

THAILAND UPDATE

General Election

- Thailand is back as a full-fledged parliamentary democracy. The general election was organized on December 23, 2007 in accordance with the timeline pledged to the Thai people and the international community over a year ago.
- The voters' turnout of 74.45%, or 32.75 million voters, was the highest so far among all elections held in Thailand.
- The Election Commission has endorsed 460 Members of Parliament out of 477 members, above 95% or 456 members required for the House of Representatives to convene its first session. The People's Power Party (PPP) won the plurality of votes, followed by the Democrat Party, Chart Thai Party, and four smaller parties.

Forming of Government

- On January 19, 2008, the PPP officially announced the coalition government of 6 parties, all with the exception of the Democrat Party.

House of Representatives

- The House convened its opening session on Jan 21, 2008 and has elected as its Speaker Mr. Yongyuth Tiyapairat, who resigned from his executive position of Deputy Leader of his party as required by the Constitution.¹
- The House is scheduled to vote for a new Prime Minister Monday January 28th. A new Cabinet will then be formed and should assume office by the end of February 2008 at the latest. The Democrat Party will serve as the only opposition party in the House.

Senate

- The process of selecting 74 out of 150 senators has begun. Academic, government, private, professional and other organizations in all sectors of society have been invited to register and nominate candidates. The selection will be undertaken by a committee of seven,² representing the nation's seven independent constitutional bodies. By February 21, 2008 the Selection Committee will submit the list to the Election Commission.
- The other 76 senators will be elected – one senator per province – on March 2, 2008. In the meantime, the outgoing National Legislative Assembly now serves as the Senate, pending the selection and election of the new Senate.
- The current composition of the Senate aims to achieve a balance between partisan and non-partisan members to enhance the Senate's checks and balances role.

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*Royal Thai Embassy
Washington, D.C.
January 24, 2008*

¹ The 2007 Constitution requires that the Speaker of the House and deputies cannot be members of the executive committee of a political party concurrently.

² The selection committee comprises the President of the Constitutional Court, Chairperson of the Election Commission, Chief Ombudsman, Chairperson of the National Counter Corruption Commission, Chairperson of the State Auditor Commission, a Supreme Court judge selected by the Supreme Court, and a Supreme Administrative Court judge selected by the Supreme Administrative Court.