



**Devotees of Wat Phra Dhammakaya
Official Statement
28 February 2017, 10.00 hrs.**

Wat Phra Dhammakaya has given its full cooperation to state officials in searching every square inch of the temple as requested by the search warrant. On the nights of the 16th and 17th of February, 10 officials remained inside the temple premises in 2-hour shifts. Officials concluded that they were not able to locate the person of interest and did not discover any property in violation of the law. However, on the fourth day of the siege, innocent monks, novices, and devotees were ordered to vacate the temple premises by 15.00 hrs. This affirmed the speculation that this siege is no longer a case against the Most Venerable Dhammajayo, and instead, has become an act of aggression towards the greater Buddhist community as a whole, through the use of unjust legislation.

We plead for a stop to the use of Article 44 against innocent citizens, particularly against an organization that is a member of one of the three respected institutions of Thailand, that is, Buddhism. The continued application of Article 44 will affect innocent monks and devotees far and wide because the confidence in the image of Buddhism and the Kingdom of Thailand will be destroyed. No law has ever been enforced against religion in this manner in the history of Thailand.

Therefore, I implore those with the authority to truly consider the immediate revocation of Article 44.