obligations, contributing directly to the normalisation of bullying among both school personnel and children themselves. This gap is further compounded by the absence of systematic training on bullying and cyberbullying awareness for teachers and students.¹⁰
3. **Most schools lack an adequate number of trained psychologists,** and where they exist, they are often inaccessible to all children, leaving bullied children without meaningful psychosocial support and, in serious cases, at risk of depression or self-

¹⁰ Amnesty International Thailand and Child Rights Connect. *UPR Consultation Workshop Report*, p. 6. Issues 1.

harm. Participants raised concerns that information disclosed to school psychologists may not remain confidential and may be shared with parents without informed consent, which in some cases may generate additional safety risks for the child.¹¹

Legal and Policy Framework

- **The Child Protection Act B.E. 2546 (2003), Section 24** requires provincial governors, district chiefs, and deputy district chiefs to protect the welfare of children within their areas of responsibility. The Act prohibits physical, sexual, and psychological abuse and abandonment and neglect, and prescribes both administrative and criminal penalties for violations.
- **The Ministry of Education Regulation on Discipline of Students B.E. 2548 (2005), Article 6** prohibits punishment of students through violent, bullying, or vindictive means, with regard to the student's age and the severity of the conduct. However, the Regulation lacks clear enforcement mechanisms, resulting in the continued use of physical punishment in schools in practice.¹²
- **The Act Amending the Civil and Commercial Code (No. 25) B.E. 2568 (2025)** Section 1567(2) grants holders of parental authority the right to discipline their children for correction or behavioural adjustment, provided such discipline does not constitute abuse or violent physical or psychological harm, or wrongful conduct.
- **The National Child Protection Action Plan B.E. 2566–2570 (2023–2027)** establishes strategies on family support, counselling, parent network formation, positive parenting promotion, and linking families to mental health support programmes and resources.¹³

Recommendations

1. The State should, within two years, establish school- and community-level mechanisms to monitor the effective enforcement of laws prohibiting corporal punishment and all forms of violence against children in all settings, and require all educational institutions and community bodies to maintain clear, accessible procedures for receiving complaints, issuing warnings, and applying proportionate sanctions in all instances of violation, bullying, or violence against children.
2. The State should establish a systematic mechanism for collecting and publicly reporting data on violence against children in educational settings, disaggregated by type, sex, and age group, on an annual basis, alongside measurable targets for reducing incidents of violence in schools with annual public reporting on progress.
3. The Ministry of Education should immediately establish integrated school-level and central mechanisms for the prevention of protection from violence against children in educational institutions.
4. All educational institutions under all jurisdictions must be mandated and supported to maintain an adequate number of psychologists or mental health professionals.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ministry of Education. (2005). *Ministerial Regulation on the Punishment of Students and Pupils B.E. 2548*. Accessed 22 March 2026.

¹³ End Corporal Punishment. (2025, March 31). Thailand prohibits all corporal punishment of children. Accessed 22 March 2026. <https://endcorporalpunishment.org/thailandprohibitscorporalpunishment>

5. The state must promote children's bodily autonomy and effectively implement preventive and corrective measures to address bullying in both family and educational settings within 3 years.
6. The state must expedite the review and enactment of legislation specifically addressing bullying in educational institutions and cyberbullying, including clear definitions, proactive prevention measures, and school accountability mechanisms.

5. Right to Nationality and Legal Identity

Situation and Concerns

Survey results indicate that 22% of respondents were uncertain of their own documentation status, suggesting a "hidden population", people not counted by the system and who do not themselves know their status. 57% perceived that many children need nationality, reflecting widespread community recognition that statelessness extends well beyond individual cases.

The most severe impacts on the rights of stateless children were in access to healthcare, with 81% facing barriers; 70% unable to continue education or apply for employment; 70% facing restrictions on travelling between districts or provinces; 68% denied access to education; 65% reporting daily safety concerns; 61% not receiving State welfare and financial assistance; and 32% experiencing discrimination in schools or communities due to absence of identity documents.

65% of respondents called for a simplified and expedited nationality application process; 65% for mobile service units to reach remote areas; 65% for expanded recognition of evidence in line with community realities; and 54% for information provided in accessible, locally understood languages.

From this data, child and youth HRDs collectively identified the following key structural root causes;

1. **Children and families frequently lack awareness of nationality, application processes and their rights.** Participants noted that "a lack of knowledge about nationality applications, both among individuals and officials, can lead to corruption by authorities"¹⁴ and that some children become "Stateless children holding a zero card" (persons with no registration status). because no one understands proper birth registration procedures. This reflects a structural challenge: children born without nationality face significant barriers to birth registration, perpetuating statelessness across generations. Communication barriers further compound this issue, as State authorities frequently use formal language and bureaucratic documentation that generates misunderstanding between the State and local communities.¹⁵
2. **State officials abuse their power for personal gain and engage in corrupt practices.** Children and youth reported that "*fear of powerful individuals and bribery in harassment and corruption prevents people from receiving legal protection.*"¹⁶ Despite the existence of laws, bribery undermines justice. Corruption at the local level was identified as a key factor causing delays in nationality processes, with some families having to pay bribes to have their documents considered.

¹⁴ Amnesty International Thailand and Child Rights Connect. *UPR Consultation Workshop Report*, p. 8. Issues 3.

¹⁵ Amnesty International Thailand and Child Rights Connect. *UPR Consultation Workshop Report*, p. 10. Issues 3.

¹⁶ Ibid.

