

# FORCED TO FIGHT

## MILITARY CONSCRIPTION IN SOUTHEASTERN BURMA

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A SHORT REPORT BY THE  
HUMAN RIGHTS FOUNDATION OF MONLAND



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## SUMMARY FINDINGS

The impacts of forced conscription are being felt across the country. In Southeastern Burma, families are torn apart as the junta recruits new soldiers in its war against the people.

*“None of the young men and their parents like the compulsory conscription law. The New Mon State Party (AD) and other revolutionary forces have released statements and stood with the young population. These actions have motivated us a lot,”* said a young man in Southeastern Burma.

## IMPACTS ON COMMUNITIES & FAMILIES



**Financial Insecurity**



**Education Stalled**



**Family Separation**

## CONSCRIPTION LAW RELATED HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

**20+**

Civilians detained in Mudon and Thanbyuzayat townships in Mon State for forced conscription.

**12+**

Arbitrary arrests related to the conscription law in Mawlamyine Capital, Mon State.

**75+**

Areas in Mon, Karen States were raided, and 60% of cases were associated with the conscription law.

## INTRODUCTION

As the conflict intensifies across Burma, it has become abundantly clear that the military junta is desperately trying to compensate for their historic losses on and off the battlefields. On February 10th, 2024, it enacted a compulsory conscription law, which sent shock-waves across the country.

The order comes amid high casualty rates of junta soldiers by the opposition forces as well as soaring defections amid economic turmoil and rising poverty. The 2010 People's Military Service Law, mandating conscription, is now being enforced for the first time since it was passed.

*“This decision came after the military suffered problems in battles. They promised to defeat anyone against them. They plan to start recruiting 5,000 people in April 2024,”* a 25-year-old Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) civil servant said on March 28, 2024.

The implementation of mandatory military service includes all men aged 18–35 and women aged 18–27 who must be in the Burma Army for at least two years. This law has caused widespread fear and uncertainty among young people.

Since the attempted coup on 1 February 2021, youth have been at the forefront of a Revolution that has refused to inherit another era of military rule.

Women, in particular, adopted new roles as they transcended previously held gender stereotypes.

The CDM was led by sectors dominated by women in education, labour and health care. When the revolution shifted from peaceful protest to armed resistance, women joined their male comrades on the front lines, continuing to participate in the shared quest for freedom.

These efforts have not gone unseen by the military junta, which has unsuccessfully portrayed the youth as guilty in efforts to ‘destabilize the State.’

The majority of civilians support the pro-democracy values spearheading the revolution. Their calls include federal democracy and a release of all political prisoners.

At the end of 2021, the people-powered movement shifted from peaceful protest to armed resistance where groups have made considerable gains in capturing key bases, territory and camps once controlled by the junta.

Now, the military is trying to sabotage the futures of the young people by forcing them to turn against their pro-democracy allies and take up arms to fight with them. Those who fail to adhere to the law can be imprisoned for up to five years.



**Photo:** Officials from the junta's General Administration Department and the Police forces distributed information sheets, which solely highlighted the positive aspects of military service, to travelers in Mawlamyine, Mon State.

Currently, more than 20,000 people have been unlawfully detained by the military for their revolutionary activities, according to the Assistance Association of Political Prisoners.

The decision to enlist has driven many people into hiding or joining ethnic revolution organizations (EROs) and their various alliance groups.

Furthermore, this briefing paper, 'Forced to Fight,' will provide an

overview of how the enforcement of the Conscription Law has affected communities in Southeastern Burma in Mon State, Karen State and the Tanintharyi region between February and April 2024.

It will also highlight the resilience of ethnic revolution organizations (EROs), civil society groups, and human rights defenders from all backgrounds committed to ending military rule.

**Photo:** Military training conducted in Thanbyuzayat, Mon State, featuring young people from Mon and Karen States.



## IMPACTS OF FORCED CONSCRIPTION IN SOUTHEASTERN BURMA

It is estimated that at least 600 young individuals are currently undergoing forced military training across several regions within targeted documentation areas of the Human Rights Foundation of Monland, including Mon State, Karen State, and the Tanintharyi Region.

This surge in conscription is evident from the attendance figures at advanced military training institutions, such as the Military Advanced Training Depot (MATD-4) in Thanbyuzayat, Mon State, which saw the arrival of 200 new trainees in the first week of April 2024 alone. As of April 25, another 260 recruits have commenced training, indicating a rapid escalation in military conscription efforts.

In addition to the ongoing sessions in Southern Tanintharyi region, approximately 200 trainees are currently engaged in military training at the MATD-12 facility in the southern town of Plaw.

Despite the junta's claim that recruitment would follow the New Year activities in April, HURFOM observed ward and village administrators collecting the names of men many weeks beforehand. By the regime's estimates, they are planning for 5,000 people to be recruited per month across the country. The junta also announced that 60,000 men would be called for military service each year.

