



FRAUD, IRREGULARITIES AND DIRTY TRICKS

A REPORT ON THAILAND'S 2019 ELECTIONS



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In collaboration with CSI LA

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Pavin has authored several books, including: *A Plastic Nation: The Curse of Thainess in Thai-Burmese Relations*, *Reinventing Thailand: Thaksin and His Foreign Policy*, and, as editor, *'Good Coup' Gone Bad: Thailand's Political Developments after Thaksin's Downfall*. His forthcoming books include: *Coup, King, Crisis: Time of a Dangerous Interregnum in Thailand*, and, as editor, *Routledge Handbook on Contemporary Thailand*.

Pavin has long been an advocate for democracy and human rights. As an academic, he has raised several issues pertaining to the state of democracy in his home country, Thailand. He has also worked with international organisations to raise awareness of human rights protections and the promotion of democracy in Thailand and the Southeast Asian region.

ABOUT FORSEA

FORSEA – or Forces of Renewal for Southeast Asia – is an international not-for-profit organisation created by Southeast Asian democrats and rights campaigners committed to making the region more just, fair and democratic. The organisation is built on the ideal that close cooperation between pro-democracy forces in the region is needed to effectively combat dictatorship and restore democracy and human rights.

Find out more at <https://forsea.co/>

ABOUT CSI LA

CSI LA is a prominent anonymous Thai activist group known for exposing fraud and corruption in the Thai government. The group was notably responsible for publishing pictures in 2018 exposing the many luxury watches worn by Deputy Prime Minister Prawit Wongsuwon.

Find out more at <https://www.facebook.com/CSILA90210/>

- ❖ This report is largely based on information crowdsourced by CSI LA through a purpose-built online page, enabling Thai voters to report instances of fraud and other irregularities observed over a period of 10 days during and around the March 2019 election. During this period, CSI LA received thousands of reports from Thai citizens all over the country. These reports were thoroughly analysed and checked for authenticity and accuracy. Only the most verifiably accurate submissions are included in this report.
- ❖ Eight different types of voter and electoral fraud are identified in this report:
 1. Electoral Commission (EC) malfunctions, including:
 - Publication of incorrect information about party candidates on official documents;
 - Miscalculated ballots;
 - Setting up polling stations in unsuitable locations;
 - Failure to give ballots to overseas voters; and
 - Failure to deliver ballots from overseas back to Thailand in a timely manner.
 2. State influence in the voting process, including:
 - Tampering with the election posters of opposition parties;
 - Information Officers being instructed to apply pressure on voters to support parties with pro-junta agendas;
 - A letter by the Ministry of Interior inciting its staff to support parties with pro-junta agendas;
 - State officers forcing voters to attend political party functions, in particular those with pro-junta agendas;
 - State officers forcing members of the military to go vote, most likely for parties with pro-junta agendas; and
 - State officers attempting to interfere with voters whilst were casting their votes.
 3. Illegal/dubious activities, including:
 - Illegally setting up posters in front of polling stations;
 - Pro-junta parties continuing campaigning activities on the eve of elections;
 - The destruction of election posters belonging to opposition parties;
 - Evidence of suspicious funding for some political parties;
 - The falsification of donation receipts from members of several parties
 4. Improper ballot transportation, such as the use of private pick-ups and mini-trucks, instead of vehicles of the Post Office that are normally responsible for the transportation of ballots. Without a secure and official transportation of ballots boxes, it is impossible to guarantee that the votes they contain have not been tampered with.
 5. Ballot box irregularities, including ballot boxes found improperly secured, and broken ballot box locks found in trash piles. Tampering with ballot boxes allows ballot stuffing, where ballots for a particular candidate are “stuffed” into the ballot box to swing the result in a particular direction.

6. **Vote buying:** Vote buying remains a prominent type of electoral fraud in Thailand. CSI LA received more than 2,200 complaints with regards to vote buying committed by a myriad of political parties. The most common form of vote buying is evidently cash distribution—voters who are paid to vote for specific candidates.
 7. **Unchecked voter IDs:** The lack of voter ID verification allows for voter impersonation, which consists in using another person's identity documents without their consent to vote for a particular candidate. Most cases of unchecked voter IDs reported to CSI LA came from the centre of the country, where the junta came first in the polls
 8. **Fake and/or mistaken IDs, including:**
 - Identity theft, and notably the inclusion of deceased people on the electoral register;
 - Underage voters, below the age of 18 and therefore ineligible to vote, found their names on the list of eligible voters;
 - Multiple cases of mixed-up addresses and polling stations. Many voters did not find their name in their registered local polling station.
- ❖ The information presented in this report exposes the systemic fraud and other irregularities during the 2019 election, pointing to a coordinated and methodical effort to facilitate the victory of pro-junta political forces. These activities completed the efforts of the junta before and after the election to cripple the democratic opposition and maintain control of the country, which this report briefly covers. The election, from its announcement to today, has made a mockery of Thailand's democratic tradition.
- ❖ In light of the evidence shown in this report, the Thai people and the international community must reject the elections results and call for a real election. The junta sees the election as means to assert its legitimacy while maintain dictatorial control over the country. It is today more crucial than ever that the world does not grant any legitimacy to the military junta.

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Introduction

On March 24th, 2019, Thailand held its first general election since 2014. The election was supposed to be a historic opportunity for Thailand to restore democracy after five years of rule by a despotic military junta which had seized power by force. Old parties were joined by many new ones, all seeking to court the votes of millions of Thais, many of whom had never voted before. For the international community, the election was seen as a test of Thailand's future as a democracy. In 2018, the European Union notably decided to resume normal relations with Thailand's based on the junta's pledge to offer free and fair elections.

The election that took place, however, was anything but free and fair. Almost as soon as the junta started to communicate its willingness to stage new elections, it used every tool at its disposal to create an uneven playing field. In 2017, it created and implemented a new constitution which virtually guaranteed its ability to maintain control of the government regardless of the election results. It then postponed the election several times, banning all political activities until campaigning was finally allowed to begin, a few months before the March 2019 election date. Once campaigning had begun, the junta and the Electoral Commission took countless actions to stifle opposition parties and give their own candidates an unfair advantage. While this report touches briefly on some of the fraudulent activities during the campaign season, these unlawful actions are far too numerous to count in this report. They are, however, well documented elsewhere and have been covered extensively in the press.

This report, prepared by FORSEA in partnership with CSI LA, exposes numerous, documented instances of election fraud and other types of irregularities observed on and around the date of the elections. The information presented in this report, including all the images contained therein, was gathered from thousands of submissions by Thai citizens who witnessed and reported the fraud through online forms created by CSI LA using the online tool Typeform.

Citizens were asked to input information on the online form, including the province and election district where they witnessed the incident, to upload photographic evidence, and to fill in their contact details. The data was collected over a period of 10 days, from March 19th-29th. The data was then processed and checked by both CSI LA and FORSEA to ensure its authenticity and accuracy. See the Typeform page here:

https://csila90210gmailcom.typeform.com/to/PQ5svR?fbclid=IwAR1jntmW_OC2jioGHyhsu_tC6vKmrVL1No05_ijEP4B-cV6bol7eRVWtzAuQ. This report features screenshots of social media posts relating these irregularities on the CSI LA Facebook page.

Figure 1: Landing page of the online form used by CSI LA to collect evidence



เจ้าหน้าที่ไม่ตรวจบัตรคนมาใช้สิทธิโดย CSI LA

Start press ENTER

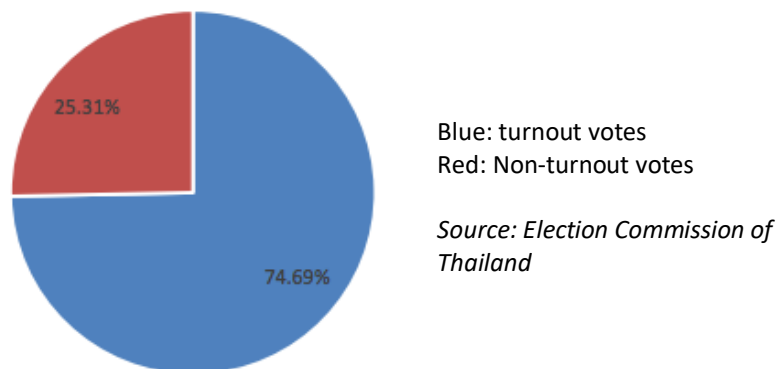
This report therefore offers a thus-far unprecedented insight into both the scale and nature of the widespread fraud that took place around the Thai elections. It proves beyond any doubt that the long-promised elections were rigged to ensure a victory of the pro-junta party and, therefore, preserve military dictatorship under a false veneer of democracy. This report, therefore, urges the people of Thailand and the international community not to accept the election results and resume their calls for real, democratic elections. It also recommends a solution to resolve the current political quagmire. However, the proposed solution will require both tireless support of the Thai public, and a persistent effort from the international community to apply pressure and call on the Electoral Commission and the Thai military government to urgently fix the problems that have arisen as a result of these elections.

