

# Action needed against abusive lawsuits in Thailand

## Profundo's statement

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Recently, Sarinee Achavanuntakul, a Thai writer and academic renowned for her expertise in economy, sustainable finance and good corporate governance, was sued for defamation in both civil and criminal cases. The cases were brought forward by Gulf Energy Development, a Thai energy holding company. The lawsuits originated from a Facebook post by ms. Achavanuntakul which aimed to provide factual explanations about the power plant monopolies and the rise in electricity costs in Thailand. Sadly, these defamation cases are among many others that the Thai energy company has initiated against various critics.

At Profundo, we have a long working relationship with ms. Achavanuntakul. We have learned to know her as a sharp and integer analyst of economic and political developments in her country. Her analyses are always fact-based, fair and driven by the best interests of the Thai nation.

In our view, the legal actions against ms. Achavanuntakul and other critical voices in Thailand can therefore be described as Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs), as they have the goal to intimidate and suppress critical views. In Thailand and other countries across the world, such lawsuits increasingly target journalists, activists, human rights defenders, academics, civil society organisations and their representatives. SLAPPs represent a clear threat to the right of freedom of opinion and expression.

We hope and expect that the judicial power in Thailand therefore will take a clear stance in defense of ms. Achavanuntakul and other critical voices confronted with similar lawsuits.