

## HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

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August 22, 2007

H.E. Mr. Kyaw Tint Swe  
Ambassador and Permanent Representative  
Permanent Mission of Myanmar to the United Nations  
10 East 77<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10021  
*Via facsimile*

Your Excellency:

Human Rights Watch conducts regular, systematic investigations of human rights abuses in some seventy countries around the world. As part of its ongoing work on children's rights and to update our previous research, Human Rights Watch is currently conducting an investigation related to the recruitment of children as soldiers in Myanmar. Our investigation encompasses recruitment by national armed forces (Tatmadaw) as well as by armed non-state groups.

We plan to publish a report on child recruitment in Myanmar later this year and are gathering information via many different avenues. In order that our information on the Myanmar Tatmadaw is as complete as possible, we request your assistance in forwarding this letter to the appropriate officials in your government, and providing Human Rights Watch with the following information:

- 1) Information on the Myanmar army's recruitment policies and practices. In particular, please provide a list of all recruitment units and their locations, identify recruitment targets or quotas for the previous two years and the units which are responsible for recruitment, and statistics on the total number of individuals nationwide recruited into the army for each year since 2002, broken down by age;
- 2) An elaboration of how recruitment is monitored and what measures are in place to prevent forced conscription or the recruitment of minors in accordance with military rules.
- 3) Details on specific initiatives undertaken since 2004 by the Committee on the Prevention of the Recruitment of Underage Children, including measures taken to educate regional and local commands not to recruit children; measures taken to raise awareness among society about the rights of children generally, and specifically regarding the minimum age for recruitment for military service;
- 4) Information regarding the number of recruiters found to have recruited under-age soldiers in violation of established

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- policies since 2004, and the disciplinary measures taken in these cases;
- 5) Information regarding the number of children demobilized from the armed forces since 2004, and details regarding any programmes set up for the demobilisation, rehabilitation and reintegration of Tatmadaw child soldiers;
  - 6) Information on any draft articles in the proposed state constitution pertaining to mandatory military service or military recruitment;
  - 7) Information concerning measures that have been taken to release and resettle former child soldiers who were arrested for desertion or other offences, including the names and addresses of persons who have been so assisted;
  - 8) Copies of all recruitment rules, orders and directives issued by the Ministry of Defence, including "Directive for Recruiting new qualified private and other ranks for the Armed Forces" issued by the Office of the Adjutant General, Ministry of Defence, Reference no: 1/131/Yay-1(Kha), dated 5<sup>th</sup> April 2000, and "Directive: Not to practice forced recruitment for new recruits" issued by the Officer of the Adjutant-General, Ministry of Defence, Reference No: 1/131/Yay-1(Ka), 2 October 1997;
  - 9) A list of all Nationalities Youth Development Training Schools (NYDTS) under the Ministry of Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs, statistics on the numbers of previous or current NYDTS students who were previously enrolled in the Ye Nyunt programme, and statistics on the current occupations of the NYDTS graduates including those who have joined the military;
  - 10) Information on any communications between your government and the Royal Thai government regarding dialogue between United Nations agencies in Thailand (specifically UNICEF and UNHCR) and non-state armed groups such as the Karen National Union and Karenni National Progressive Party on the subject of child recruitment to their armies. Specifically, did your government request the Thai government to halt such dialogue? If so, what were the reasons? Will your government consider reversing this policy?

Unfortunately our report must be produced on a short time schedule, so we would very much appreciate your reply on the above requests no later than September 15, 2007.

Thank you very much for your kind assistance.

Sincerely yours,

Jo Becker  
Advocacy Director  
Children's Rights Division