I. Background on the Elections

On 24 March 2019, Thai voters took part in the first general election since the military coup of 2014, which overthrew the elected government of former Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra, whose brother, Thaksin, was also toppled in a coup in 2006. These elections were the first to take place in accordance with the new Constitution drafted by Committees that had been appointed by the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO), the governing body set up by the perpetrators of the 2014 coup. The new Constitution was officially launched in 2017.¹ 77 political parties entered the election contest, including three major parties: the Pheu Thai [For Thai] Party, the Palang Pracharat [People's State Power] Party, and the Democrat Party. Future Forward, an emerging political party spearheaded by a young billionaire, Thanathorn Juangroongruangkit, also entered the race.

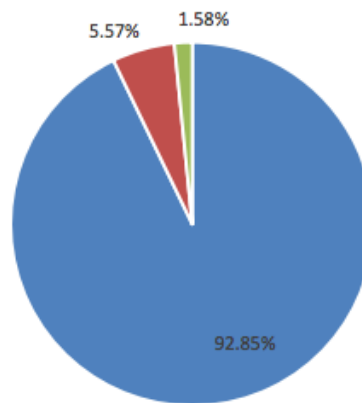
500 seats were due to be filled in the House of Representatives, with 201 seats needed for a majority. The total number of registered voters was 51,239,638, representing a significant proportion of the 69.04 million population. Of these, approximately 7 million were first-time voters. According to the statistics of the Election Commission (EC) registered on 28 March 2019, the voter turnout in the election stood at 74.69 percent, representing 38,268,375 people. Consequently, 12,971,263 people did not cast their vote, equating to 25.31 percent of the total number of eligible voters.² It is worth recalling that the last elections held in Thailand were in 2011, when Yingluck Shinawatra became the first female prime minister in the country's history.

Figure 2: Turnout Votes



The EC categorises the votes into various types of ballots. Out of a total of 38,268,366 ballots, 35,532,645 (92.85 percent) were labelled as "good ballots", 2,130,327 (5.57 percent) were labelled as "voided ballots", and 605,392 ballots (1.58 percent) were labelled as "blank". A vote labelled "blank" is not counted.

Figure 3: Categories of Ballots



Blue: Good ballots
Red: Voided ballots

Source: Election Commission of Thailand

The elections were organised according to a new mixed-member apportionment system, in which voters cast a single vote for both a constituency candidate and a nationwide party list – with the nationwide list used to achieve proportional representation. Under the new Constitution, the Prime Minister is not required to be an elected member of the House of Representatives and will instead be chosen by the Parliament. Additionally, the Parliament is now composed not only of the 500 Representatives, but also of 250 Senators, appointed by the junta. By contrast, in the 1997 constitution, dubbed “the people’s constitution”, 200 members of the Senate were directly elected to serve a 6-year term. Over the course of 20 years, the Senate has gradually become an instrument of the old establishment to overpower the House of Representatives.

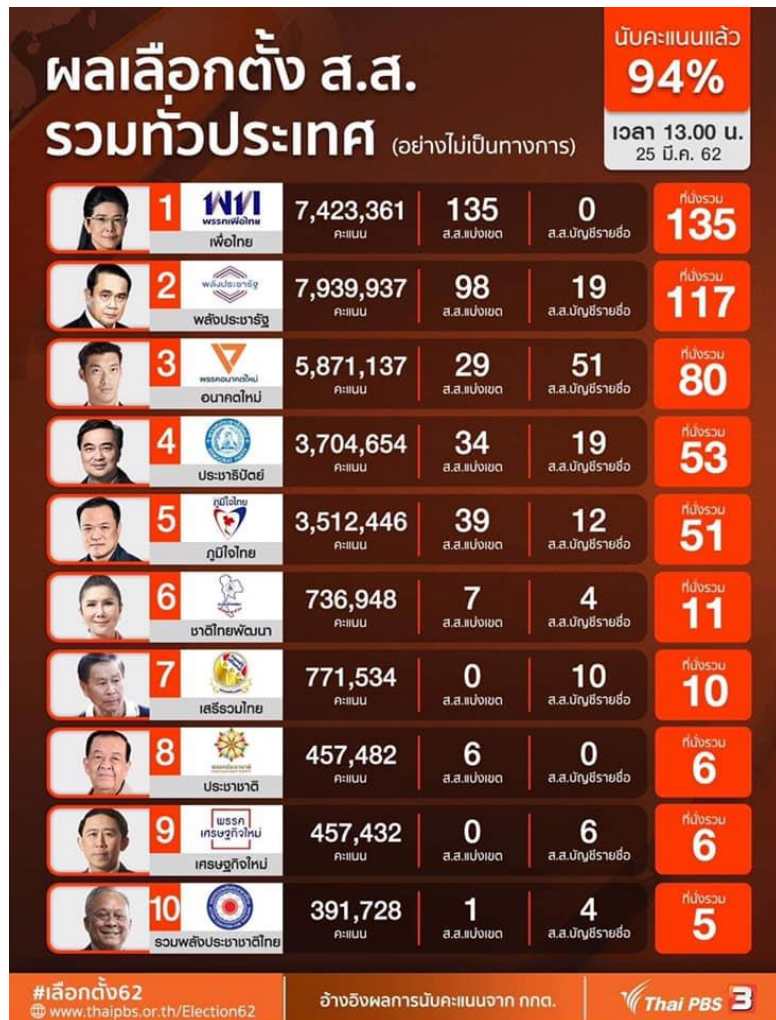
Recently, the Thai media reported that the selection of the Senators was completed. It reported that those selected have been linked to top leaders in the NCPO, including Prime Minister General Prayuth Chan-ocha, Deputy Prime Minister General Prawit Wonsuwan and Minister of Interior General Anupong Paochinda. Among expected names of the Senators are General Preecha Chan-ocha, brother of Prayuth, and Police General Patcharawat Wongsuwan, brother of Prawit and former police chief. This list brings together a large number of military men with intimate connections with the current military regime, suggesting the political ambition of the army in reserving its position in the political realm. Additional details can be found at: <https://www.posttoday.com/politic/report/582759>.

According to the Election Commission, Thailand is divided into six electoral regions: North, Northeast, East, Central (including Bangkok), West and South. Each region is composed of multiple provinces:

- The North has 14 provinces: Uttaradit, Sukhothai, Lampoon, Lampang, Maehongson, Petchaboon, Pichit, Pitsanulok, Prae, Payao, Nan, Chiangmai, Chiangrai and Kampaengpetch.
- The Northeast has 20 provinces: Amnatcharoen, Ubonratchatani, Udontani, Nongbualamphu, Nongkhai, Srisaket, Surin, Sakonnakorn, Loei, Roi-et, Yasothon, Mukdaharn, Mahasarakham, Buriram, Buengkan, Nakhonratchasima, Nakhonpanom, Chaiyaphum, Khonkaen and Kalasin.
- The Central region has 17 provinces: Bangkok, Uthaithani, Angthong, Saraburi, Suphanburi, Singhaburi, Samutsakhon, Samutsongkham, Samutprakarn, Lopburi, Ayutthaya, Pathumthani, Nakhonsawan, Nonthaburi, Nakhonprathom, Nakhonnayok and Chainat.
- The East has 7 provinces: Sakaew, Rayong, Prajeenburi, Trad, Chonburi, Chachoensao and Chanthaburi.
- The West has 5 provinces: Ratchaburi, Petchaburi, Prachuabkhirikhan, Tak and Kanchanaburi.
- The South has 14 provinces: Yala, Suratthani, Songkhla, Satun, Ranong, Phuket, Pattalung, Pangnga, Pattani, Narathiwat, Nakhonsrithammarat, Trang, Chumporn and Krabi.

