

Ongoing underage recruitment and use by the Myanmar military

June 2015

For more than ten years, Child Soldiers International has documented the widespread recruitment and use of children as soldiers in Myanmar. We have conducted two in-depth investigations on the drivers and patterns of recruitment and use of child soldiers by both the Myanmar military and non-state armed groups, which were published in [Chance for Change: Ending the recruitment and use of child soldiers in Myanmar](#) in January 2013, and [Under the Radar: Ongoing recruitment and use by the Myanmar army](#) in January 2015.

Three years since the UN signed the Joint Action Plan (JAP) to end the recruitment and use of children with the Myanmar government in June 2012, children continue to be present in the ranks of the *Tatmadaw Kyi* (Myanmar army) and the Border Guard Forces (BGFs), as well as armed opposition groups.

Children continue to be unlawfully recruited into the Myanmar military: A total of 357 cases of child recruitment and use by the *Tatmadaw Kyi* were reported through the UN Country Task Force-operated phone line, the forced labour complaint mechanism of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and community monitoring.¹ A comparison of combined information received by the UN Country Task Force for Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) in 2014 and 2015 shows that reports of child recruitment into the *Tatmadaw Kyi* have slightly increased with 91 cases reported between January to March 2015 compared to 84 cases during the previous reporting period.² On going armed conflict, related insecurity and high levels of attrition have ensured that the Myanmar military is under pressure to maintain its troop strength, thereby necessitating constant recruitment. While representatives from the Myanmar military have strongly denied the prevalence of this practice, Child Soldiers International's research found that an unofficial system of incentives to reward recruiters and punishments for failure to meet recruitment targets still exists at the battalion level. Bonuses in cash or in kind are also known to be provided to recruiters for exceeding recruitment targets and, in some cases, serving soldiers who want to leave the army are told that they will only be discharged if they find new recruits.³

This 'recruitment economy' has contributed to the creation of an informal network of civilian 'brokers', who receive payments for delivering new recruits. It has also generated pressure on recruiting officers to ignore the minimum recruitment age restrictions, which exist under Myanmar law, in a context where adults are unwilling to volunteer and where recruitment procedures designed to prevent underage recruitment have not been strictly enforced. Despite welcome measures to spread greater awareness about the unlawfulness of underage recruitment, the operationalising of a more centralised system for

¹ UN General Assembly (UNGA), *Annual report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict*, UN. Doc. A/69/926 – S/2015/409, 5 June 2015, para. 134, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/69/926&Lang=E&Area=UNDOC

² Child Soldiers International, Interview with member of CTFMR, May 2015.

³ Retirement age from the *Tatmadaw Kyi* is established at 60 years. Unofficially, however, in order to seek early retirement, military personnel are required to bring in new recruits. Interviews with confidential sources show that in non-military government offices, employees seeking early retirement have to pay a large amount of money estimated at approximately US\$5,000 in order to leave their jobs. This amount of money depends upon their years of service and training received as it has to cover the costs the state has invested in human resources that will not be serving the nation anymore.

recruitment and accountability measures taken against those responsible for underage recruitment, children continue to be among those forcibly recruited, as they are easier to trick and more susceptible to pressure to enlist. Where children from economically deprived or troubled backgrounds have volunteered for enlistment, the absence of rigorous enforcement of safeguards has facilitated their recruitment.

Information gathered by Child Soldiers International shows that military officers and informal recruiting agents (civilian brokers) continue to use deliberate misrepresentation, intimidation, coercion and enticement to obtain new recruits, including under-18s. Civilian brokers are known to frequently recruit boys under false pretences, often offering them a different job, such as a driver.

ILO Convention 182 on Worst Forms of Child Labour (1999) came into force on 18 December 2014 following ratification by the Myanmar government in 2013; however, the required legislative framework has yet to be put in place.

