

The Plight

OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN BURMA

Woman and Child Rights Project (Southern Burma)

Issue No.3, September 2010



1. SUMMARY
2. METHODOLOGY
3. MAIN FINDINGS
4. ANALYSIS
 - 4.1 Village Militias
 - 4.2 The lottery
 - 4.3. Forced to buy guns
 - 4.4 Questions answered with torture
 - 4.5 Forced Labor
 - 4.6 "No choice"
5. Forced Recruitment and forced labor causes families to flee their villages
6. Elections are unlikely to halt use of child soldiers or forced labor
7. Who's involved
8. LEGAL DEFINITIONS
9. WHAT YOU CAN DO
10. RECOMMENDATIONS

THE RECRUITMENT OF CHILD SOLDIERS THREATENS

FAMILIES IN SOUTHERN BURMA

1. SUMMARY

The recruitment of child soldiers into local militias by the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) in southern Mon State and northern Tenasserim Division is widespread and systematic.

During field research in May and August 2010 in Ye Township, Mon State, and Ye Phyu Township, Tenasserim Division, WCRP documented the forced recruitment of 40 children in these areas. In one village surveyed, 15 out of 40 civilians forced to perform security duties for the military were children.

In addition, the use of children in forced labor by the SPDC in these areas is also widespread and systematic.

As a direct result, many families living in the region have fled to the Thai border to seek shelter. According to the Thailand Burma Border Consortium (TBBC), 1,550 people in Ye and Ye Phyu Townships have been internally displaced since August 2008, bringing the total number of internally displaced persons in the area to 64,000.

The recruitment of child soldiers and the use of forced labor constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity under international law. The international community should support a UN Commission of Inquiry to further investigate these crimes.

Human rights workers fear that the situation will worsen after the elections when the military authorities continue their push for ceasefire groups to



Photo by HURFOM

form Border Guard Forces (BGF). "If ceasefire groups say 'yes' for BGF, we will have the burden of militarization in these areas. If the ceasefire groups continue to reject the BGF, war might break out. We don't know where and how can we save our life in the future. It's a lose-lose situation for our children. We are very worried for our generation that the situation is getting worse" said a Mon parent.