After the elections, preliminary results showed that the Palang Pracharat Party won the greatest number of votes with 7,939,937, followed by the Pheu Thai Party with 7,423,361 votes. Future Forward amassed a total of 5,871,137 votes; the Democrat Party 3,704,654, and the Bhumjaithai [Proud to be Thai] Party collected 3,512,446 votes. Due to the complicated electoral algorithm used to calculate the number of seats won by each party, the Pheu Thai Party ended up winning the largest number of parliamentary seats with 135; the Palang Pracharat won 117; Future Forward won 80; the Democrat Party won 53, and Bhumjaithai won 51. The results are presented in Figure Three below:

Figure 4: Preliminary Results on 25 March 2019



Source: Thai PBS, based on the results of Election Commission of Thailand

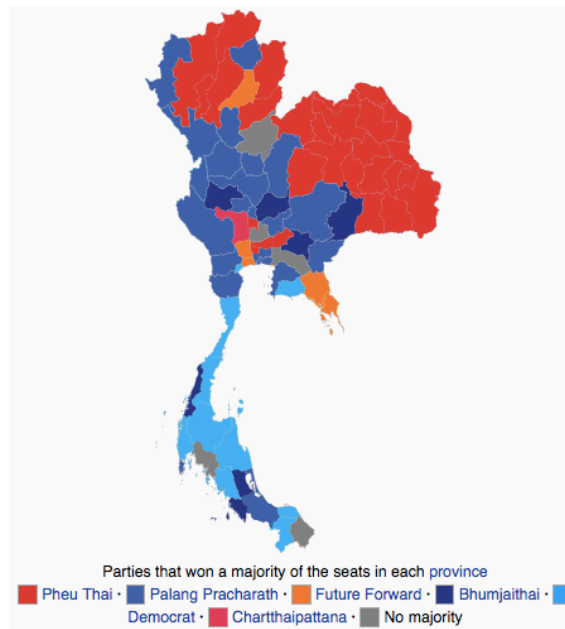
However, one week after the preliminary results were announced, the EC claimed it had discovered mysterious ‘uncounted ballots’, which meant that all political parties received additional votes. Taking these additional votes into account, the total number of votes received by the Palang Pracharat Party now stood at 8,433,137, followed by the Pheu Thai Party with 7,920,630 votes, Future Forward with 6,265,950 votes, the Democrat Party with 3,947,726 votes, and finally the Bhumjaithai Party with 3,732,883 votes. In terms of the number of parliamentary seats won, the Pheu Thai Party remained the winner with a total of 137 parliamentary seats. Palang Pracharat won 118; whilst Future Forward won 87, the Democrat Party, 55; and Bhumjaithai won 52. However, these numbers have not yet been verified by the EC, and it is possible that these ‘uncounted ballots’ are a delaying tactic.

According to the Thai political norms, the party winning the greatest number of parliamentary seats is eligible to initiate or form a government (a one-party government if it has an absolute majority, and a coalition government if it does not). Hence, following the elections, the Pheu Thai Party initially formed a coalition government with the Future Forward Party, along with other, smaller parties. However, this attempt made by Pheu Thai has so far been stymied, due to the fact that the EC is still in the process of counting votes. Meanwhile, the Palang Pracharat party has claimed that it is also eligible to set up a coalition government, because it had won the most votes in the elections despite not gaining the most seats in Parliament. The wrangling between the two main opposing parties to form the next government has intensified the current political climate in Thailand.

In terms of the geographic distribution of the votes, the results have shown that regionalism still largely defines Thai politics. The north and northeast regions, traditionally seen as strongholds of the Pheu Thai Party, have continued to serve as power bases for Pheu Thai. Statistically, Pheu Thai won 27.94 percent in the north, and 36.43 percent in the northeast.

The combined central and west regions were key to Palang Pracharat's victory. In Bangkok, the situation is considered to be rather more complex. The Future Forward Party won 26.15 percent of the vote, but Palang Pracharat won 25.74 percent of parliamentary seats. This result was certainly unprecedented, since Bangkok has long been recognised as the territory dominated by the Democrat Party. Despite this, the Democrat Party won only 15.44 percent in Bangkok, winning zero parliamentary seats and finishing fourth in the popular vote in the Thai capital. In the south, the Democrat Party, as expected, won the most votes. Although the party was able to maintain its electoral dominance in the south, its overall share of the vote fell dramatically, from 73.52 percent in 2011 to 28.63 percent in 2019.

Figure 5: Geographic Vote Distribution, 2019 Elections



The stark regional differences in the party's results showcase once again the persistent nature of polarisation in Thai politics. The red and yellow divide, crudely portrayed as a conflict between (conservative) urban elites and (pro-Thaksin) rural residents, has not disappeared. Political reconciliation will, accordingly, be difficult. The current parliamentary interregnum period has the potential to further exacerbate political tensions. For more than three weeks, the EC has been unable to announce the election results, heightening suspicions that it is trying to distort the results to benefit the junta.

II. Pre-election Fraud and Irregularities

Before announcing that the election would take place on 24 March 2019, the NCPO had previously postponed the election several times, stating that the country was not ready for a political transition. Part of the problem was the long process of rewriting the Constitution and the complex associated electoral system. In short, voters were asked to cast a single ballot for their preferred candidate in their local constituency. However, their votes at the local level would then also be counted at the national level to determine the number of party-list seats won by their party. This new electoral system was designed to prevent the country's powerful political parties, like the Pheu Thai Party, from once again winning an absolute majority in Parliament. Voters would elect 500 members of the House of Representatives, but the 250 Senators would be appointed by the junta. The new Constitution also states that a joint session of the two houses of Parliament is required to select the prime minister, who does not need to be a member of Parliament himself. With the Senate under the total control of the junta, parties supporting incumbent Prime Minister General Prayuth Chan-ocha would therefore only need to win 126 seats in the House of Representatives to return him to the premiership. This situation naturally provides a favourable landscape to allow the pro-junta Palang Pracharat Party to control the Prime Minister's seat.

The repeated postponements of the elections effectively prevented political parties from preparing themselves well for the election. Article 44 of the Constitution grants the Head of NCPO the power to give any order deemed necessary for "the benefit of reform in any field and to strengthen public unity and harmony, or for the prevention, disruption or suppression of any act which undermines public unity and harmony, or for the prevention, disruption or suppression of any act which undermines public peace and order or national security, the monarchy, national economics or administration of State affairs". This article was used to postpone elections, and in fact forbids political parties from conducting their election campaigns until they were allowed to do so, or at least until the election date was announced. It was, however, likely that politicians allying with the junta could have enjoyed certain advantages, such as inside information about the timing of the elections, therefore potentially being able to map out necessary measures in preparation for the elections ahead of other political parties. It is noticeable that these politicians, and particularly those from the Palang Pracharat Party, were able to produce election flyers, posters and billboards, soon after the election date was announced.

After the election date was announced, numerous instances of fraud and other irregularities were detected. The information below was gathered mainly through CSI LA's crowdsourcing app.

Vote Buying

Vote buying remains a prominent type of electoral fraud in Thailand. CSI LA received more than 2,200 complaints with regards to vote buying committed by a myriad of political parties. The top three provinces in which this type of fraud was reported were Samutprakarn, Chonburi and Nakhonratchasima. Analytically, it is worth noting that these provinces are situated in key industrial zones in which economic capitals are regarded high and readily available. This, in return, has made these provinces prominent in terms of their important political capitals.

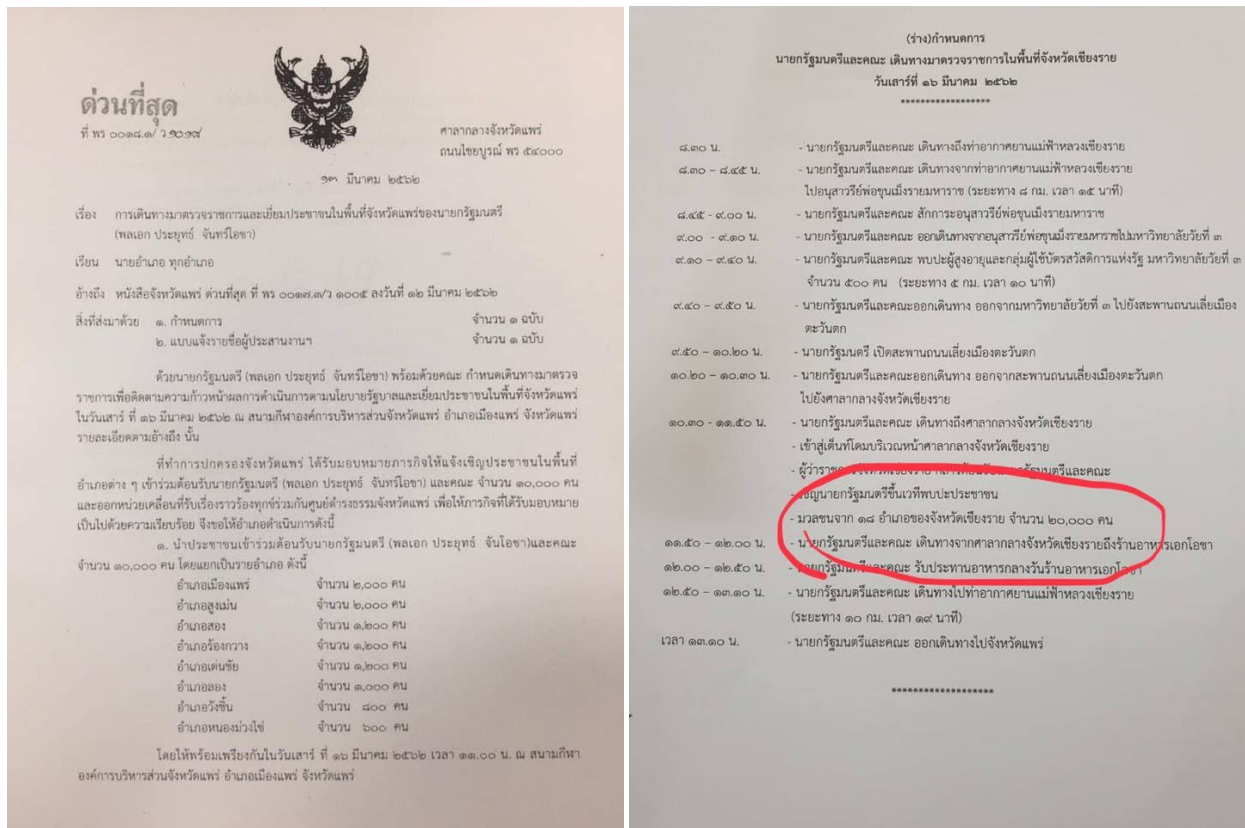
Based on the evidence gathered by CSI LA, the most common form of vote buying is cash distribution—voters who are paid to vote for specific candidates. Vote buying is often committed by local brokers (also known as *huakanan* in Thai) and influential figures. A video clip, uploaded on social media on 16 March 2019 by a Twitter user named "@nompqxt", shows a member of the Palang Pracharat Party handing out cash to voters in the province of Ubonratchathani, in the northeast of Thailand.³ In the south, the Democrat Party released a document with details of a political party collecting names and identity card numbers of up to 35,000 individuals, purportedly to pay them to vote for its party.