Child Soldiers International has the following serious concerns regarding underage recruitment and use in Myanmar:

Ongoing recruitment of children

Research conducted by Child Soldiers International in May 2015 shows that children continue to be unlawfully recruited into the ranks of the *Tatmadaw Kyi*, although reported numbers of new recruitment cases are significantly lower in comparison to previous years. For the period January-December 2014, 38 cases of new recruitment were reported and verified by the CTFMR. From January to April 2015, 14 cases of 'suspected minors' were reported to the CTFMR but few of these were recruited during that period.⁴

Information received by Child Soldiers International shows that owing to on-going conflicts new recruits, both adults and children, continue to be deployed in the front lines, more recently in the southern Shan state.⁵

Slow identification and release of underage recruits despite increased awareness

A total of 646 children and young people have so far been released from the *Tatmadaw Kyi* under the JAP since it was signed in mid-2012.⁶ These include 93 released since the beginning of 2015.⁷ A majority of these cases are identified through complaints of underage recruitment made to a public hotline number.⁸ A small number of cases stem from direct interventions made by parents following training and awareness raising sessions by the ILO.

Despite a commitment to promptly identify, verify and release children under the JAP, the number of children identified and released by the military under the JAP remains very low, when compared to

⁴ Child Soldiers International, Confidential interviews, June 2015, London.

⁵ Child Soldiers International, Confidential interviews, June 2015, London.

⁶ See figures in the following press releases: UNICEF Myanmar, *Over 400 children released by Myanmar Armed Forces in just one year*, 23 January 2015 http://www.unicef.org/myanmar/media_23482.html; UNICEF Myanmar, *51 more children released by Myanmar army*, 4 June 2015, http://www.unicef.org/myanmar/media_24186.html

⁷ This acceleration in discharges is said partially to be due to the new tripartite case-management meeting which occurs on a monthly basis between CTFMR/ *Tatmadaw*-MOD and Ministry of Immigration since August 2014.

⁸ In November 2013, the UN CTFMR supported the Myanmar government to launch a nation-wide campaign to raise awareness on its commitment to end the recruitment and use of children by the *Tatmadaw Kyi*. As part of this campaign, and on behalf of the UN CTFMR, UNICEF and World Vision are managing 2 hotlines (09-421166701 and 09-421166702) where anyone can report suspected cases of children recruited by the *Tatmadaw Kyi*.

reported high levels of recruitment of children by the Myanmar military in the past. This limited number is partially a result of the age limit relating to underage recruits under the JAP⁹ and the fact that since a large number of individuals recruited as children are now in their 20s or older, they are covered under the ILO's Forced Labour Complaints Mechanism.¹⁰

While processes to verify and release children under the JAP apply to both the BGFs and the *Tatmadaw Kyi*, awareness of these mechanisms is very low in the BGFs and so far only one child has been released from its ranks.¹¹

The *Tatmadaw Kyi* has incorporated information on preventing underage recruitment into training programs for military personnel with Sergeants and Corporals receiving annual training on this issue.¹² Military focal points (of the rank of Lt. Colonel) located in the 14 Regional Military Commands (RMCs) and all Adjutant Officers from the RMC who are responsible for staff administration, have been provided training in prevention of underage recruitment and implementation of the JAP.¹³ Additional Directives on ending underage recruitment and use issued by the Commander-in-Chief are reportedly widely disseminated.¹⁴

The Myanmar military is required to follow agreed protocols¹⁵ for identifying underage recruits in a battalion or recruitment centres, including identification by the officers and self-identification by the children. In practice, it is reported that officers are loathe to admit underage recruits are present in their ranks and children are too fearful to come forward and declare they are underage.¹⁶ This is said to occur due to a variety of reasons, which include a fear of accountability within the *Tatmadaw Kyi* and the officer's lack of capacity to undertake age assessments. There are several cases of children who have come forward and were reportedly intimidated by officers and had to lodge their complaint through an alternative mechanism. Children have been threatened, beaten, handcuffed and on occasion forced to take on duties involving hard labour after self-identification.¹⁷

In cases where a documentation review is conducted, those responsible (the Sergeant Clerk, Adjutant Battalion or Battalion Commander tasked with verifying the actual age of the recruit with Township authorities and the child's parents) may not have received the training to identify false documentation. In other instances, widespread corruption within Township authorities and the significant, if unofficial, influence that the military exerts on them ensures that documentation is often falsified and an accurate proof of age is seldom obtained.

As a result, the *Tatmadaw Kyi's* progress in identifying children within its ranks has been slow.

⁹ Under the JAP, the government commits to discharge from service those under the age of 18.

