

Extract on Myanmar from:

**Children and armed conflict - Report of the Secretary-General , 15 May 2014.
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Myanmar

107. The recruitment and use of children by parties to conflict continued to be a concern in 2013. The United Nations received complaints of 37 children newly recruited into the Tatmadaw, including a 12-year-old boy, and 196 others previously recruited. Children used by the Tatmadaw continued to be deployed to the frontline as combatants and in other roles, in particular in Kachin State.

108. The number of reported arrests of children under charges of desertion from the Tatmadaw increased in 2013. Of 98 boys associated with the Tatmadaw, who were reported under the International Labour Organization (ILO) complaint mechanism, 40 were documented as absent without leave. Of the 40, 10 children were arrested and detained for alleged desertion. Four of the children were released from detention and discharged, including two in January 2014. In addition, children were arrested because of their alleged association with armed groups. For example, in Kachin State, a 16-year-old displaced boy was taken by the Tatmadaw on suspicion of being a Kachin Independence Army (KIA) soldier. He was released after being used as a porter for weapons for two days.

109. Armed groups also continued to recruit and use children, including the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and the Karen National Liberation Army Peace Council. Several cases of children associated with KIA and KNLA were reported and verified. One boy was separated from KNLA upon advocacy by ILO. In a single incident in December 2013, the KIA forcibly recruited an unknown number of children from among 50 people. Thirty-two people had been released by the end of the reporting period. The remaining villagers, save one, were released in early January. Lack of access prevented the verification of reported use of children by the Shan State Army South, the Karenni National Progressive Party/Karenni Army (KNPP/KA) and the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (DKBA). Approximately 20 children suspected of association with the United Wa State Army (UWSA) were observed by the United Nations in northern Shan State. On a positive note, the United Nations began to re-engage with armed groups listed for recruitment and use, including KNLA and KNPP/KA. KNPP proactively approached my Special Representative and subsequently the United Nations in Myanmar with a letter to renew previous engagements on the issue.

110. At least seven children were killed and six others injured in sporadic fighting between the Tatmadaw and KIA in Kachin and northern Shan States, including air strikes by the Tatmadaw. In addition, a two-month-old boy was injured by a grenade during a clash between the Tatmadaw and the KNLA on 16 March in Papun district, Karen State. Also in Karen State, Hpa-an district, on 27 April, a newborn baby and an 18-month-old girl were injured in shelling during a clash between the Tatmadaw

and the DKBA. Although it could not be verified whether parties to conflict continued to use landmines, limited efforts at demining, marking and signing continued to put children at risk. During the reporting period, four boys, between 13 and 17 years of age, were killed by landmines in Kayin and Kachin States and five boys, between 10 and 16 years of age, were injured by landmines in Kachin and Northern Shan State. In addition, the communal violence in Rakhine State continued to preoccupy child protection actors.

111. During clashes between the Tatmadaw and KIA from October to November 2013, several schools were reportedly damaged in Kachin State and several others were closed. From late December 2012 until mid-February 2013, schools in Laiza, Kachin State, remained closed owing to fighting between KIA and the Tatmadaw. Allegations of schools being damaged by the Tatmadaw in Shan State could not be verified because of denial of access to the area. In November 2013, Tatmadaw troops, reportedly to minimize civilian casualties, surrounded a Boarding School in Mansi Township, Kachin State, forcing over 300 schoolchildren to flee. In addition, in Kachin and northern Shan State, mine fields laid by the Tatmadaw and KIA in close proximity to schools and hospitals remained a concern.

112. Several reports of sexual violence against children by Tatmadaw soldiers were received in 2013, including the alleged gang-rape of a 14-year-old girl in northern Kachin State. In February 2014, a Tatmadaw soldier was sentenced to life imprisonment by a civilian court for the rape of a seven-year-old girl in northern Shan State.

113. Humanitarian access to areas affected by armed conflict improved during the reporting period but remained restricted in certain areas, including areas beyond Government control in Kachin and Kayin States. Humanitarian access to such areas was only granted in June, September and November, when seven humanitarian cross-line missions assisted over 23,000 people.

114. Access for monitoring purposes covered under the action plan with the Government of Myanmar improved during the reporting period but remained limited. An initial eight monitoring visits were allowed to selected operational Tatmadaw units in the second half of 2013. On 29 May, the United Nations and representatives of the Government conducted a joint midterm review on progress and challenges in the implementation of the action plan. In November, the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict conducted a field visit to Myanmar, welcoming the Government's respective progress and stressing the need for continued efforts under the framework. In that regard, I welcome Myanmar's renewed commitment to the extended action plan in early 2014.

115. In 2013, 178 children, in one case as young as 12, were separated from the Tatmadaw, including 134 under the framework of the action plan and 15 through the ILO forced labour complaint mechanism. At the time of reporting, 197 other complaints of child recruitment shared by the United Nations were under review by the Government. Reports on the recruitment of children by the Tatmadaw received through the action plan complaints mechanism established in November 2012 increased significantly towards the end of the reporting period owing to a nationwide awareness campaign in consultation with the Government. I commend

the ratification of ILO convention 182 (1999), prohibiting the worst forms of child labour, including the recruitment and use of children. The United Nations in

Myanmar stands ready to support the implementation of the action plan and to further engage with armed groups to end and prevent child recruitment. In that regard, I am encouraged by the ongoing peace talks between the Government and several non-State parties listed for the recruitment and use of children.