In Nakhonprathom province, a government officer was found to be paying money to voters on the eve of the elections.⁴ In another instance, a video clip filmed at a football field in Narathiwat province on 18 February 2019 showed local brokers handing out 1,000 Baht (US\$32) while instructing voters to vote for a particular candidate. The video is available here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=j2sFtlj64_o.

State Influence

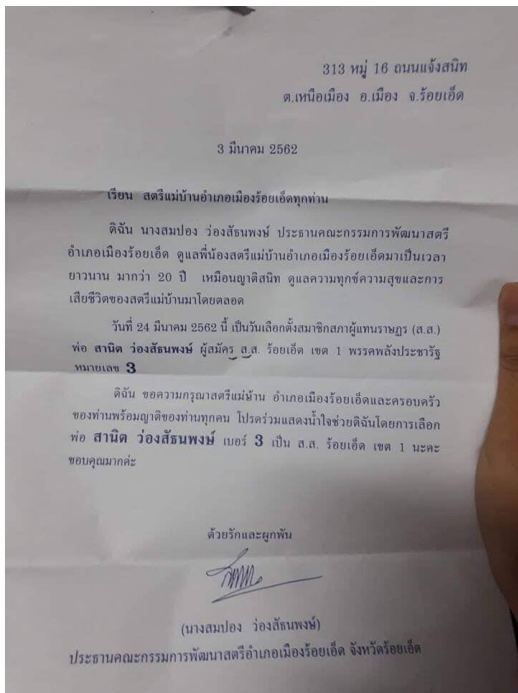
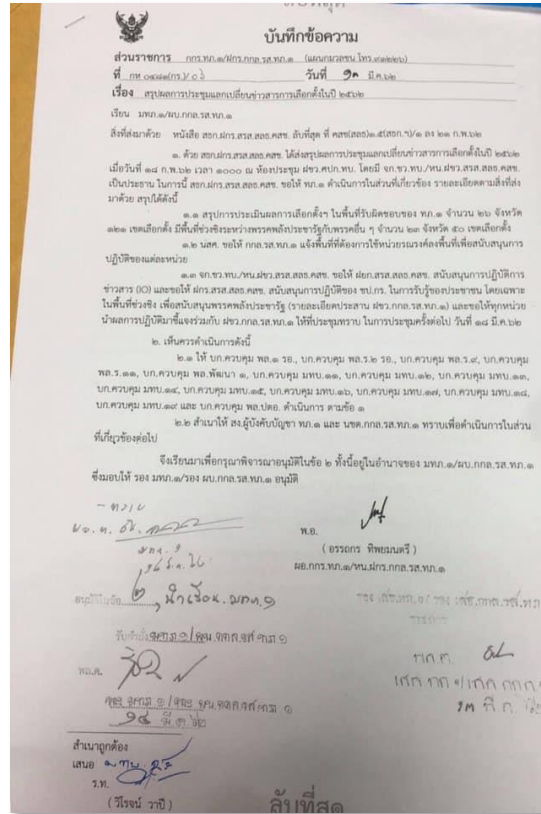
Just a week before the elections, the Prime Minister, Prayuth Chan-ocha, by then a formal candidate for premiership on behalf of the Palang Pracharat party, planned visits to four provinces, namely Prael, Chiangrai, Chiangmai and Nakhonsithammarat. The Prime Minister instructed local officers to bring a large number of people to welcome him. This could be considered as a violation of the election law, since government officers must refrain from engaging, or participating, in the elections. Prayuth never resigned from his post while campaigning for Palang Pracharat and continued to exploit his position to aid the election campaign of the party.

Figures 6-7: Letter from the Prime Minister's office instructing local officers to bring crowds to welcome him



In a separate event, the army instructed an IO (Information Operation) unit to assess the pre-election electoral landscape, and to support the operations of the army in order to help the pro-junta Palang Pracharat Party win the elections in constituencies heatedly contested with other parties, as shown in figure 6. However, the army's instruction was eventually leaked to the public, though the army denied issuing it. This led to widespread public debates over the army's active intervention in the elections. Similarly, a photo also leaked to the public showed a gathering session within the army, in which soldiers were told to fully understand and exercise their electoral rights. This went against the military's supposed obligation of non-intervention in the election process.

Figure 8: Memo from the Directorate of Civil Affairs and Civil Affairs Department Peace and Order Maintaining Command dated 21 February 2019



Similarly, a letter issued by the President of the Women's Development Club of the Roi Et province (figure 7) urged voters in the Maung district to vote for a candidate from the Palang Pracharat Party. The President referred to her past contributions toward the improvement of the livelihood of local residents. She therefore implied that she expected local voters to vote for Palang Pracharat, as a way of returning the favour for her past generosity towards the district.

Figure 9: Letter from the Women's Development Club of the Roi Et Province

Fake and Inaccurate Ballots

Fake ballots were made and distributed to certain target groups of voters, apparently among the hill tribes and ethnic minorities. They were produced to mislead voters into voting for a specific party, in this case the Palang Pracharat Party. It was assumed that the hill tribes and ethnic minorities would not be able to fully understand the Thai language, and could therefore be more easily manipulated.

Figure 10: Fake Ballot



Some inaccurate ballots were honest errors made by the EC in process of producing them. However, others were printed with the deliberate intention to confuse voters. For example, the name and the logo of a party on a ballot would not match. In some cases, information on a given candidate was wrong, such as incorrect educational background, age and even the wrong gender in some cases.

Manipulated Online Campaign

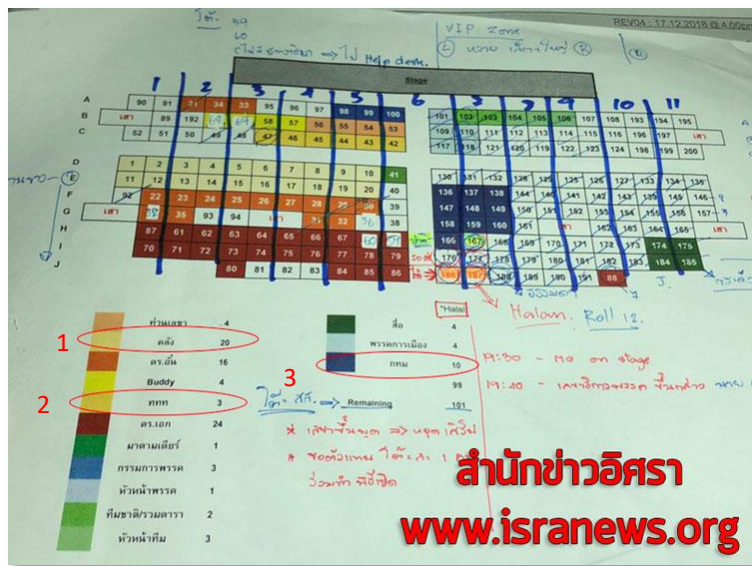
The army launched online campaigns to influence soldiers to vote for the pro-junta Palang Pracharat Party. The objective of these campaigns was to also portray the red shirts, largely seen as supporters of Thaksin and mostly located in far-flung regions in the north and northeast, as their enemy. This portrayal in the online campaigns could be interpreted as suggesting that voting for the Pheu Thai Party was not advisable, and even prohibited. This tactic was reinforced by regular online campaigns engineered by Information Operation (IO) officers. In another case, a fake video clip purported to show a supposed conversation between Thaksin and Thanathorn—the leader of the Future Forward party, negotiating ministerial positions, if Future Forward accepted to join Pheu Thai in setting up a new government after the elections. The clip was aired on Nation TV, a media company closely associated with the junta. Chai Bunnag is the owner of the Media Network Corporation which owns leading pro-junta media outlets, including the Nation, Spring News and TNews. Chai is also the husband of Watanya Wongopasi, also known as “Madame Dear”. Watanya is the former CEO of the Media Network Corporation and a candidate of the Palang Pracharat Party. The clip was later confirmed to be fake. See the clip here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B5i4LJIB_XE

Meanwhile, on the eve of the elections, King Vajiralongkorn issued a royal statement urging the Thai people to vote for “good people”. This could be construed as an attempt to sway the voters from the Pheu Thai Party, whose members were often portrayed as “bad” because of their association with Thaksin. The statement was widely distributed online: <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/thai-king-urges-support-for-good-people-hours-before-polls-open>.

