

**Statement on Thailand**  
**By H.E. Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, Secretary-General of ASEAN**  
**ASEAN Secretariat, 14 April 2009**

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I welcomed the end of the anti-government protest in Bangkok today. And I hoped and prayed for normalcy to return to Thailand quickly, so that the Thai people can celebrate Songkran peacefully this week in the tradition of family reunion, friendship, and forgiveness.

I am grateful to Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva of Thailand and the Thai Government for the safe evacuation of the Leaders of ASEAN Member States and their Dialogue Partners from Pattaya following the cancellation of the "Related Summits" on **11-12 April 2009**. Those affected Leaders, as well as their Ministers and senior officials, agreed with the decision. They also sympathized with Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva for trying to avoid violence and bloodshed at all costs.

I also would like to put on record my additional views as follows:

- What had happened in Pattaya and Bangkok will not erode the credibility and dignity of Thailand's chairmanship of ASEAN. On the contrary, the restrained government responses showed the integrity of the Thai Government in restoring law and order with admirable respect for life, safety, and constitutional rights of all.
- The cancellation in Pattaya was a serious setback to ASEAN, an irrevocable loss of great opportunity. But it will not weaken ASEAN. Neither will it discourage ASEAN.
- The other ASEAN Leaders and their Dialogue Partners were actually in Pattaya (except the Prime Minister of Australia who was on his way, and the Prime Minister of India who could not attend); they were there, ready to meet and cooperate, with us in ASEAN, even when many protesters were trying to block traffic and create commotion.
- The centrality of ASEAN has not been questioned. In fact, many ASEAN Leaders and their Dialogue Partners have expressed support for ASEAN to re-schedule the "Related Summits" as soon as possible.

I am now in Bali, preparing to attend the meeting of the Third Bali Regional Ministerial Conference. I will take advantage of the presence of several ASEAN Ministers and those of Dialogue Partners and their senior officials to begin a round of consultations on the next steps to regain momentum for ASEAN.

I am confident that Thailand as well as ASEAN will emerge from this chaos stronger and more determined to promote dialogue and cooperation. Dialogue and cooperation – not protest and violence – will enable us to build lasting peace, security and prosperity for all in individual countries as well as in our ASEAN Community.