¹⁰ The ILO has received 962 complaints of underage recruitment from February 2007 till September 2013. In addition, other UN organisations, including UNICEF, have received reports.

¹¹ In 2011, BGFs were named for the first time in the UN Secretary-General's annexes to his annual report on children and armed conflict (together with the *Tatmadaw Kyi*) as parties that recruit and use children in armed conflict. UN GA, *Annual report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict*, UN Doc. A/65/820-S/2011/250, 23 April 2011, Annex I.

¹² Child Soldiers International, Meeting with Myanmar government delegation led by Major General Than Soe, Deputy Adjutant General, Ministry of Defence, Naypyitaw, 10 December 2014.

¹³ Child Soldiers International, Interview with Major General Ngwe Thein, Director, Directorate of Military Strength, Naypyitaw, 10 September 2013.

¹⁴ Child Soldiers International interview with UN CTFMR representative, May 2015.

¹⁵ Agreed procedures which form part of the work plan between the Myanmar military and the UN CTFMR incorporate processes which include: mass identification where officers are required to separate out and question those who visibly appear young in age; through a system of self-identification, where underage recruits can come forward and declare their age in response to announcements made by officials; and by carrying out a review of recruitment documentation to identify through a set of agreed procedures, the presence of an underage recruit in the battalion or recruitment centre.

¹⁶ Child Soldiers International, Confidential interviews, May 2015, London.

¹⁷ Child Soldiers International, Confidential interviews, June 2015, London.

Ongoing falsification of identity documents

The practice of falsifying age documentation continues to be reported.¹⁸ Some military personnel and civilian recruitment brokers reportedly forge documents before bringing a child into the recruitment centre. In other cases, recruiters are reported to have taken children to a different state to the one they are registered in and had a second Citizenship Scrutiny Card (CSC) or National Registration Card (NRC) issued in which the recruit is registered as 18 years old. Age verification documents can be easily falsified at local photocopy shops, where templates of birth certificates, family lists and school registration forms are readily available.¹⁹ Child Soldiers International understands that, in addition to age, recruiters falsely registered other information at the time of recruitment, for example altering the child's biographical information (i.e. the father's name) to make it more difficult for parents or the authorities to subsequently locate the child.²⁰ After their recruitment, children are often issued a CSC containing false information.

The Myanmar government admitted that the falsification of documents remained an ongoing problem but denied that this led to the recruitment of children since recruitment only took place "once the documents were checked and approved by officials from the Ministry of Immigration".²¹

A problem which is becoming newly evident is that the *Tatmadaw Kyi*, in a bid to ensure that its recruitment files are complete, takes responsibility for all soldiers to have a CSC – they call in officials from the Ministry of Immigration to prepare identity documents for all cases, including putting all soldiers together on a family list. There may be very little or no substantiating documentation prior to the issuance of this card, so its veracity cannot be confirmed. Similarly, officials from the *Tatmadaw Kyi* regularly support new recruits to gather up all of their documentation. In a situation where a sergeant goes to a school administrator to request a copy of the School Testimonial, there are high chances that intimidation or coercion result in a document which support the needs of the Myanmar military, resulting in the availability of numerous contradictory documents. In some cases, parents have also falsified documents to allow their child into school earlier or later than the rule, which also contributes to the confusion.

The ILO has also received reports where teachers have acted as "brokers" and falsified documentation to trick young boys into military service, acting out of financial interest and in complicity with the military.²²

Ongoing use of children without formal recruitment

The JAP signed between the Myanmar government and the CTFMR in 2012 explicitly identifies steps such as age verification practices and monitoring and oversight mechanisms to ending "recruitment and use" of children by the *Tatmadaw Kyi* and the BGFs. However, information gathered by Child Soldiers International shows that both the Myanmar military and other state security forces have continued to use children without formal recruitment.

¹⁸ Child Soldiers International, Confidential interviews, 14 May 2015, London.

¹⁹ The ILO received testimony from a child who was taken by a recruitment officer to a copy shop near Mandalay train station where he observed documents being counterfeited to establish that he was over 18.

²⁰ See Human Rights Watch (HRW), *Sold to be Soldiers: The recruitment and use of child soldiers in Burma*, October 2007, <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2007/burma1007/burma1007webwcover.pdf>.