Controversial Fundraising

On 19 December 2018, the Palang Pracharat Party organised a fundraising gala dinner with a price tag of 3 million baht (US\$95,000) per table, taking the total amount of the entire event to 622 million baht (US\$95 million). A leaked photo of the seating chart showing sponsors from various government offices, including the Ministry of Finance, the Tourism Authority of Thailand to the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration was released. Such evidence illustrates a direct involvement of government offices in the party’s activities. As expected, in response to the public protest of the event, the EC had refused to investigate the incident.

Figure 11: Leaked photo of the seating chart



The seating plan above includes members from the Treasury (1), the Tourism Authority of Thailand (2), and the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (3).

Vote Suppression

On 17 March 2019, the day on which advanced voting took place through the country, a series of mishaps and lack of sufficient facilities brought about serious obstacles at the polling stations. In Ayutthaya, it was discovered that the EC had assigned a polling station inside a local school, despite the fact that the election date overlapped with a student examination, causing great inconvenience and difficulty for voters.

The same problem was also found in a local polling station in Chiangmai province. In the meantime, different types of mishaps were detected throughout the country, such as long queues to cast votes, small voting rooms, and insufficient ballots, all caused by human error. In some polling stations, officials distributed the wrong ballots, leading to ballot shortages. In some instances, the queues were extremely long. Under the hot weather, some voters fainted, whilst others simply gave up on the voting process and returned home.

The case of vote suppression during advanced voting in Malaysia is particularly telling. Thai voters in Kuala Lumpur complained about long queues because of the limited number of polling booths (in total, there are only three booths for 40,000 voters). It was also reported that some of the booths were made out of torn cardboard boxes. In New Zealand, all of the ballots were sent back to Thailand later than planned. The EC thus failed to retrieve the ballots prior to the official election on 24 March. This led the EC to declare all ballots from New Zealand to be void.



Figure 12: Scenes of chaos at a polling station in a school in Ayutthaya, as students try to attend their exams, and voters try to cast their votes

Figure 13: Long queues and booths made of torn cardboard boxes in Malaysia



Source: CSI LA

The Case of Thai Raksa Chart Party

One of the most important instances of irregularity in the 2019 elections was the disbanding of the Thai Raksa Chart [Thai Save the Nation] party on 7 March 2019. Known to be a “backup party” for Pheu Thai, the Thai Raksa Chart party’s inaugural convention was held on 7 November 2018. Owing to the design of the constitution that was meant to weaken Thaksin’s influence in politics, the Thai Raksa Chart party was established to serve as a backup in case the Pheu Thai party was dissolved. However, it later emerged that the party had been disbanded by order of the Constitutional Court⁵.

On 8 February 2019, in an event that was later dubbed as the “8 February incident”, the party announced the nomination of Princess Ubolratana Rajakanya as its sole candidate for Prime Minister. Ubolratana is the eldest daughter of the late King, Bhumibol Adulyadej, and the elder sister of the current King, Vajiralongkorn. Her entrance into politics was regarded as a political earthquake, since it was the first time that a member of the royal family was directly involved in politics. As a result, the responses from the public to her nomination were mixed. Ubolratana received strong support from Thaksin’s supporters, but was heavily criticised by Thaksin’s opponents for intervening in politics and therefore violating the supposed tradition according to which the monarchy is supposed to be above politics. The response from the anti-Thaksin camp was ironic, given the fact that the Thai monarchy has long interfered in politics, both directly and indirectly.

Shortly after the announcement of her nomination, King Vajiralongkorn issued a royal statement condemning Thaksin for politicising the monarchy and damaging the long-held tradition of royals being “apolitical figures”. The statement in effect killed the prospect of Ubolratana becoming the first Prime Minister issued from the Royal Family⁶.

Figure 14: Royal Command against Princess Ubolratana



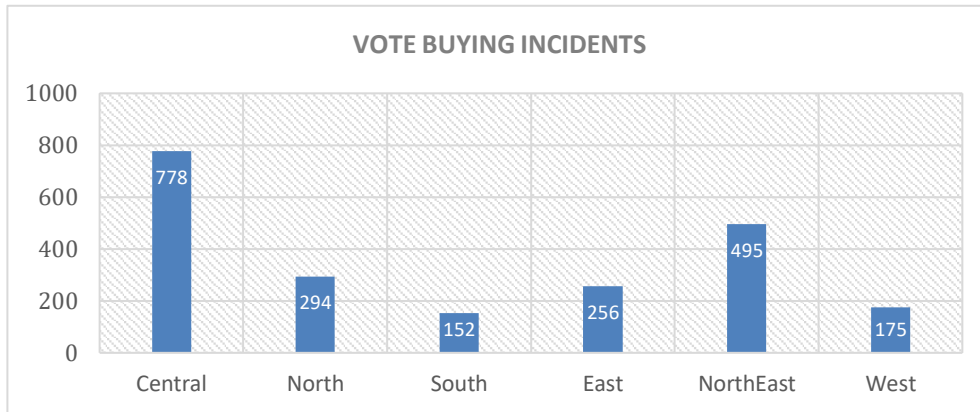
Source: [Matichon](#)

The intervention from Vajiralongkorn, to a great extent, set the tone for the Constitutional Court to rule against the Thai Raksa Chart party. On 13 February 2019, the EC submitted a request to the Constitutional Court asking for the dissolution of the party on the grounds that it brought a member of the royal family into politics. The party was finally dissolved with immediate effect on 7 March, and its leaders were banned from politics for 10 years.

III. Election Day, 24 March 2019

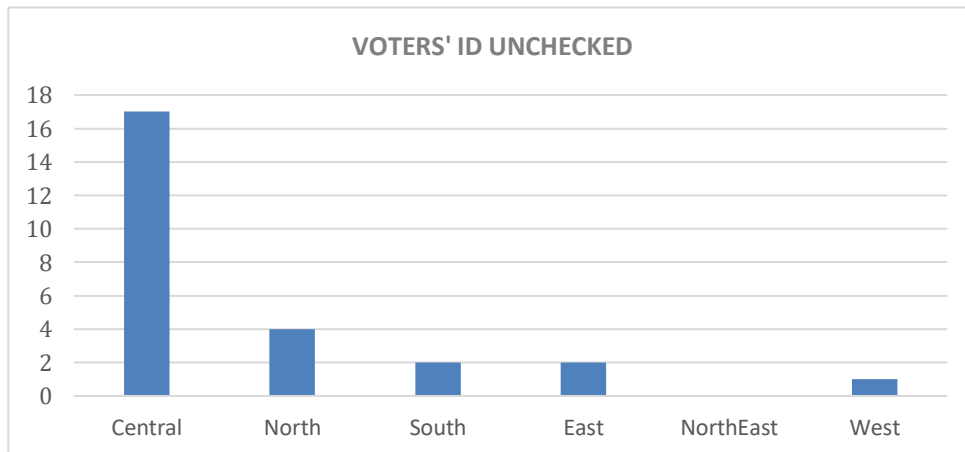
There was a substantial number of complaints related to electoral fraud and irregularities on the election day, 24th March 2019. The purpose of this report is to expose fraud and irregularities that occurred during the elections, as compiled by CSI LA. The large majority of the information was collected with the voluntary assistance of the Thai public, through crowdsourcing. In this report, fraud and irregularities are divided and analysed according to their type.

