

Introduction

- Overall, the situation in Thailand is more peaceful and secure, as reflected in the satisfaction of both ordinary citizens and the business community. The Consumer confidence index and the Thai Industries Sentiment Index have both risen. The tourism sector is also recovering, with a continued rise in number of tourist arrivals.
- More importantly, the National Council of Peace and Order (NCPO) has laid down the specific details and timeline of its 3-stage Roadmap to return Thailand to a democratic path.

3-phase Road Map

- The **first phase** focuses on creating Reconciliation Centres for Reform. A reform committee will also be set up to pave the way for a confrontation-free second phase.
- In the **second phase** focuses on establishing a legislative council, with the aim to select an interim Prime Minister, cabinet members, and draft a new constitution. A reform council will also be established to resolve existing conflicts, with solutions that can be accepted by all sides.
- The **third phase** will see a general election take place under a democratic system which is accepted by all sides, which is expected to be held at the latter half of 2015.

Current status:

- The Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand (Provisional) B.E.2557 has been promulgated on 22 July 2014. It contains 48 Sections and sets up five principal organs in the administration of the country in Phase 2.
 - The National Legislative Assembly will consist of 220 members selected by the NCPO. Their main task is to pass legislations, approve Emergency Decrees, and approve the signing of international agreements. These functions are in line with the authority and powers of a normal Parliament. The Assembly will terminate upon the installment of a new Parliament pursuant to the new Constitution. The National Legislative Assembly is expected to begin their duties from September 2014.

- The Council of Ministers will consist of 36 members, the same number as in the previous government's. They are tasked with administering the country, expediting the reform process, and continuing with reconciliation. This Cabinet will cease to function when a new cabinet assumes office after the general election is held pursuant to the new Constitution. The Council of Ministers are expected to begin their duties from September 2014.
- The National Reform Council will consist of 250 members, selected from all 77 provinces of Thailand and 11 social and professional sectors nationwide. The Council will recommend various reform measures, which the Cabinet will carry out under existing laws, or under new laws passed by the Legislative Assembly. The Council will also deliberate on the draft of the new Constitution. The Council is expected to be appointed in early October 2014.
- The Constitution Drafting Committee will consist of 36 members nominated by the National Reform Council, the National Legislative Assembly, the Cabinet, and the NCPO (at the ratio of 20 : 5 : 5 : 6 respectively). Committee members must not be a member of any political party or independent organization during the past 3 years prior to his/her appointment.
- The NCPO, consisting of no more than 15 members, will continue to exist to help the Cabinet with maintaining peace and security in the country. The NCPO can submit policy proposals to and request to hold joint meetings with the Cabinet. The Cabinet can choose whether to act upon these proposals.

Drafting Process of the new Constitution (attached diagram)

- Selection Committees will be appointed to propose a short list of names for the members of the Reform Council.
- The NCPO will reduce the short list down to 250 members.
- Within 15 days, a full Constitution Drafting Committee must be nominated by the National Reform Council, the National Legislative Assembly, the Cabinet, and the NCPO.
- The Constitution Drafting Committee, taking into account recommendations from the Reform Council, proposes a draft of the new Constitution within 120 days.

- The Reform Council and the NCPO will jointly consider the draft new Constitution and revert to the Drafting Committee with their suggestions within 40 days.
- The Drafting Committee considers these suggestions, revises the draft, and returns the revised draft to the Reform Council within 60 days.
- The Reform Council votes to either accept or reject the revised draft as a whole – no further amendment is possible.
 - If the Reform Council rejects the draft, the terms of office the Reform Council and the Drafting Committee also terminates.
 - In this case, the selection process for the Reform Council and the Drafting Committee will start again.
- If the Reform Council accepts the draft, the Chairman of the Reform Council will submit it for Royal Endorsement.
 - If the draft does not receive the Royal Endorsement, the terms of office of the Reform Council and the Drafting Committee will terminate, and the selection process for the Council and the Drafting Committee will start again.
- If the draft receives Royal Endorsement, it will be promulgated in the Royal Gazette. On that same day, the Provisional Constitution will cease to be in force.
- With a new Constitution in place, and a general election expected towards October 2015, Thailand will have a fully democratic regime with His Majesty the King as Head of State.

Links:

Thailand Tourism situation update: <http://www.tatnews.org/category/tat-releases/situation-update/>

Thailand Political situation update: <http://www.mfa.go.th/main/en/media-center/3756>

Briefing on political situation: <http://www.thaigov.go.th/en.html>