|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| From: | **Minister of Home Affairs**  **Lt. Gen. Kyaw Swe**  **Minister of Home Affairs**  **Office No. 10, Nay Pyi Taw**  **Republic of the Union of Myanmar** |

Place, Date

Dear Minister Lt.Gen. Kyaw Swe,

Former child soldier **Aung Ko Htwe**is serving two years and six months in prison in connection with a media interview he gave about his experiences in the Myanmar military. He faces a further three years in prison after he protested his conviction. He should be immediately and unconditionally released.

     Aung Ko Htwe, now 26, was arrested on 18 August 2017. His "crime" was to give a media interview, broadcast  earlier that month, in which he described his experiences as a child soldier, including how the military abducted and forcibly recruited him when he was 13 years old (Myanmar has a long history of recruiting child soldiers into the armed forces). He was charged under Section 505(b) of Myanmar's Penal Code. The provision has frequently been used to arbitrarily restrict the right to freedom of expression in Myanmar.

     Two years later in 2007, he and two others tried to escape. A motorcyclist was killed during the attempt, and the three were charged with murder, found guilty and sentenced to death. Aung Ko Htwe's sentence was later commuted to life imprisonment. He was released in July 2017 after 10 years in prison. However, he was re-arrested in connection with the RFA interview, and has been in detention ever since. Amnesty International considers him a Prisoner of Conscience as he only executed his right to freedon of expression. We therefore urge the Myanmar authorities to

-  immediately and unconditionally **release Aung Ko Htwe,** drop all charges against him and quash all convictions for which he is imprisoned, as he es being punished solely for the peaceful exercise of his human right;

- ensure that, pending his release, Ko Aung Htwe is held in conditions which meet international standards, and that he has regular access to family, lawyers of his choosing and any medical treatment he requires;

- repeal or amend all laws which criminalize or impose arbitrary restrictions on the human right to freedom of expression and bring Myanmar legislation into line with international human rights law and standards.

     We trust that the Myanmar authorities will do their utmost to abide by their obligation to International Law aund the UN Conventions, and we will monitor the process against Aung Ko Htwe closely.

Yours sincerely

copies to: Union Attorney General U Tun Tun Oo; the State Counsellor Daw Aung Suu Kyi;  Diplomatic Representatives in Switzerland

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| From: | **Union Attorney General**  **U Tun Tun Oo**  **Union Attorney General Office No. 25**  **Nay Pyi Taw,**  **Republic of the Union of Myanmar** |

Place, Date

Dear Attorney General U Tun Tun Oo,

Former child soldier **Aung Ko Htwe**is serving two years and six months in prison in connection with a media interview he gave about his experiences in the Myanmar military. He faces a further three years in prison after he protested his conviction. He should be immediately and unconditionally released.

     Aung Ko Htwe, now 26, was arrested on 18 August 2017. His "crime" was to give a media interview, broadcast  earlier that month, in which he described his experiences as a child soldier, including how the military abducted and forcibly recruited him when he was 13 years old (Myanmar has a long history of recruiting child soldiers into the armed forces). He was charged under Section 505(b) of Myanmar's Penal Code. The provision has frequently been used to arbitrarily restrict the right to freedom of expression in Myanmar.

     Two years later in 2007, he and two others tried to escape. A motorcyclist was killed during the attempt, and the three were charged with murder, found guilty and sentenced to death. Aung Ko Htwe's sentence was later commuted to life imprisonment. He was released in July 2017 after 10 years in prison. However, he was re-arrested in connection with the RFA interview, and has been in detention ever since. Amnesty International considers him a Prisoner of Conscience as he only executed his right to freedon of expression. We therefore urge the Myanmar authorities to

-  immediately and unconditionally **release Aung Ko Htwe,** drop all charges against him and quash all convictions for which he is imprisoned, as he es being punished solely for the peaceful exercise of his human right;

- ensure that, pending his release, Ko Aung Htwe is held in conditions which meet international standards, and that he has regular access to family, lawyers of his choosing and any medical treatment he requires;

- repeal or amend all laws which criminalize or impose arbitrary restrictions on the human right to freedom of expression and bring Myanmar legislation into line with international human rights law and standards.

     We trust that the Myanmar authorities will do their utmost to abide by their obligation to International Law aund the UN Conventions, and we will monitor the process against Aung Ko Htwe closely.

Yours sincerely

copies to: Minister of Home Affairs; Lt. Gen. Kyaw Swe; the State Counsellor Daw Aung Suu Kyi; Diplomatic Representatives in Switzerland