Figure 15: Vote Buying Incidents



Source: CSI LA

Figure 16: Voters' ID Unchecked



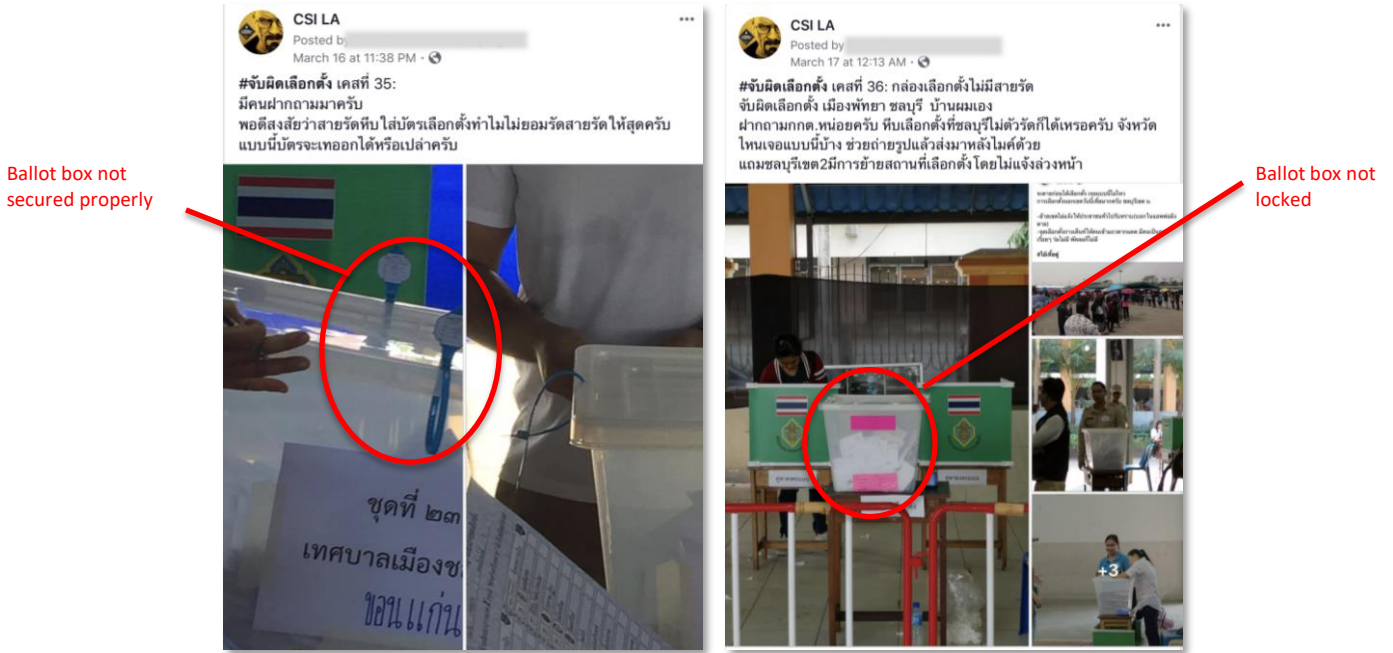
In the following section, the report demonstrates six types of fraud and irregularities, namely ballot box irregularities, EC malfunctions, fake and mistaken ID, illegal and dubious activities, improper ballot transportations, and state's influence. The instances of fraud and irregularities are hereinafter divided by type, rather than by region. While they occurred throughout the Kingdom, certain types of fraud and irregularities were found to be more common in some regions than others.

Ballot Box Irregularities

3 cases of fraud and irregularities were found in Chumpon, Chonburi and Khonkaen, which equates to 4 percent of the total number of reported cases of this type. Cases include:

- Ballot boxes that were not secured properly (Chonburi and Khonkaen)

Figures 17 (left)-18 (right): Ballot boxes not secured properly



- Ballot box seals found damaged in a trash pile (Chumpon):

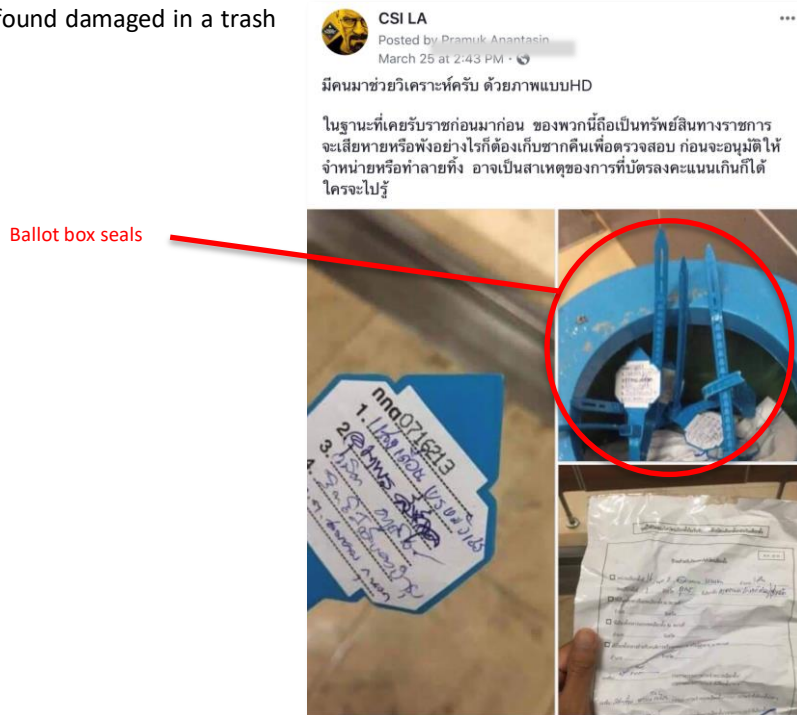
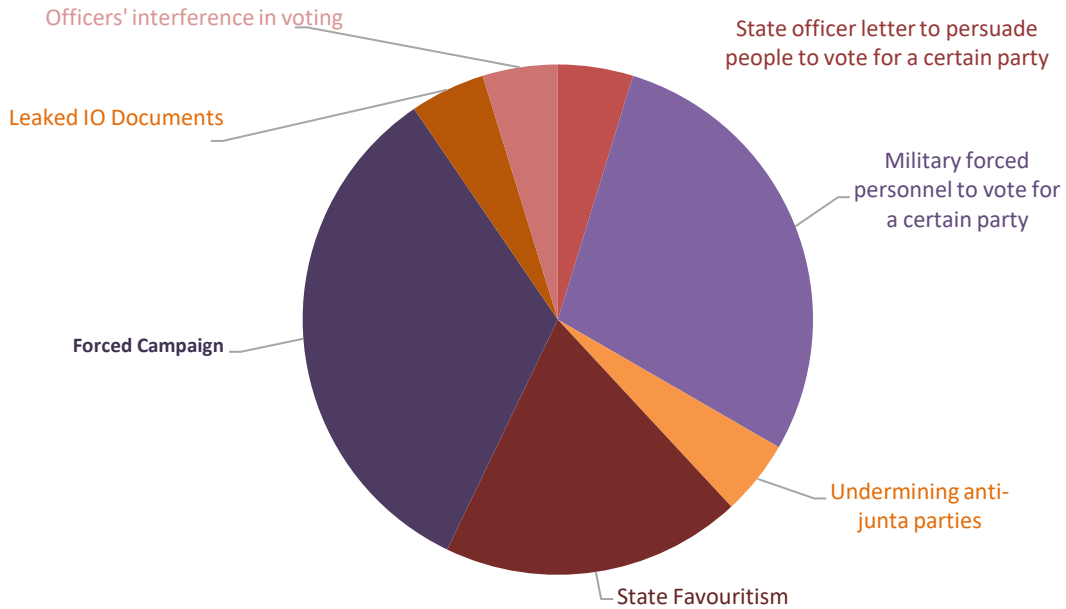


Figure 19: Ballot box locks found in a trash pile

State influence

There were 16 reported attempts by State officers to influence voters, which amounts to 22 percent of all reported frauds and irregularities.

Figure 20: State Influence Statistics



These cases include:

- State favouritism toward the pro-junta parties: For example, while posters of the pro-junta parties remained undamaged, those of the opposition were often found tampered with, or even missing.

Figures 21 (left)-22 (right): Only pro-junta posters being displayed



Figure 23: Pro-junta poster hiding posters from other parties



- Forced voting: State officers forced voters to attend political party functions, particular those with pro-junta agendas. Additionally, state officers forced military officers to go vote, possibly for parties with pro-junta agendas.

