

# Thai Army Leader Denies Junta Is Waging Political Witch Hunt

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BANGKOK, Thailand, Oct. 25—A Thai military leader today denied that the new junta is conducting a witch hunt against all dissidents.

The army chief of staff, Gen. Kriangsak Chamanand, who is believed to exercise decisive influence over the junta, said:

"We are only interested in bringing to justice real hard-core Communists against whom we have gathered evidence. We will not persecute anyone who is not guilty, or take revenge against any lawful group. We will not consider anyone our enemies except the Communists."

But as he spoke there were continued reports of houses being searched and people being picked up by the military and police on suspicion of activities harmful to national security. The arrests are being made under new blanket powers that allow suspects to be held without trial for up to 180 days.

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