A message from

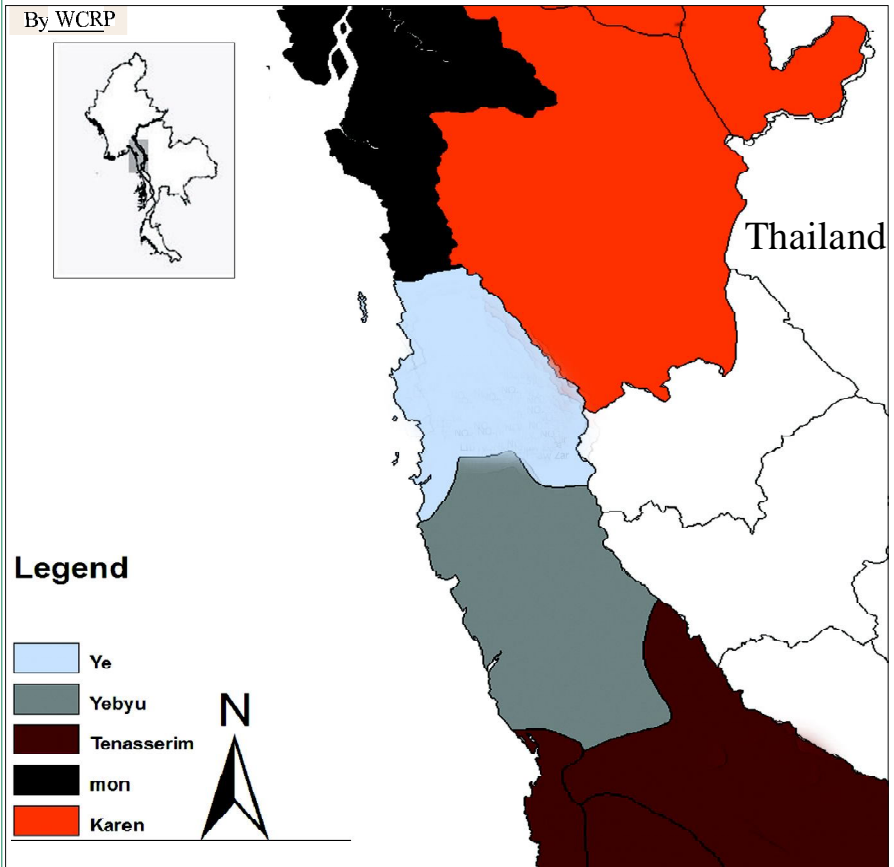
Woman and Child Rights Project

The Woman and Child Rights Project (WCRP), southern Burma, was founded in 2000 by the Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) in order to monitor and protect the rights of women and children and to focus international attention on Burma in order to pressure the Burmese military regime -- the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) -- to uphold the rights of women and children.

WCRP's main aim is to promote and protect the rights of women and children according to the CEDAW and the CRC, which were both ratified by the regime. WCRP implements various alternative activities to expose how the SPDC and its Burmese Army continually violate women and children's rights and ignore the CEDAW and CRC.

WCRP's objectives are:

- To monitor and protect women and children's rights by: collecting information, monitoring the situation inside and distributing information to the international community
- To strengthen women and children in their communities by teaching them about their rights, according to the CEDAW and CRC and encouraging them to protect these rights..



Please note that while these findings are limited to southern Mon State and northern Tenasserim Division, it has been widely reported elsewhere that the SPDC has also been recruiting local militias in Kachin, Karen, and Shan States and that children are likely being recruited in these areas as well.

2. METHODOLOGY

The WCRP field team used in-depth interviews and surveys in the collection of data for this report. WCRP field reporters surveyed villages of southern Ye Township and conducted in-depth interviews with children and parents from conflict areas who are now living in IDP areas under the control of New Mon State Party. In addition, the WCRP Coordinator went to migrant communities in Samut Sakhon and Samut Prakan Provinces near Bangkok, Thailand and to Phuket, Phang Nga Provinces in southern Thailand, and elsewhere to conduct interviews with children and their parents from southern Burma who migrated or fled from conflict areas into Thailand.

The WCRP limited its field research to southern Mon State and northern Tenasserim Division. However, it has been widely reported elsewhere that the SPDC has also been recruiting local militias in Kachin, Karen and Shan States and that children are likely being recruited in these areas as well, and that the use of child soldiers and children in forced labor is not limited to the regions that the WCRP has covered in this report.

3. MAIN FINDINGS

Two months of WCRP data collection during field research in May and August 2010 found 40 children were recruited or used as child soldiers by SPDC. Of these 40 children:

- Thirteen children were recruited to be militia members by SPDC troops.
- Twenty-five children were recruited to be village guards from 2008 to 2010.
- Two children were recruited to be porters.
- Six out of 30 child soldiers “volunteered” and are still in the military. One of these “volunteers” was responsible for convincing five more children to join.
- In one village surveyed by WCRP 15 out of 40 village security guards were children, some as young as 12 years-old.

In addition, WCRP found the use of children in forced labor to be widespread and systematic throughout Mon State, with most children over the age of ten and some even younger having experienced forced labor.

4. ANALYSIS

4.1 Village militias

SPDC troops in southern Burma have increased its military presence by implementing a local village militia strategy. The regime is forcing the local people into militia units or civilian army (*Pyi-Thu-Sit* in Burmese) to fight against the armed anti-SPDC groups in southern Mon State and northern Tenasserim Division. The SPDC mandates that every village in Ye township have a militia comprised of villagers. According to WCRP’s findings, the SPDC has also been recruiting village children into these militias in southern Mon State and northern Tenasserim Division. The SPDC military forcibly recruits children from ethnic villages to work as soldiers, guards, look-outs, porters, spies, messengers, human shields, and minesweepers.