²¹ Child Soldiers International, Meeting with Myanmar government delegation led by Major General Than Soe, Deputy Adjutant General, Ministry of Defence, Naypyitaw, 10 December 2014.

²² Child Soldiers International, Interview with ILO representative, May 2015.

Use of underage children by the military has been reported in Shan, Chin and Mon state.²³ Patterns of use of children by the Myanmar military, Border Guard Police, Myanmar Police and township and village administrators have been reported from Arakan state since 2013.²⁴ Members of the Rohingya community are specifically targeted. Although, as formally “non-citizens”,²⁵ they cannot be recruited into the army, the use of members of the Rohingya community as forced labour by Myanmar security forces has been documented.²⁶ In May 2015, Child Soldiers International received specific information on Rohingya children being included for forced labour by Myanmar security forces.

In 2014, children were among those asked by the village administrator to present themselves for labour at a battalion commander’s verbal orders in Buthidaung Township in northern Arakan state. These children, along with adults, have been taken to regiments where they are made to do unpaid hard labour including sentry duties for a period of four to 14 days. Battalion commanders are said to use tacit threats of violence.

In the first half of 2015, following instructions by either the Border Guard Police or *Tatmadaw Kyi* in Rathedaung Township,²⁷ IDPs had to provide labour as daily sentry guards to the Border Guard Police. Each family is expected to provide one family member once a week.²⁸ Given the lack of birth registration and age verification procedures, there is serious concern that children were among those required to provide sentry duty by the Border Guard Police.²⁹ The Border Guard Police report directly to Ministry of Home Affairs and are not under the command of the Myanmar armed forces. In recent years, however, Border Guard Police have been carrying out activity usually undertaken by the *Tatmadaw Kyi*; for example, they have repeatedly exchanged fire with the Bangladesh Border Guard (BGB). Child Soldiers International is therefore concerned that children used by the Border Guard Police may be used in hostilities in violation of Article 38.2 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

On 3 April 2015 a directive was issued by the Myanmar military Commander in Chief specifically prohibiting the “use” of children.³⁰ Information received by Child Soldiers International shows that the directive has been disseminated widely, including among battalions posted in the frontlines of the conflict in Southern Shan and Kachin state.³¹ The impact of this directive on the behaviour of the Myanmar military remains to be assessed.

²³ Information gathered by the UN CTFMR.

²⁴ Widespread incidences of forced labour by the Myanmar military, Border Guard Police, Myanmar Police and township and village administrators have been reported in Arakan state. According to confidential information received by Child Soldiers International, nearly 2,000 children were subjected to forced labour in northern Arakan state in 2013, and nearly 400 cases have been reported in 2014.

²⁵ Myanmar’s 1982 Citizenship Law has effectively prevented ethnic Rohingya from obtaining Myanmar citizenship. Under this Law, children born to non-citizens do not obtain citizenship and in order for a Rohingya child to attain Myanmar citizenship, one parent must be a Myanmar citizen under three specified categories. “Burma Citizenship Law,” Chapter II, 15 October 1982, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3ae6b4f71b.html>. See also: *IRIN News*, “In Brief: 40,000 Rohingya children in Myanmar unregistered”, 19 January 2012, <http://www.irinnews.org/report/94672/in-brief-40-000-rohingya-children-in-myanmar-unregistered>

²⁶ See for instance: The Arakan Project, *Forced labour during the Arakan crisis: An overview of forced labour practices in North Arakan, Burma (June to August 2012)*, 31 August, 2012, http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs14/Arakan_Project-FL-Arakan_crisis.pdf

²⁷ A request was made for 22 sentry guards for five sentry posts for Koe Tan Kauk camp and 16 sentry guards for five sentry posts for Chein Khar Li camp. Requests are more commonly issued from the Border Guard Police.

²⁸ Child Soldiers International has received information that the Border Guard Police conducts regular surprise checks on those on sentry duty and if they detect any misconduct or if they believe that sentry duty is not being carried out according to their expectations, money or goods are extorted from those on duty.

²⁹ In March 2012, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar reported that “tens of thousands of children remain unregistered” as a result of the citizenship law. UN Human Rights Council, *Progress Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar*, A/HRC/19/67, 7 March 2012, http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/RegularSession/Session19/A-HRC-19-67_en.pdf

³⁰ The Directive is not on file with Child Soldiers International.

