



**Statement from Wat Phra Dhammakaya
24 February 2017 at 09:30 hrs.**

1. We would like to thank the authorities (on 23 February 2017) for allowing the devotees to offer food to the monks, even though it still was not enough to feed the thousands of monks and novices in the temple. We want to ask the police, the soldiers, and DSI to continue to permit the offering of food to the monks, as it is a well-preserved Buddhist tradition where the Buddha had allowed monks to accept offerings from faithful laypeople. This action follows the 3 *Bases of Meritorious Actions*, which are *dana* (generosity), *sila* (moral conduct), and *bhavana* (meditation).

2. Although the authorities did not initiate a raid today, they have been pushing for ground and moving closer and closer, especially to the rear of the temple, near the Boonraksa Medical Center. Due to these actions, neighbors around the temple are concerned for the welfare of the monks, novices, and devotees living in the temple.

3. The accusation by the White Shark Team that the Dhammakaya Foundation had encroached on national forest after they went to search the area around Moo 6 Khao Thong, in Muang, Krabi, is absolutely not true. The Dhammakaya Foundation has never bought land, invaded or encroached on the area around the national forest around Moo 6 Khao Thong, in Muang, Krabi. The Dhammakaya Foundation would like to declare that the foundation does not have any connection to this accusation.

4. In the case that the government has continually increased its accusations against the temple to legitimize an invasion of the temple, I want to make an observation that the increasing accusations is not the key issue. But, the key issue is that the temple did not resist DSI's search on 16-18, 21, 22 February. The authorities have searched the temple three times. During the first search, only the DSI team and news representatives went. During the second search, DSI came with the metropolitan police, K-9 unit, and many news reporters. During the third search, DSI director-general and deputy director, representatives from the National Office of Buddhism,

news reporters, and most importantly, the Ecclesiastical Head of Pathum Thani Province were present. On that day, Zone A (196-rai area) was thoroughly searched and 15 buildings, which had already been searched, were sealed off.

5. In the case that the government is unable to revoke Article 44 because the temple has resisted the police, the temple would like to make the following response. The temple has accepted the 3 arrest warrants and over 300 cases against it, the many thousands of officers surrounding every gate of the temple, the sealing of 15 buildings, and the utilization of the 2,000-rai area by the authorities. This clearly shows that the temple did not resist the police in any way. More importantly, the temple fully cooperated with the authorities for the first 3 days of search, and the additional 2 searches of every area. It is the authorities who did not keep their end of the agreement. They did not find the person they sought but still won't leave. And in the case of our fear of a third party entering the scene, the temple only has elders and children. People who scaled the wall did so because they wanted to take part in religious practices at the temple, since the authorities had set up blockade on every road, every path, and every gate, prohibiting them from entering the temple normally. Even more importantly, it was stated in an interview that force may be used to arrest the monks and novices. These statements only create fear and anxiety for the devotees and neighbors of the temple.

At the present moment, the Thai society and its people, along with foreigners, want to see an honest and benevolent government delicately address the current situation. This way, the government can finally accomplish its goal of bringing the people together and "restoring happiness" to its citizens as it has set out to do when it first came to power.

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