Photo by HURFOM

SPDC’s Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) No. 588, based in Mon State, trains children to become SPDC

4.2 The lottery

The SPDC Army requires that each household enter all male members between the ages of 12 and 59 into a lottery system which selects militia participants. The village headman is responsible for organizing the lottery system that selects whether a villager has to participate or not. According to one villager it was "very rare" for a villager who is representing his household not to be selected for militia service. The village headmen, in Ye Township, are appointed by local SPDC battalion soldiers and are under their direct command. To avoid being selected, families can opt to hire a replacement or pay a fine. In some villages, the lottery includes children as young as 12.

4.3 Forced to buy guns

Responsibilities and tasks of the village militia are determined by SPDC soldiers on a day-by-day basis and then relayed to the village headman. The SPDC requires that the village militia carry guns, but does not provide them to the villagers. The guns must be purchased with money collected from village households, and are considered SPDC property. If a gun is lost or damaged, the villager responsible is punished by the SPDC soldiers, and villagers are required to tell anyone who asks that the guns were provided by the SPDC.

4.4 Questions answered with torture

SPDC soldiers also order the village militia to provide security from attacks by splinter groups, especially when the SPDC is based in the village or during a period of heightened conflict. In addition to the establishment of village militias in Ye and Ye Phyu Township, the SPDC also uses a rotational system to form a guard force made up of villagers. Up to 12 people are used per night in some villages where insurgent activity is high, and sometimes the village is guarded during the day as well. If a villager questions an order, or fails to implement an order immediately and completely, that villager and their family are tortured.

16-year-old Mehm Mon Chan from a village of Khawzar sub-township, Ye Township said "I was in the militia representing my cousin's family. My cousin is only 12 years old, and lives alone with his grandmother. If they did not give someone from the family to the militia, then they would have been arrested and beaten, so I had to stand for their family. My father represented my family."

15-year-old Mhem Layie Mon from a village of Ye Township said, "I did this many times, more times than I can count that I stood guard. I do not remember how many times. I performed these duties until February 2009 when my family and I fled to the IDP area where we live now."

16-year-old Mhem Balai explained how he was forced to be a guard in his village of Ye Township: "When I was a guard, I worked with my friend who is also 16, and an older man. I am very lucky that I could escape to Thailand and avoid that dangerous and scary work. I have no doubt that my friend still has to do the same work as before for the Burmese soldiers, or maybe even worse, because I heard that the security situation in my village is not so good."

4.5 Forced labor

Nearly all villagers in areas surveyed have been forced to work for the military on at least one occasion but often many times. The SPDC makes daily demands for labor of the local villagers, including children. Often there is no alternative for a family but to send one of their children, as the adults must work their regular job in order to buy food for their family.

4.6 "No choice"

Children are forced to work on innumerable projects under harsh conditions and without pay. These include the building of army barracks, police stations, roads and state schools, clearing land, breaking and carrying rocks and many other tasks. "Special" projects often require the entire village to work. Expensive fines must be paid if a villager fails to report for work. Wealthier families can sometimes bribe officials and gain exemptions, but for the vast majority of villagers, there is no choice but to send a family member to work.

Mi Yin, a mother with three children said, "If the adult people go for forced labor, we have nothing to eat. So we have to send our children to go instead. The strong soldiers used our little child to work for their battalion. Burmese soldiers are very lazy and just use villagers, including children, by pointing with their gun."

In 2008, a 50-year-old villager from Khawzar sub-township, Ye Township, said that three boys, ages 10, 14 and 15, were randomly selected by the village headman under pressure from SPDC military to work in the military barracks stationed near their village. The three children worked from sunrise to sunset digging ditches, repairing roads, carrying soil and building fences around the camp. "The children can only go to school when it is the turn of other households to do the forced labor. If it is their family's turn, then they must work, because their families are too poor to pay the fine, or for their parents to take time away from their paid work."

Nai ong Mon, a former village headman from a village in southern Ye explained how he used to participate in the forced labor. In a village of 50 households, children as young as eight years old were forced into labor and every child performed some type of forced labor by the age of 15. The primary responsibility of the children entailed building roads inside the military camp. "I used to collect the villagers to go and work when they were ordered to do so by the SPDC. We would get the order from the soldiers almost every day for at least 10 people to go to work for them. If there were 10 people doing the work, at least 5 of them would be under 18. Eventually I could not do it anymore, I could not bring myself to follow the orders of the soldiers. I quit my position and fled my village."

