

March 4th, 2024

It has been two weeks since the military junta made the announcement about forced military service. I don't know what the future holds for me. I turn 18 in four months. I dread that day. I am so afraid. From that day on I can be called up.

I don't know what I would be made to do if I am chosen. I don't want to imagine.

Before the coup, my life was peaceful. Our village was safe and harmonious, but now we live in constant fear, uncertain of what will happen. Family dinners and meetings with friends, once common, are now distant memories.

I was always someone who loved school and I had a plan for my life. I wanted to become a nurse. I was studying hard at school and thought by 26 I would be a nurse caring for people in our village. It was my dream, but now it seems impossible to achieve.



My school closed due to COVID. It was supposed to reopen but the coup led to another closure. I had to stop my education.

The three years since then have aged me. Fear has disrupted the peaceful life we knew. My family was forced to flee our village. We became separated as we fled from one place to another. Our relatives are now in different places and now I live with my mother only. The money she earns is just enough to eat, but not enough to pay the rent. So I went to find a job. It is not easy. I work hard. I am young but my body is stiff, and it hurts.

Without me, I don't know how my mother would survive. I pray for peace. I pray I will not be conscripted. I remember the peaceful days and hope to live in harmony as a united family as before.

Khine