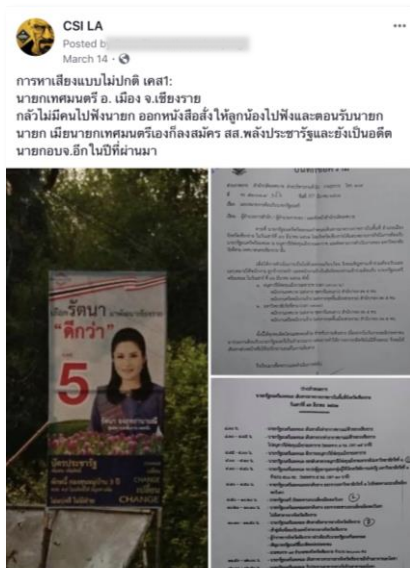
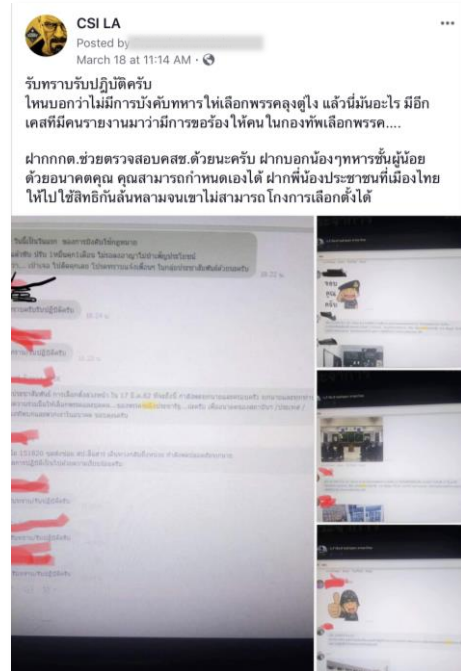


Figure 24: The Mayor of Muang District, Chiang Rai Province used her authority to recruit people to greet Prime Minister Prayuth Chan O-Cha, who was the “outsider candidate” for the Pralang Pracharat Party. The memo list down the time-table for the Prime Minister visit and asked for 20,000 people from 18 sub-district to come greet him and show support.



Figure 25: Letters from KhonKaen Provincial Public Health Office ordering people to volunteer to greet the Prime Minister, Prayuth Chan O-Cha who was the official outsider candidate for Pralang Pracharat Party.



Figures 26 (left) and 27 (right): Leaks from Facebook chat group allegedly from military groups ordering its members, presumably military personal, to vote for Pralang Pracharat Party

- State pressure on voters:

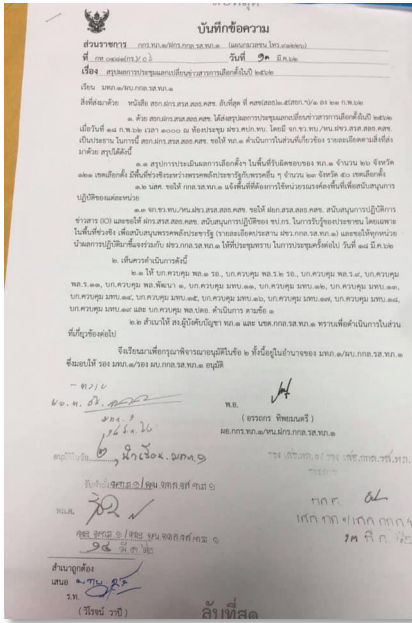


Figure 28: Leaked documents show an order from the government to IO officers asking them to apply pressure on voters to support parties with pro-junta agendas.

- The tactic of persuasion:

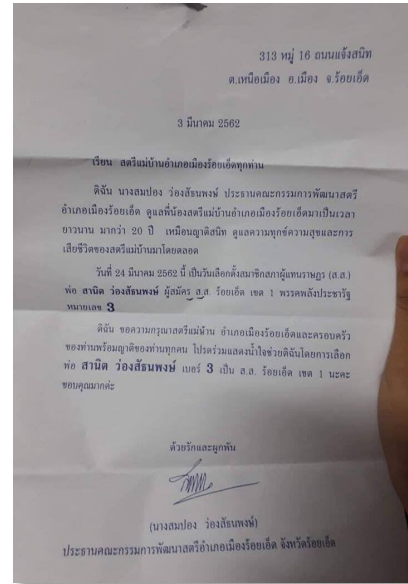


Figure 29: A unit within the Ministry of Interior issued a letter to persuade the Ministry's staff to support parties with pro-junta agendas.

- State interference in polling stations:

Government officers interfered with the voters whilst the latter casted their votes.

Figure 30: Village head seen standing behind a ballot box with a voter.



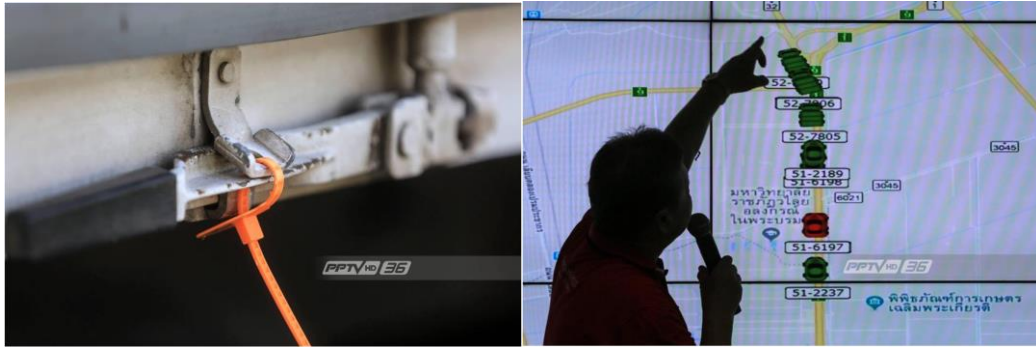
Improper Ballot Transportation

Six cases were registered pertaining to the use of improper vehicles to transport the ballots. These cases make up 8 percent of the total number of reported instances of fraud and irregularities. For example, private pick-ups and mini-trucks were used for such purpose, instead of the vehicles of the Post Office that are normally responsible for the transportation of ballots.

Figures 31-34: Examples of proper ballot transportation according to the EC



The trucks are supposed to be properly secure, GPS-tracked and escorted by police, as below:



Source : <https://board.postjung.com/1134876>

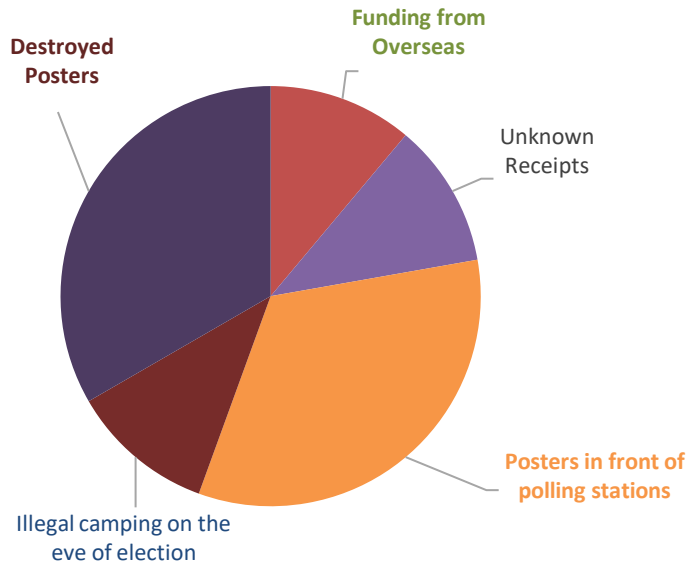
Figures 35-38:
Pictures of unofficial vehicles transporting non-secured ballot boxes without a police escort



Illegal/Dubious Activities

Seven cases pertaining to illegal and/or dubious activities conducted by political parties were reported to CSI LA. This equates to approximately 10 percent of all reported fraud and irregularities.

Figure 39: Illegal/Dubious activities



Illegal and dubious activities include:

- Setting up posters in front of polling stations:



Figures 40 (left)-41 (right): According to the election law, no poster or any type of advertisement is allowed on the day of the election. In the pictures above, posters were located right in front of polling stations.

- Continuing with campaigning on the eve of the elections:

Figure 42 (right): A video clip recorded what seems to be an advertising car on 17th March, the eve of the elections, by which time campaigning activity is supposed to stop according to Thai law.



- Destroying the election posters of opposing parties:



Figure 43 (above): Damaged party posters

- Falsifying receipts: Donation receipts from members of particular parties were issued despite the fact that no donation was ever actually

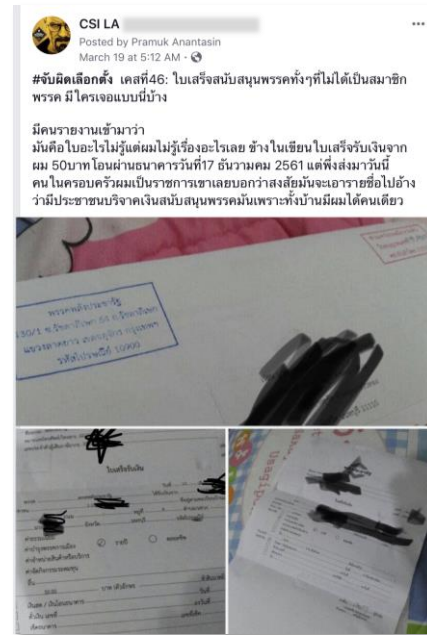


Figure 45 (above): Falsified receipts

- Dubious sources of funding for some political parties, including overseas donations.