A 13-year-old boy from — Village of Khawzar sub-township, Ye Township, was forced to porter soil to a construction site where villagers were repairing a stretch of the main road. The victim performed this task from 6am until 6pm and was not able to attend school. Armed soldiers supervised the work and intimidated the child, as well as the other workers. The child explained that many villagers must participate in unpaid labor every day, including other children.

According to the WCRP's finding, eight boys aged between 14 and 17 from — Village, Khawzar sub-township were forced to work at the police station. The boys started work before 7am until 6pm digging ditches, making fences, and cutting wood and bamboo, working for 36 days straight. All the boys were attending school and missed school when they were working. They had to provide their own food, water, and tools.



Young children carry heavy stones under the control of the SPDC.

Photo by WCRP

Thirteen year-old Mhem Mon performed forced labor and was forcibly recruited to be a village guard: "I had to leave my old grandmother alone in my village. She is not in good health. She has a mental problem. I am scared of the

Burmese soldiers and I followed my sister, who had already left. I was forced to guard the soldiers at night time. I had to be responsible for our household, because my grandmother is sick and she has no money to hire other people – we were just two people in our household. So I had to be the guard.”

In 2009, in — Village in southern Ye Township, three children out of 27 people were forced to work in the barracks. They started work at 7am and had to work until 5pm. The barracks were more than a mile away from the village, so they had to be driven there every morning by someone from the village that had a car. One of the girls, who has since fled to Thailand, described her experience: “It was mostly women working. We had to make fences, clear bushes and scrub away from the barracks, fix the road and do whatever else the soldiers ordered. Every morning I had to wake up very early, at 4am, to cook food for lunch. We had to bring our own water as well.

My family has been poor since I was born, and we had to leave school because we could not afford it. After my mother passed away I took responsibility for my family. We had no money to pay the fine and instead of working we fled to Thailand. I didn’t want to work in the army barracks – I am a woman and the soldiers scare me. We have to do whatever they want.”

5. Forced recruitment and forced labor causes families to flee their villages

According to the Thailand Burma Border Consortium (TBBC), 1,550



Photo by HURFOM

SPDC forces children to do heavy labor to build a State School

people in Ye and Ye Phyu Townships have been internally displaced since August 2008, bringing the total number of internally displaced persons in the area to 64,000. Many of the villagers surveyed by TBBC said they fled to relocation sites and areas controlled by the New Mon State Party because of forced labor and forced recruitment into village militias.¹

Forced labor and the recruitment of child soldiers by the SPDC into village militias have also caused more and more families to flee to Thailand.

A field officer and teacher from the Labor Rights Promotion Network (LPN), a Thai NGO, said: “I meet mostly people from Mon State, Karen State and Tenasserim Division who fled to Thailand because they don’t want to join the village militia.”

As a result, village populations in the region are decreasing. It is mostly male heads of households who are migrating. The fathers plan in escaping is to work in Thailand and send money home, so that even if the SPDC does try to recruit other family members, the family will have money to pay the fine instead. However fines are increasing from at most 3,000 kyat (US\$3) in 2009 to 7,000 kyat (US\$7).

A grandmother said: “I had to pay 3,000 kyat (US\$3) to get my grandson released once from the militia but I could not pay for the next time and he had to join.”

¹ TBBC (29 Oct 09) Protracted Displacement and Militarization in Eastern Burma – 2009 Survey



Southern Burma residents in the process of fleeing their homes

Photo by WCRP

A wife of an SPDC Army soldier who fled to Thailand said: "I am a Burmese soldier's wife. Both I and my children didn't want to attend military training but if we are in Burma we had no choice. So we fled to Thailand."

Mhem Pine Non, an 18-year-old boy now living in Thailand, said: "I fled from my village over two months ago to avoid being in the village militia after I was chosen in the ballot. I don't want to be in village militia. When I was in my village I was forced to guard and do other types of hard labor very often. [...] I am okay, I can cope, but I feel very worried and sad for two of my cousins who are still studying. They are only 12 and 14 years old, and they are also forced to guard the whole night without sleep and then in the morning they have to go to school. I am sure they are sleepy when they are at school. I think they have to drop out the school soon like me."

