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**Statement from Wat Phra Dhammakaya**  
**27 February 2017, 10:00 hrs.**

Twelve days into this operation and the government has already spent over 60 million baht.

This has had an impact on Wat Phra Dhammakaya in the following ways:

1. Losing the freedom to practice one's own religion and the ability to disseminate the Buddha's teachings to the rest of the world.
2. Five CCTV cameras at Gate 1 were vandalized.
3. One truck full of fresh vegetables and another full of pork meat that were purchased by the kitchen at Wat Phra Dhammakaya were denied entry into the temple, and were left to spoil. This is a loss of 200,000 baht.
4. Three tons of pork meat from people who wanted to offer them to the monks were confiscated, and 2,000 raw eggs went missing. This may seem minor, trivial, and amusing, but it is disheartening for faithful Buddhists to see the things they intended to offer to the monks disappear.
5. 98,000 liters of stocked gasoline in tankers were siphoned out without our permission. This is a loss of 2.25 million baht.

The gasoline was confiscated by Department of Special Investigation (DSI) as state evidence in a criminal lawsuit.

- Confiscated property in the criminal case refers to (1) an illegal item; (2) an item obtained illegally; and (3) an item used or intended for illegal activities.
- Searches, confiscations, or any activities conducted by the officials must be performed with honesty and transparency. In coming in to search and confiscate the gasoline, we noticed that the name of the tanker company and their license plates were concealed. The representative of the gasoline owner was prohibited from taking photos to document the confiscation. In summary, they wouldn't consent to our request to monitor their activities.
- Therefore, we are not certain of DSI officials' objectives. The gasoline was meant for the vehicles used in our organization, not to be sold for profit or used as fuel to create any disturbance. It is a large quantity of gasoline because there are many vehicles in the organization. Once the inspection is complete, Wat Phra Dhammakaya would appreciate having the gasoline returned.

6. Internet and cell phone signals were cut off beginning 25 February 2017, which prevented freedom of information, a human rights violation. This also caused concern amongst the devotees who may have relatives inside Wat Phra Dhammakaya. Mothers can not contact their sons who are novice monks, and relatives can not contact their loved ones who are inside Wat Phra Dhammakaya. The dollar value cannot be placed on the amount of distress and anguish experienced.

7. State officials have stepped on and dirtied the Maha Dhammakaya Cetiya--the pagoda of a million Buddhas--an extremely sacred and respected monument inside the temple. Buddhist devotees around the world pay respect to this cetiya where 1 million Buddha statues are enshrined. State officials have tread on the upper part of the cetiya where only monks and novices are permitted. Lay devotees who donated to the construction of this cetiya have never had the privilege to go up to the top.

8. A total of 569 monks, novices, and lay devotees have missed the annual Pali exam due to fear of Article 44. Consternation over Article 44 has also caused the bus drivers to be reluctant to transport anyone to and from Wat Phra Dhammakaya.

9. One devotee remains in serious condition from a scuffle with state officials, with ribs 1-6 broken, a broken clavicle, as well as bleeding out of the ears. The initial hospital that this devotee was rushed to refused treatment due to fear of Article 44.

10. Large shipping containers have been used by state officials to block access in and out of Gate 5. Mr. Suwaphan Tanyuwardhana, Minister of Justice, stated that there will be no blockage of any kind. This is not true. We have received news that from 24 February 2017 onward, two shipping containers, measuring 12 meters, have blocked Gate 15. State officials went on the news and stated that it was the temple staff that placed the containers there. This is a completely false accusation, as we have CCTV footage showing state officials in DSI marked vehicles delivering these containers to obstruct the entrance of Gate 15.

11. Wat Phra Dhammakaya was accused of preparing to stage an uprising and engage in violence. We deny this because the temple's key principles are peace, tranquility and abstention from violence. The devotees are only here to chant and meditate.

12. There are discussions that officials may infiltrate the temple and distribute flyers or print documents that attack the three respected institutions of Thailand in order to frame the temple. We would like to reiterate that we have always had the utmost respect for the nation's three main institutions: Nation, Religion, and Monarchy. During the ceremony to consecrate the sima-stones placed for the Main Chapel on 24 December 1977, HRH King Rama IX requested HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sririndhorn and HRH Princess Chulabhorn to represent him in the consecration ceremony. Then, in the ceremony to cast the gold statue of the Great Master Phramongkolthepmuni in 1994, we had the great honor of having HRH King Rama X himself as

the honorary guest in casting the statue. The warm memories of these events which demonstrate the immeasurable compassion of the monarchy towards Wat Phra Dhammakaya still linger to this day.

How has this impacted the government?

1. The current government's invocation of Article 44 has already led to one death. Let us reiterate the outrage against Article 44 is not directly related to Wat Phra Dhammakaya, but it is a matter of Buddhism being abused and other issues relating to the monastic community that make the Thai people unhappy.

2. The government has carelessly drained a fixed government budget, already scarce due to the current economic recession. This hasty expenditure has exceeded 60 million baht, and there is no end in sight. This does not include the relief funds needed should the unexpected occur.

3. State officials have lost the public's confidence due to the use of Article 44. It is an act beyond the confines of the law. This is no longer about the search for an individual person, Most Venerable Dhammajayo, but rather an attack on Buddhism. State officials have conducted a very thorough search of every building, in every room on every floor in Wat Phra Dhammakaya. Some buildings were searched as many as 3-4 times. These include the Centennial Building, Bhavana building, Daowadung building, and the 60-Year building. After each search, they left detailed documentation stating that the search has concluded and that nothing of interest was found. This document is then co-signed by Wat Phra Dhammakaya officials and approximately 10 state officials.

Rather than concluding the search, the government ordered 3,000 to 4,000 soldiers and police officers to surround the temple as well as insisting that Article 44 remain in effect indefinitely. On 19 February 2017, state officials demanded monks, novices, and devotees to vacate the temple grounds before 15.00 hours. Instead, people came rushing in, not because they only wanted to protect Most Ven. Dhammajayo, but because they wanted to protect Buddhism, Wat Phra Dhammakaya, and the monks and novices there.

At this moment, state officials are still controlling the flow of monks and devotees coming in and out of Wat Phra Dhammakaya. The Lord Buddha promoted the building of temples so that monks from all four directions can have a place where they can seek refuge. Does denying entry to monks who have travelled to Wat Phra Dhammakaya conflict with the teachings of the Lord Buddha? Buddhists can decide for themselves.

For the reasons stated above, I plead with the prime minister to consider the feelings and concerns of the citizens of Thailand, for the sake of peace for this nation, for the sake of Buddhism, for the sake of the people who are concerned for Buddhism, and for the sake of the parents of the monks and novices who can not reach them. Please revoke Article 44 in order to

return happiness to this nation and to restore peace within Buddhism. I would like to reiterate that at this time, it is no longer about finding one person, but about the unjust use of power. The searches have been completed and the person of interest was not found, yet officials refuse to leave. This does not benefit the citizens of Thailand as it sends a negative image of Thailand to the world. Today, devotees from Wat Phra Dhammakaya and Buddhists in Europe have travelled to the United Nations in Switzerland, which is hosting a meeting concerning human rights, to protest the unjust use of Article 44 on Wat Phra Dhammakaya, a violation of human rights.