Figure 44 (above): Thai election law prohibits foreign donations, but news outlet Isranews found that a company which was linked to an offshore company located in the British Virgin Islands, had donated funds to the Pralang Pracharat Party.

Fake/Mistaken IDs

CSI LA found 3 cases involving fake and mistaken IDs, amounting to 4 percent of the total number of reported instances of fraud and irregularities. These include:

- Stolen identity. Deceased individuals were notably listed as eligible voters.
- Underage voters. Youths below the age of 18 (ineligible to vote) found their names on the list of eligible voters.



Figure 46: Post from a Facebook user whose deceased grandmother is still listed as an eligible voter



Figure 47: Underage voter ID

- Cases of mixed-up addresses and polling stations. Many did not find their name in their registered local polling station.

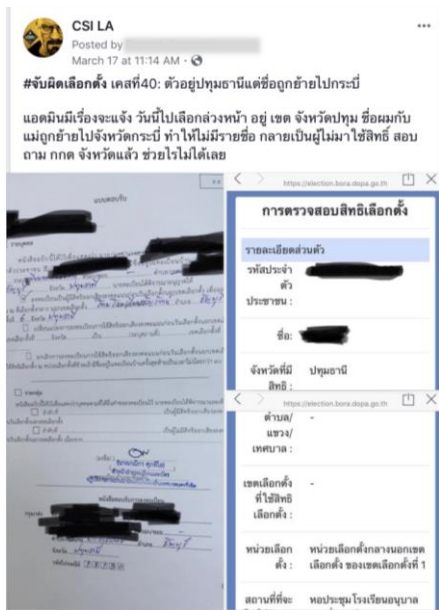
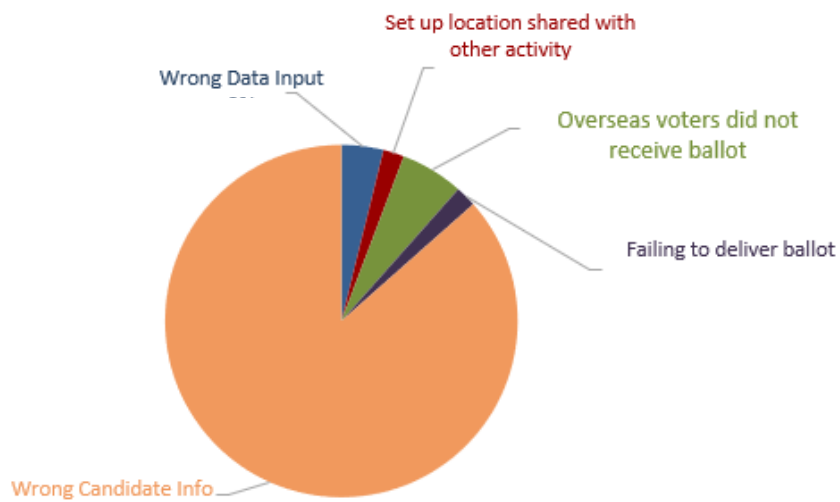


Figure 48

EC Malfunctions

There were 38 cases reported to CSI LA concerning malfunctions by the EC. This represents 52 percent of the total number of reported instances of fraud and irregularities.

Figure 49: EC Malfunctions



EC malfunctions include:

- Setting up polling stations in locations that simultaneously hosted other activities;
- Overseas voters failing to receive ballots;
- Failing to deliver ballots from overseas back to Thailand in a timely manner.

- Publishing wrong information about party candidates on official documents:

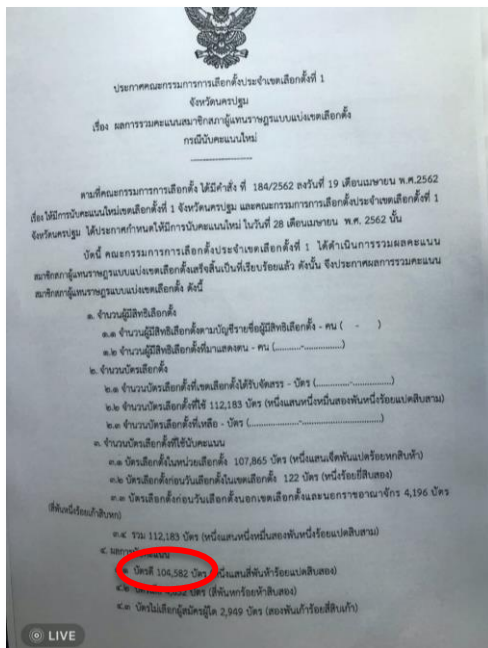


Figure 50: Male candidate labeled as “Mrs”, with the wrong name.



Figure 51: Candidate whose occupation was listed as “monk”. Under election law a monk cannot hold any official position.

- Miscounting the ballots:



Figures 52 (left) – 53 (right): Results announced at the polling station (right) are not the same as those reported on the official letter (left)

IV. Post-election Fraud and Irregularities

At the time of writing of this report, almost a month after the elections, the official results of the elections have not yet been announced, sparking a general outcry against the inefficiency of the EC. Ballot counting, however, has proven to be a tricky business. Miraculously, the Election Commission discovered extra ballots, boosting the vote totals for several parties, including, to no one's surprise, the Palang Pracharat Party. Opposition parties are actively discussing an anti-junta alliance to pave the way for a pro-democracy coalition government, which would have as its main goal the demilitarisation of Thai politics.

However, the path toward this goal is a difficult one. Even if a government can be formed by the opposition, many pitfalls still lie ahead. The Constitution empowers the Senate over the House of Representatives, and all Senate members are junta appointees. These Senators would make the life of any anti-junta government extremely difficult.

In this post-election period, the outstanding problem has been the long delay in the announcement of the results, which seems to suggest an intentional delaying strategy by the military government. The recounting of the ballots was explained as a genuine mistake of the EC, because it did not include the votes from the advanced elections (held a week before the general election), as well as overseas ballots. However, even after the recounting of the ballots, the EC has been unable, and somewhat reluctant, to reveal "raw" voting data, i.e. original votes, which include "good" as well as "nullified" votes. This makes it difficult for independent election monitoring organisations to compare the "raw" votes with the initial results. In other words, there remain discrepancies between the exit polls carried out in front of the polling stations and the initial results announced by the EC to the public.

FORSEA and CSI LA are urging the EC to make the raw voting data available, so as to allow the public to check for existing discrepancies. Due to the reluctance of the EC, certain quarters in Thai society have now called upon the members of the EC to step down. In retaliation, the EC has filed a lawsuit against some political activists who criticised it. The feud between the EC and the public has further complicated the Thai elections.

The feud has recently been extended to involve the Future Forward Party. Because of the party's success in the elections, it has become a target of attack from the opposing camp. Established less than a year ago, the Future Forward Party came third in the elections, after Pheu Thai and Palang Pracharat. In Bangkok, the party won 804,272 votes, in turn gaining 9 parliamentary seats, second only to Palang Pracharat which won 12 parliamentary seats. Future Forward's success has effectively reduced other prominent parties, such as the Democrat Party, to insignificance in Bangkok. Since then, it is clear that the opposing camp has been using legal instruments to assault the leader of the party, Thanathorn Juangroongruangkit, as well as its Secretary-General, Piyabutr Saengkanokkul. The junta has instructed its legal team, led by General Burin Thongpraphai, to file a complaint against Thanathorn based on the allegation that he violated Article 116 of the Thai Criminal Code, generally known as a sedition charge, as he was accused of providing assistance to an individual who led protests against the 2014 coup, who in turn violated a junta ban on gatherings of more than five people. The sedition charge against Thanathorn is the most serious allegation against any politician so far. Meanwhile, Piyabutr has also been charged—he was summoned to respond to allegations of computer crime and contempt of court related to a video clip of him reading a statement from his party on a court decision to dissolve Thai Raksa Chart party in early March. The charges against Future Forward leaders are meant to send a strong message from the Thai political elites, who appear unwilling to accept the results of the elections. These elites are therefore searching for extra-parliamentary means to undermine their political opponents.

The Thai crisis has been exacerbated by the failure to organise a free and fair elections. Up to this point, no one knows if the elections on the 24th March will be nullified. Talks in the Thai capital get louder around the possibility of setting up a “national government”, whereby leaders of political parties, no matter what side they stand on, may come and work together in a coalition. But this option will not only further deepen the Thai stalemate because of the contrasting political ideologies among these parties. It would also weaken the public’s trust in the electoral process because, once again, the vote of the people would be treated as meaningless.

END