17-year-old Mhem Seik Mon, who worked as a village guard from the middle of 2008 until he fled to Thailand at the end of 2009 in southern Ye Township: "We had to guard the Burmese soldiers all the time. When they were sleeping, we could not sleep even though we were very tired and wanted to sleep very much, because if the soldiers see that we are asleep, we would get fined and have to give the soldiers money – 5,000 kyat per time, or food such as pigs and chickens that belong to our families for the soldier's food. I fled to Thailand. The other children are probably still working as guards."

6. Elections are unlikely to halt use of child soldiers or forced labor

Human rights workers fear that the situation will worsen after the elections when the military authorities will continue their push for ceasefire groups to form Border Guard Forces (BGF). WCRP has great concern for future generations of Burma after the election. Since the SPDC is threatening to revoke its ceasefire agreement with the New Mon State Party (NMSP) WCRP fears that the situation will be even worse than before the 1995 ceasefire agreement, because in the past 15 years, the SPDC has heavily militarized the area [see *WHO'S INVOLVED* below]. As a result, children in these areas and elsewhere will likely be even more susceptible to both forced labor and the forced recruitment as child soldiers.

"If ceasefire groups say "yes" for BGF, we will have the burden of militarization in these areas. If the ceasefire groups continue to reject the BGF, war might break out. We don't know where and how can we save our life in the future. It's a lose-lose situation for our children. We are very worried for our generation that the situation is getting worse," said a Mon parent.



Photo by HURFOM

Child soldiers were ordered to serve in the front line of the Anankwin Tactical Command.

“My children will kill each other”

A father whose oldest son took up arms against the SPDC shared his story: “I cannot stop my child joining the insurgency, because if I were young, I might do same because the Burmese soldiers don’t accept our people as human beings. But if we continue living in the village, my younger son will have to join the Burmese soldier militia program. So if we listen to the Burmese soldiers, my children will kill each other”.

7. Who’s involved

According to the TBBC, three SPDC Army Artillery Battalions, six Infantry Battalions, and 12 Light Infantry Battalions are based in Ye and Ye Phyu Townships. In addition, the SPDC Army Military Operations Command 19 is based in Ye Township, Mon State.²

8. LEGAL DEFINITIONS

Note that given the term “child soldier” is not limited to those children who have carried arms but extends to children who have been used by an armed force in any capacity³, and also that the recruitment is forced and unpaid, the recruitment of children into village militias violates international laws prohibiting the use of children as soldiers, and laws prohibiting forced labor.

Use and Recruitment of Child Soldiers

The recruitment and use of child soldiers is prohibited by international humanitarian law (the law of armed conflict) and international human rights law. Protocol II to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 applies during non-international armed conflict and prohibits state and non-state armed groups from recruiting children under the age of 15 into the armed forces or permitting them to take part in hostilities.⁴ This standard is reflected in the Convention on the Rights of the Child,⁵ acceded to by the Burmese government in 1991.



Photo by HURFOM

SPDC’s LIB 588 commander deems the children ready to fight.

² TBBC (29 Oct 09) Protracted Displacement and Militarization in Eastern Burma – 2009 Survey

³ Cape Town Principles and Best Practices on the Recruitment of Children into the Armed Forces and on Demobilization and Social Reintegration of Child Soldiers in Africa (UNICEF, 1997)

⁴ Art. 4(3) c

Irrespective of the ratification of these treaties, the recruitment of children under the age of 15 to armed forces is now considered to be a breach of customary international law, applicable to all parties to an armed conflict regardless of whether the party has ratified any of the above conventions.

