



Ambassador U Aung Lynn

Date: 09/12/2019

Myanmar Mission to the United States

Myanmar Embassy, Washington D.C

Re: Letter of condemnation against Myanmar government for Naw Ohn Hla's arrest and incarceration

Dear Your Excellency U Aung Lynn,

The Karen Organization of America strongly condemns the arrest and jailing of Karen activist Naw Ohn Hla on September 9th for organizing and holding the Karen Martyr's Day celebration in August. The charges against Naw Ohn Hla and other Karen youth organizers highlight the ongoing lack of freedom of expression in Myanmar, especially for ethnic minorities, to exercise their rights and express their political aspiration.

We call upon the Yangon Region government and the government of Myanmar led by the National League for Democracy to drop all charges against Naw Ohn Hla and immediately release her without condition. The prohibition of Karen people and other ethnic minority groups in Myanmar to hold and celebrate events important to their history shows a lack of respect and acceptance of their political rights in the country.

As Myanmar is ushering in a new era and working to build a peaceful, strong and multi-cultural democracy with ethnic minority groups in the country, it is important for the government to respect their rights and freedom of expression. And as one of the important participants in Myanmar's peace process, the Karen community and the Karen National Union have been peacefully working with the Myanmar government under difficult circumstance in order to achieve lasting peace and genuine federal democracy. However, the arrest and jailing of Karen activists such as Naw Ohn Hla is detrimental to the peace process and will only further increase the Karen community's mistrust in the government and its fragile peace process.

As a result, in the spirit of peace, unity and democracy, we call upon the Yangon Region government and the government of Myanmar to do the right thing by dropping all charges against Naw Ohn Hla and to immediately release her. We also urge the NLD government to remove all military-era restrictive measures and laws that bar peaceful assembly and work to guarantee freedom of expression and assembly for everyone.

Sincerely,

Karen Organization of America

Contact: Saw Greh Moo (Spokesperson), Email: grehmoo@hotmail.com, Tel: 2525717634

Saw Kler Eh Soe (Joint Secretary), Email: klersharefuture@gmail.com Tel: 3153167722