³¹ Child Soldiers International, Confidential interview, May 2015.

Detention of former child soldiers

Child Soldiers International remains concerned that children who escape from the *Tatmadaw Kyi* continue to be detained and treated like adult deserters. While commitments and policy directives regarding the arrest and prosecution of underage runaways have been issued at higher levels of government, this practice is not supported at the level of battalions and regiments, where such arrests continue to take place. Children arrested in this manner are charged with “desertion/AWOL” and also for “criminal action”.

In 2014, the ILO via its Complaint Mechanism on forced labour received 52 cases of children who fled the *Tatmadaw Kyi* and were declared “deserters”. Out of these, at least 13 were arrested, charged with desertion and imprisoned. While no specific orders have been issued requiring arresting officers to check the documentation of alleged deserters to ensure that they were indeed of legal recruitment age when recruited, there is a directive which orders officers not to arrest or perform any legal procedure and harass those in possession of an ILO protection letter.

Under the JAP, the Myanmar government agreed to share with the ILO on a regular basis a list of persons arrested or incarcerated for desertion, with a view to verify the legitimacy of that charge in respect of their age on recruitment; however, this has yet to occur on a regular basis.³²

Accountability

Limited accountability measures have so far failed to definitively end on-going underage recruitment.

According to the ILO, 274 prosecutions, resulting in punishments ranging from the issuance of formal reprimands, monetary fines, demotion, loss of service time against promotion and pension rights, dishonourable discharge or imprisonment, have been made against military personnel in response to complaints made under the ILO’s Supplementary Understanding.³³ In fact, all accountability measures taken by the *Tatmadaw Kyi* so far have stemmed entirely from this mechanism. While some form of disciplinary action by the military is taken in cases brought to their attention, the majority of those punished are of lower ranks (Corporals, Sergeants, Lance Corporals). Commanders have not been held accountable despite the fact that the *Tatmadaw Kyi* operates on the principle of line of command.

Information received by Child Soldiers International also shows that *Tatmadaw Kyi* officials have approached former child soldiers to sign documents saying they were voluntarily recruited as there is concern that these children may be called to testify against those who recruited them.

No systematic and effective investigations or prosecutions have been initiated with regards to civilian brokers who play an important role in luring and forcing children to the military recruitment officers. This could partly be because of an absence of a clear legal avenue for prosecutions, which the CTFMR is trying to address by advocating for a Presidential Decree to fill this gap.

Underage recruitment and use by armed opposition groups

Armed opposition groups active in various regions of Myanmar have been known to recruit children and use them in hostilities. Some of these groups are considered persistent perpetrators, having been listed for at least five years in the annexes of the UN Secretary-General’s annual reports on children and armed

³² ILO Governing Body 323rd Session, Geneva, 12-27 March 2015, UN.Doc. GB.323/INS/4.

³³ Op. cit.

conflict. Research conducted by Child Soldiers International on three groups, the Karen National Union/Karen National Liberation Army (KNU/KNLA), the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (DKBA) and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) shows the continued practice of formal and informal association of children with these groups, coupled with the absence of effective age verification procedures, which places children at considerable risk of unlawful recruitment and participation in hostilities.³⁴

As the UN Security Council Working Group has noted in its August 2013 conclusions³⁵, the current efforts to resolve the armed conflicts in Myanmar constitutes an important opportunity to address the issue of child soldiers. The Myanmar Peace Centre has voiced support for the inclusion of issues concerning protection of children in the nationwide ceasefire agreement.³⁶ The draft Nationwide Ceasefire agreement currently includes a provision to end forced labour and calls on parties to deter from recruitment of underage persons, forced conscription, killing and maiming, molestation or other forms of gender based violence and abduction.³⁷

Conclusion

The Myanmar military continues to face pressures to increase troop numbers and a system of incentive-based quotas drives demand for fresh recruitment. This puts children at particular risk. Most cases of underage recruitment in recent years have been coerced, with children being tricked or lured into the army through false promises. The practice of falsification of age documents, including NRCs, CSC and family lists, continues unchecked and no measures have been taken to establish accountability for this practice.