3. **State officials and educational institutions discriminate against stateless children and youth in practice, despite the existence of protective policies.** Children and youth shared direct experiences of discrimination based on their legal status, stating that “*because we do not have nationality, we are often overlooked our opinions and rights are undervalued.*”¹⁷ Although the Ministry of Education has policies allowing children without nationality to access education, in practice, many still face barriers. For example, some reported being unable to enroll in certain programs despite existing policies and being told that nationality is required to access low-income scholarships, a requirement that does not exist in policy.¹⁸
4. **Nationality application processes are complex and burdensome, involving multiple agencies, difficult travel requirements, and officials lacking updated policy knowledge.** Travel restrictions further limit opportunities for youth development, leaving families waiting for years to resolve their status.¹⁹ Verification processes are not adapted to local contexts with respect to language, documentation types, and available evidence, and the absence of interpreters for ethnic languages further excludes indigenous and ethnic minority children from accessing these processes.

Legal and Policy Framework

- **The Nationality Act B.E. 2508 (1965)** and its 2008 amendments allow stateless individuals to apply for Thai nationality if they can provide proof of birth and residence. However, such evidence is often difficult to obtain, especially in rural communities and within complex bureaucratic systems. The process takes an average of 4.5 years.²⁰
- **The Civil Registration Act B.E. 2534 (1991)**, as amended up to No. 3 (2019), guarantees birth registration for all children in Thailand regardless of parental status. However, in practice, local officials often require additional documents from migrant families.

Recommendations

1. The state should review and strengthen existing legal mechanisms to establish criminal and administrative sanctions for corrupt officials, ensure the establishment of an independent oversight body to receive complaints from affected individuals, including children and youth, and require annual public transparency reporting, along with effective accountability mechanisms and disciplinary measures.
2. The state should improve procedures for acquiring nationality and legal status to ensure they are accessible, transparent, and subject to monitoring, including enabling children and families to participate in tracking and evaluating these processes.
3. The state should implement systematic awareness-raising activities on child rights and human rights for stateless persons, in collaboration with civil society organizations and educational institutions, to ensure that stateless individuals are informed of their rights and can effectively access nationality and legal status procedures.

¹⁷ Amnesty International Thailand and Child Rights Connect. *UPR Consultation Workshop Report*, p. 7. Issues 2.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Amnesty International Thailand and Child Rights Connect. *UPR Consultation Workshop Report*, p.

²⁰ Refworld/UNHCR. (n.d.). *Nationality Act, B.E. 2508 (as last amended by Nationality Act No. 4, B.E. 2551)*. Accessed 22 March 2026. <https://www.refworld.org/legal/legislation/natlegbod/1965/en/71855>

4. The state should provide systematic and continuous human rights training for officials working with stateless persons, ethnic groups, and indigenous communities, with a focus on non-discrimination, due process, and children's rights in accordance with international standards.
5. The state should strengthen and effectively implement existing legal and policy frameworks to protect stateless persons from harassment, intimidation, and arbitrary detention, including clear penalties for perpetrators, and establish safe, confidential, and child-sensitive complaint mechanisms to ensure that affected children and youth can access protection without fear.
6. The state should ensure that nationality application procedures and civil status documentation are available in languages used by ethnic and Indigenous communities at all stages, and guarantee the right to free interpretation services.

Endnotes

^[1] Amnesty International Thailand and Child Rights Connect. *Report of the UPR Consultation Workshop on Child and Youth HRDs: Empowering Child HRDs in Thailand Project*. Bangkok, February 2026, p. 10-11.

^[2] Amnesty International Thailand and Child Rights Connect. *UPR Consultation Workshop Report*, p. 9.

^[3] Amnesty International Thailand and Child Rights Connect. *Report of the UPR Consultation Workshop on Child and Youth HRDs: Empowering Child HRDs in Thailand Project*. Bangkok, February 2026, p. 10. issues 2

^[4] Amnesty International Thailand and Child Rights Connect. *UPR Consultation Workshop Report*, p. 10. Issues 4.

^[5] Amnesty International Thailand and Child Rights Connect. *UPR Consultation Workshop Report*, p. 8.

^[6] Amnesty International Thailand and Child Rights Connect. *UPR Consultation Workshop Report*, p. 10. Issues 4.

^[7] Amnesty International Thailand and Child Rights Connect. *UPR Consultation Workshop Report*, p. 10. Issues 4.

^[8] Amnesty International Thailand and Child Rights Connect. *UPR Consultation Workshop Report*, p. 8. Issues 4.

^[9] Amnesty International Thailand and Child Rights Connect. *UPR Consultation Workshop Report*, p. 6. Issues 1.

^[10] Amnesty International Thailand and Child Rights Connect. *UPR Consultation Workshop Report*, p. 6. Issues 1.

^[11] Ibid.

^[12] Ministry of Education. (2005). *Ministerial Regulation on the Punishment of Students and Pupils B.E. 2548*. Accessed 22 March 2026.

^[13] End Corporal Punishment. (2025, March 31). Thailand prohibits all corporal punishment of children. Accessed 22 March 2026.

<https://endcorporalpunishment.org/thailandprohibitscorporalpunishment>

^[14] Amnesty International Thailand and Child Rights Connect. *UPR Consultation Workshop Report*, p. 8. Issues 3.

^[15] Amnesty International Thailand and Child Rights Connect. *UPR Consultation Workshop Report*, p. 10. Issues 3.

^[16] Ibid.

^[17] Amnesty International Thailand and Child Rights Connect. *UPR Consultation Workshop Report*, p. 7. Issues 2.

^[18] Ibid.

^[19] Amnesty International Thailand and Child Rights Connect. *UPR Consultation Workshop Report*, p. 18.

^[20] Refworld/UNHCR. (n.d.). *Nationality Act, B.E. 2508 (as last amended by Nationality Act No. 4, B.E. 2551)*. Accessed 22 March 2026.

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