

Thammasat University massacre

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The **Thammasat University Massacre**, or **Massacre of 6 October 1976** (เหตุการณ์ 6 ตุลา), was an attack on students and protesters that occurred on the campus of Thammasat University and at Sanam Luang in Bangkok. Students from various universities were demonstrating against the return to Thailand of Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn, a former military ruler. By the official count, forty-six people died in the attack, during which protesters were shot, beaten and their bodies mutilated.^[1]

After Thanom was replaced by a civilian prime minister in October 1973, an army faction headed by Major-General Pramarn Adireksarn began plotting a return to military rule. Right-wing paramilitary groups were armed and trained and a crackdown on left-wing activists was prepared. The Communist takeover of Indochina in 1975 at the end of the Vietnam War convinced many that Thailand could be the next communist target and that the nation's unruly left-wing students were aiding the enemy.

The day before the massacre, a photo of a mock hanging by Thammasat demonstrators was published in the Bangkok press. To many, the students in the photo appeared to be hanging the Crown Prince Vajiralongkorn in effigy. In response, outraged paramilitary forces gathered outside the university that evening.

Lieutenant-General Chumphon Lohachala, deputy director of the national police, ordered an attack in the morning and authorized free fire on the campus. A junta headed by the defense minister, Admiral Sa-ngad Chaloryu, seized power immediately after the massacre. The membership of the junta was more moderate than that of

Pramarn's faction and the relationship between the factions remains poorly understood.^[1] The junta installed Tanin Kraivixien, a hard-line anti-communist and a royal favorite, as prime minister.

6 October 1976 Massacre



6 October 1976 Massacre Memorial in Thammasat University, Bangkok

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| Location | Thammasat University and at Sanam Luang in Bangkok, Thailand |
| Date | 6 October 1976 (UTC +8) |
| Target | Demonstration |
| Attack type | Shooting, bludgeoning, hanging, ^[1] burning alive, ^[2] rape ^[1] |
| Weapon(s) | M-16 rifles, carbines, pistols, grenade launchers, recoilless rifles ^[3] |
| Deaths | 46 |
| Injured | 167 |
| Perpetrators | Border Patrol Police, commanded by Pol. Lt. Gen. Chumphon Lohachala; Volunteer Defense Corps Red Gaur paramilitary Bangkok local police ^[3] |

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