More recent legal instruments raised the standard created by the Geneva Conventions and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, increasing the age below which recruitment constitutes a breach from 15 to 18. The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict obliges state parties to the convention to “ensure that persons who have not attained the age of 18 years are not compulsorily recruited into their armed forces.” The Optional Protocol also prohibits non-state armed groups from recruiting or using in hostilities persons under the age of 18 years, and requires that state parties “take all feasible measures to prevent such recruitment and use” by non-state armed groups.⁶

The 1999 International Labor Organization’s Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention 182 includes in its definition of the *worst forms of child labor* the “forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict”⁷ and defines a child as any person under the age of 18.⁸ The convention obliges member states to take immediate action to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.⁹

Burma has signed neither the Optional Protocol nor the Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention. However, in addition to the various international legal instruments prohibiting the recruitment and use of children in association with armed forces or armed groups, domestic prohibitions on the use of child soldiers have been in place in Burma for many years, and the SPDC has passed more recent legislation further establishing this prohibition. Directive No 13/73 (1974) of the Myanmar Defense Services and War Office Council, persons under the age of 18 are not permitted to be recruited into the armed forces. In 1993 the SPDC (then the SLORC) passed the Child Law, defining a child as any person under the age of 16 and prohibiting the employment of or granting permission to children to perform work which is hazardous to the child’s life or harmful to the child’s moral character. This is punishable by a fine or a term of imprisonment not exceeding six months.

The recruitment and use of child soldiers has been criminalized by the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court of 1998. Recruitment or use of child soldiers can now be, and already has been, prosecuted as a war crime by the International Criminal Court (ICC). The language of the Rome Statute differs from other recent accepted definitions of “child soldier”, and designates as a war crime the use of children under the age of 15 years in armed forces only if the child participates actively in hostilities.¹⁰ However Burma is not a party to the Rome Statute and thus Burmese officials could only be prosecuted in the ICC if the situation was referred to the ICC by the United Nations Security Council.

5 Art. 38(3)

6 Art. 4(2)

7 Art. 3(a)

8 Art. 2

9 Art. 6(1)

¹⁰ The language of the article is ambiguous and reads as follows: art 2(b) (xxvi) “Conscripting or enlisting children under the age of fifteen years into the national armed forces or using them to participate actively in hostilities [constitutes a war crime for the purposes of this Statute]” See http://www.coalitionfortheicc.org/blog/?p=510&langswitch_lang=en for discussion.

Forced labor

Forced labor is a form of human trafficking. The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children defines “trafficking in persons” as “the recruitment, transportation, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion...for the purpose of exploitation”. “Forced labor” is listed as a form of exploitation.¹¹

The United States Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report 2010 gives Burma a Tier Three ranking, indicating that the Burmese government is not making significant efforts to comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking in persons. The ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labor includes in its definition of *worst forms of child labor* “all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children...and forced or compulsory labour”.¹²

The Rome Statute lists human trafficking as a crime against humanity, thus giving the ICC jurisdiction over trafficking cases. As with the matter of recruitment of child soldiers, any ICC trial of Burmese officials regarding the use of forced labor would need to be referred to the ICC by the Security Council.

UN Security Council Resolution 1612

In 2005 the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1612, establishing a mechanism to monitor and report on six grave violations of children’s rights in armed conflict. The mechanism is currently not functioning well with regard to Burma. Despite widespread abuses constituting the above “grave violations”, widely acknowledged to be occurring across Burma by the United Nations and many NGOs, in 2009 only nine complaints regarding grave violations occurring in Burma were made. This number is well below any actual figures. Although no official estimates exist, while collecting data for its upcoming annual report regarding grave violations against children, WCRP field reporters have heard of **at least one hundred** such cases in southern Burma alone.

There are a number of reasons that the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) is not fully functioning with regard to Burma. MRM Task Forces in Burma and along the Thai border are unable to fully engage with the non-state armed groups, which are restricting their access to conflict areas and thus posing serious challenges to the Task Force’s ability to monitor and verify abuses. Many victims are unwilling to report the violations they suffered due to fear of harassment, arrest or other sanctions from the SPDC – either of themselves or of family members, despite the anonymity the MRM assures. Furthermore, there is a lack of widespread awareness of the MRM within the Burma movement, with many organizations that could be reporting cases unaware of the mechanism, or the process by which to file the reports.

9. WHAT YOU CAN DO

If you are an organization working with children from Burma and would like to know more about filing cases, please contact WCRP at wcrpcontact@yahoo.com or contact Chantal Scholten at childrightsmr@gmail.com.