While some steps have been taken to strengthen recruitment procedures into the *Tatmadaw Kyi*, the fact that recruitment occurs in various smaller recruitment units across the country makes effective implementation and controls difficult. Implementation of these measures needs to be routinely monitored and verified by members of the CTFMR, for which access remains a crucial requirement. No steps have been initiated to ensure that preventative mechanisms are instituted in the BGFs by implementing documentation and screening procedures for entry into their ranks.

Key Recommendations

Child Soldiers International encourages the US government to make the following recommendations:

Recommendations to the Myanmar government

- Implement the Joint Action Plan fully, resulting in the identification, registration and discharge of all children present in the ranks of the *Tatmadaw Kyi* and the BGFs;

³⁴ Child Soldiers International, *A Dangerous Refuge: Child recruitment in the Kachin Independence Army*, June 2015; Child Soldiers International, *Chance for Change: Ending the recruitment and use of child soldiers in Myanmar*, January 2013, http://child-soldiers.org/research_report_reader.php?id=624

³⁵ UN Security Council, *Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, Conclusions on children and armed conflict in Myanmar*, UN. Doc. S/AC.51/2013/2, 16 August 2013.

³⁶ *Eleven Myanmar*, “Ceasefire agreement to include protection of women, child soldiers”, 28 September 2013, <http://www.elevenmyanmar.com/politics/3551-ceasefire-agreement-to-include-protection-of-women-child-soldiers>.

³⁷ Draft Nationwide ceasefire agreement shared with Child Soldiers International by Myanmar Peace Centre, Yangon, December 2014.

- Provide the CTFMR with unimpeded access to its military sites and other areas where children may be present (such as military and civilian detention centres and prisons) to enable them to ensure there is full understanding of and implementation of the Joint Action Plan;
- Strengthen its efforts towards preventing future underage recruitment through: (a) strengthening recruitment procedures, especially by implementing Standard Operating Procedures on age verification within the army and the civilian police, and oversight across all recruitment sites in the country; (b) establishing a central database with personal information of individual *Tatmadaw Kyi* and BGF recruits; and (c) reforming the civil registration system to ensure that all children are registered at birth free of charge and without discrimination;
- As part of the Joint Action Plan, disseminate directives on the prohibition of “use” of children to all military units. Strengthen the understanding of “use” and its prohibition in existing trainings, policies and operations, including requesting all units to substantively increase awareness on the issue during assemblies and monthly meetings;
- Immediately end the practice of harassing, detaining and imprisoning children on the grounds of desertion from the armed forces, and ensure their immediate and unconditional release; in particular, the Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Home Affairs should issue a joint directive to all military and civilian police stations, stressing that suspected minors should not be arrested/detained for desertion and request that age assessments are carried out by military and civilian police before any arrest for desertion;
- Strengthen efforts to bring to justice those responsible for child recruitment or use by the *Tatmadaw Kyi* and the BGFs, including those with command responsibility and civilian brokers who assist in the unlawful recruitment of children;
- Allow and facilitate access by the Country Task Force and other independent humanitarian organisations to non-state armed groups in order to enable the negotiation of action plans and other measures, and to monitor and verify reports of child recruitment and use;
- Ensure the safe release and reintegration of children associated with these groups;
- Fully incorporate child protection throughout peace and ceasefire agreements and in the mechanisms aimed at monitoring their implementation. In particular, recruitment and use of children should be considered a violation of the ceasefire agreement. The Nationwide Ceasefire Joint Monitoring Committee should, with the support of the UN CTFMR have an explicit mandate to monitor such violations and to report them to the UN through current mechanisms, namely the 1612 Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism and the ILO’s Supplementary Understanding;
- Ratify, without delay, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

Recommendations to armed opposition groups

- Support and ensure that the issue of protection of children is incorporated into the framework of the nationwide ceasefire agreement and other agreements in the future;

- Issue, publish and widely disseminate orders to all members of armed groups to refrain from recruiting or using children in hostilities;
- Ensure that children do not take part in military operations and are removed from frontline operations with immediate effect;
- Facilitate access to the UN and other independent humanitarian organisations for the purpose of identifying ways forward to rehabilitate all under-age recruits back into the community, and concluding action plans.