

Myanmar: 849 children and young people released from Tatmadaw since 2012

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Joint press release by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and the Myanmar UN Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) on Grave Violations against Children

Yangon/New York – The Tatmadaw today released 67 children and young people from its rank. Since the signature of a Joint Action Plan (JAP) between the UN Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) on Grave Violations against Children and the Tatmadaw in 2012, 849 children and young people have been released by the army.

Today's release is the first discharge of children and young people to take place in 2017, and underlines the importance of protecting children in the context of armed conflict and within the peace process.

“We welcome this discharge by the Tatmadaw along with other measures it has taken to prevent new recruitments and the use of children. It is much more difficult to recruit a child today than it was 4 years ago, recruitment procedures have been centralized, physical checks are strengthened, and assigned military focal points ensure the ranks are aware of the standards” says Bertrand Bainvel, the UNICEF Representative, and co-chair of the UN CTFMR.

In 2017 a number of significant actions have been taken. In February, the Government signed the Paris Principles on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups – an important international framework for the reintegration of children into civilian life. And last month, the Government relaunched its national campaign to raise awareness amongst the public about its commitment to end use and recruitment of children by Tatmadaw – with radio and TV spots, newspaper inserts, and the reinstallation of billboards across the country.

Moving forward, the CTFMR calls on the Government to accelerate essential remaining steps, particularly by adopting the new Child Rights Bill which includes a chapter on children and armed conflict; ratifying the [Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on Children and Armed Conflict](#); and releasing suspected minors when there is doubt about their age.

In addition to the Tatmadaw, [seven non-state armed groups in Myanmar, are named on the UN Secretary-General's list of parties to conflict who recruit and use children](#). “We welcome the efforts made by the Tatmadaw and encourage such efforts to expand to all parts of the country where conflicts persist. We call on the Government of Myanmar to facilitate access to the other 7 listed parties, with the aim of their signing and implementing Action Plans with the United Nations,” adds Ms. Virginia

Gamba, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict.

“Today’s release is a reminder to all of the situation of the estimated 2.2 million children trapped in armed conflict and situations of tension and the need for them to also benefit from the on-going reforms in the country” concludes Bertrand Bainvel.

BACKGROUND

In addition to the Tatmadaw, there are seven non-state armed groups listed by the UN Secretary-General as “persistent perpetrators” in the recruitment and use of children in Myanmar. They are the:

1. Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (DKBA)
2. Kachin Independence Army (KIA)
3. Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA)
4. Karen National Liberation Army Peace Council
5. Karenni Army (KA)
6. Shan State Army South (SSA-S)
7. United Wa State Army (UWSA)

ABOUT THE [UN COUNTRY TASKFORCE ON MONITORING AND REPORTING \(CTFMR\) ON GRAVE VIOLATIONS AGAINST CHILDREN](#)

United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1612 mandates the UN to establish UN-led CTFMRs in countries where there is verified evidence that Grave Violations against children are being committed by parties to a conflict, either by armed forces and/or by armed groups. The CTFMR is tasked with establishing a Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) which documents, verifies and reports to the UNSC on Grave Violations against children. The six Grave Violations that are monitored and reported are:

- Killing or maiming of children
- Recruitment and use of children in armed forces and armed groups
- Attacks against schools or hospitals
- Rape or other grave sexual violence
- Abduction of children
- Denial of humanitarian access for children

The CTFMR is also mandated to provide a coordinated response to such Grave Violations. The CTFMR was established in Myanmar in 2007 and is co-Chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator and the UNICEF Representative in Yangon. The CTFMR in Myanmar includes relevant UN agencies (ILO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN OCHA, the UN RCO and WFP), Save the Children and World Vision.

HOTLINE

In May 2017, UNICEF supported the Myanmar Government to re-launch its nationwide campaign to raise awareness amongst the public about its commitment to end use and recruitment of Children by Tatmadaw. As part of this campaign, and on behalf of CTFMR, UNICEF and World Vision are managing 2 hotlines (09-421166701

and 09-421166702) where anyone can alert and report suspected cases of children being recruited or used by the Tatmadaw.

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