If you are an individual who would like to help, there are a number of things you can do.

There are many international organizations dedicated to bringing about an end to the use of children in armed conflict that you can join or donate to. The Coalition to End the Use of Child Soldiers is one such organization: http://www.child-soldiers.org/get_involved/get_involved. Other organizations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch are concerned with human rights abuses more generally.

For more information on what you can do about serious international crimes in Burma, please visit: <http://www.unscburma.org/Crimes%20in%20Burma/Homepage.php>

¹¹ Art. 3(a)

¹² Art. 3(a)

Invitation for Feedback to Our Publication "The Plight" of Women and Children in Southern Burma

Dear Readers,

In 2000, with objectives to monitor the situation of women and children in Southern Burma and to empower them with the rights described in CEDAW and CRC, which are both ratified by the current military regime, our "Woman and Child Rights Project (Southern Burma)" came into existence.

Under this project, "The Plight" Newsletter is produced quarterly and focuses on the general situation of women and children in Burma and how their human rights are violated by the ruling regime and its army.

In a plan to evaluate our publication, we wish to get FEEDBACK from our readers. Hence, can you kindly send us your feedback. If you know anyone who would like to receive the newsletter or if you wish to send your feedback, please feel free to contact the following mailing and e-mail address.

Woman and Child Rights Project
P. O. Box 2237, General Post Office
Bangkok, Thailand 10501
E-mail: wcrpcontact@yahoo.com
Website: www.rehmonnya.org

With regards,
Project Coordinator
Woman and Child Rights Project - Southern Burma

Research your government's position on the use of child soldiers, or forced labor, or the Burmese regime. If your government has not taken a strong stance against the use of child soldiers or forced labor, or if your government maintains ties with the Burmese regime, pressure your local representatives for change.

Go to Burma Campaign USA, Burma Campaign UK, Burma Campaign Australia and look at the "dirty list", a list of companies that deal with Burma despite the widespread human rights abuses its citizens continue to suffer under the military regime. Here are some of the companies that you might consider boycotting and/or contacting to ask them to cut their ties with Burma's military government:

Chevron Corporation, Daewoo, Siemens AG, Lloyds of London, Total

You can view the entire list with contact details at <http://www.burmacampaign.org.uk/index.php/burma/dirty-and-clean-list/dirty-list/contact-details>

Burma Campaign recommends avoiding all travel to Burma, and includes on its dirty list a number of companies, such as Lonely Planet or Gecko Travel, that write travel books about Burma or operate tours to Burma. WCRP does not agree with this position and does not believe that all travel should Burma should be avoided. Although many tour operators and hotels are affiliated with the military regime, a careful traveller can ensure that most of their funds go into the hands of locals and not into the SPDC's coffers. Further, WCRP believes that travel to Burma will increase awareness abroad of the brutal regime and the plight of Burma's citizens and that maintaining the isolation of Burma's people is not a path toward progress or change.

If you would like to make a donation to WCRP, or to get any more information about anything in this report or any of WCRP's other publications, please contact email wcrpcontact@yahoo.com or go to our website at www.rehmonnya.org.



SPDC's Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) No. 588 provides military training to children

Photo by HURFOM

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

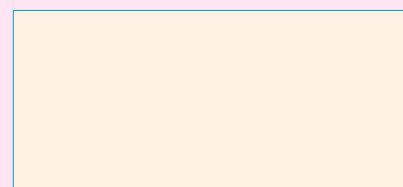
To the SPDC:

- Release immediately all children present in its military ranks, and criminally prosecute those responsible for their recruitment;
- Ratify without delay the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- Fulfill its obligations as a State party to the Forced Labor Convention 1930 (No. 29) and to the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention, 1948 (No. 87) of the ILO;
- Implement the ILO's recommendations to cease forced labor and implement labor reforms;
- Investigate and prosecute offences for forced labor committed by government agents in all circumstances.

To the international community:

- Support a UN Commission of Inquiry to investigate war crimes and crimes against humanity in Burma;
- Press the SPDC to fulfill its international obligations.

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