**6 Jan 2018** - ‘Tonight I express publicly how deeply disappointed and regretful I feel that the Thammakaset and Betagro chicken farm case controversy has been ongoing now for almost 2 years and, as the 14 former Thammakaset migrant workers from Myanmar stand a criminal trial tomorrow morning in solidarity and without any compensation yet provided to them for alleged abuses inflicted upon them, the end of the controversy still seemingly remains far out of sight.  That this criminal trial will indeed start tomorrow is a deeply disturbing situation that in no way benefits anyone involved and indeed cannot but reflect poorly on Thailand and its major food processing export industry actors, both good and less than good actors, in times of rapid and sometimes positive change in migrant worker conditions in Thailand. This case controversy continues to cast without a doubt a dark shadow over the positive reforms in migration management that have been enacted in Thailand in recent years by both the government and industry actors, despite whatever challenges those reforms still surely face. I personally thank tonight the President of the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand for his attempts to informally negotiate a settlement to this dispute, on my request, that could have avoided tomorrow’s trial, despite this negotiation process of almost 3 months ultimately proving unsuccessful so far.  I also want to thank all those who worked behind the scenes in their attempts to promote reconciliation to this case. I am standing closely with and behind the 14 workers, MWRN staff and their legal defense team as the trial commences tomorrow morning at 9am at Don Muang Court in Bangkok. This case is one that remains deeply felt in my heart, because of my previous involvement with the 14 workers, and despite the fact that I couldn’t for many reasons attend the trial tomorrow in Thailand to support the workers, MWRN and the legal defense team as well as observe the proceedings.’

**Andy Hall, migrant worker rights activist and former international affairs advisor to the Migrant Worker Rights Network (MWRN)**