



**Karen National Union  
Supreme Headquarters  
Kawthoolei  
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### **KNU Statement on the Arrest of KWU Chairperson Naw Ohn Hla and the Prosecution of Two Karen Youths for holding Karen Martyrs Day**

On the 9<sup>th</sup> September 2019, Kyauktada Township Police Chief charged and arrested the Karen Women Union (KWU) Chairperson Naw Ohn Hla, at Ahlon Township Central Police Station. Naw Ohn Hla was arrested under **Section 20 of the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Law**, for organizing the 69<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration Ceremony of “Karen Martyrs Day”, at Mahar Bandoola Park on the 12<sup>th</sup> August 2019.

The KNU's view is that the refusal of permission by Kamayut Township Administrative Chief and Dagon New Town (East) Township Administrative Chief, to hold the 69<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Karen Martyrs Day Ceremony led to the holding of the ceremony in Maha Bandoola Park, and consequently the prosecution and arrest of Naw Ohn Hla, as well as, the prosecution of two Karen youths.

The KNU urges the Government to show its political will in establishing genuine democracy and federalism with accountability, responsibility and the recognition of the different ethnic identities that was agreed and signed, by both the Government and EAO's, and states in Chapter 1, Article 1(f) to **“Collectively establish a common national identity that embraces the diverse ethnicities and languages by recognizing the distinctive history, cultural practices, literature, language and national characteristics of all ethnic nationalities living within the Republic of the Union of Myanmar”**.

Therefore, the KNU calls for the unconditional release of KWU Chairperson Naw Ohn Hla and the withdrawal of prosecution against two Karen youths Saw Albert Cho and S' Thein Zaw Min, for holding the 69<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Ceremony of the Karen Martyrs Day.

Karen National Martyrs Day is accepted and recognized by the Karen people and has been commemorated annually through the generations. Karen National Martyrs Day shall continue to be commemorated annually in line with the agreed; **“All the citizens are to collectively establish a common union national identity that embraces the diverse ethnicities and languages by recognizing the distinctive history, cultural practices, literature, language and national characteristics of all the ethnic nationalities.”**

Just as the KNU is consistently striving to establish democracy and a federal union with national equality and self-determination, we earnestly urge the public, ethnic nationalities and the Karen people to participate with all their physical, mental and intellectual abilities, in the areas of 'national equality and human rights', for the achievement of sustainable peace, democracy and a federal union.

Executive Committee  
Karen National Union (KNU)