



**Karen Human Rights Group**

Documenting the voices of villagers in rural Burma

**Statement:**

**KHRG condemns the arrest of Karen activist Naw Ohn Hla**

Naw Ohn Hla – chairperson of the Karen Women Union - has been arrested on September 9th 2019 while she was helping a young woman report a rape case at Ahlon police station in Yangon. KHRG strongly condemns this arrest and urges the Myanmar government to release her without delay.

The Kyauktada police chief charged her under section 20 of the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Law for organising a commemoration event under the name of “Karen Martyr’s Day” in front of Mahar Bandula Park on August 12th 2019. Although the Yangon government had been informed one month ahead of the event, local authorities arbitrarily decided to deny them permission. The arrest of Naw Ohn Hla violates her inherent rights to freedom of opinion and expression and freedom of assembly and association.

Judicial harassment against ethnic minority activists and human rights defenders continues to be a prevailing feature of the Myanmar government’s efforts to restrict civil society space in the country. This has a significant chilling effect on other human rights defenders and organisations.

KHRG further urges the Myanmar government to drop all charges against Naw Ohn Hla and others who face similar charges for organising the August 12th commemoration.

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