Since the public conscription law was declared, it has been quickly formalized. In many townships, registering, conducting lotteries, and drafting eligible individuals are continuously carried out. The Burma Army has also pressured local ward, town, and township administrators to expedite the law.

By March 22, 2024, the junta-backed local administration had gathered data, conducted conscription lotteries, and registered eligible men for military service in 172 townships. These efforts are taking place in most townships in the Ayeyarwady, Yangon, Bago, and Naypyidaw regions, with some progress reported in the other areas. In conflict zones, the junta is enforcing conscription in urban areas and villages near towns.

**Since the announcement of the bill, rumors have spread.**



**Photo:** Parents are afraid of the conscription law recently enacted by the military junta, and have withdrawn their children from schools.

*“We’ve heard that soldiers are arresting young men to use them as porters. We can’t sleep well at night. We’ve been in hiding for two nights. Now, we dare not travel away even in the day time. We are afraid. The situation is getting worse in both urban and rural areas,”* said one man.

There have also been numerous instances of arbitrary arrests of youth, and raids or home invasions to arrest young individuals.

The New Mon State Party-AD (anti-military dictatorship) issued an order not to comply with the conscription demands. It announced it would take decisive action against district administrations who follow the junta’s orders. Pro-democracy bodies, including the National Unity Consultative Council, the National Unity Government, and several Revolutionary Armies, have each stated they will do the same. Still, the junta is seeking to forcibly recruit, even as their administrators are targeted and killed by those who oppose the law.

The impacts are already being felt on the ground. Youths are going to Thailand or joining the revolutionary defense forces, creating a labour shortage unfortunately filled by children. HURFOM reported a worrying rise in the number of underage children in Mon State who are working to support their families.

More underage children are now working at restaurants, tea shops, bars, bike repair shops, and grocery stores. Due to the political crisis, prices have rapidly increased, creating gaps in the labour market. In Mawlamyine, Mon State, more and more violations of child labour between the ages of 12 and 16 have been found, and their wages are being exploited by the service industry.

Parents have also taken their children from school and sent them to neighbouring countries to find work opportunities.

Typically, enrolled students are in the 16-17 age range and would not be eligible for military service. Schools in Burma were closed for nearly two years due to the COVID-19 outbreak. The enrolled students have already turned 18, which is the age range for military service according to the junta’s conscription law.

*“This law terrifies the youth and parents. We are worried about how to keep our children from becoming military soldiers, and whether we should send them abroad. We don’t know what to do.”*



**Photo:** *There is a worrying increase in the number of underage children in Mon State who are working to support their families.*

One mother expressed her fear, saying, *“This law terrifies the youth and parents. We are worried about how to keep our children from becoming military soldiers, and whether we should send them abroad. We don’t know what to do.”*

Another added: *“Parents can’t wait anymore during the summer final exam period. They’re afraid of their children being conscripted into the Army, so they’ve pulled them out of school. The number of students enrolled has dropped from 30 to 50 in high schools and from 10 to 20 in primary schools,”* said a local from Mudon Township assisting with secondary education.

Photos and videos have circulated on social media showing long queues of civilians lining up at various borders in a mass exodus to evade conscription orders. In a worrying response, Thailand’s Tak province, which borders Burma, has increased security to stop the influx of people trying to cross. Many people are apprehensive because the Thai military is notorious for mistreating civilians.

On March 13, 2024, Thai authorities arrested 22 Burmese workers who crossed the border into Kanchanaburi Province along the border. Since the announcement of conscription, according to HURFOM documentation, at least 509 Burmese nationals have been arrested for illegal entry into Thailand.

The conscription law has the most significant impact on the young people, making them worried and fearful. To avoid compulsory military service, young men are fleeing abroad via illegal routes or finding shelter in liberated areas controlled by ethnic armed organizations.

*“Eventually, the junta won’t allow young men to go abroad if they have not finished military service. So, we’ll go to Thailand or Malaysia via illegal routes,”* said a young Mon man.

The increase in those attempting to cross the border into countries including China, Thailand and India has led to the junta mandating the possession of a Unique Identity Number (UID) document to be granted temporary or annual border crossing permits.



**Photo:** *The conscription law has the biggest impact on the young community, making them worried and fearful. To avoid compulsory military service, young men are fleeing abroad via illegal routes or finding shelter in liberated areas controlled by the ethnic armed organizations.*



The UID document, commonly called a “Smart Card,” contains biographic and biometric data of the individual, including a 10-digit unique number. This initiative aims to replace the traditional household registration system with electronic UID cards, which have been previously collected. The decision is intended to control counterfeit national registration cards at border entries and exits and maintain accurate records of population movement.

Until the end of 2023, residents near border areas could cross into neighbouring countries using designated border gates by simply showing their national registration card and obtaining a Temporary Border Pass and Border permits.

A CDM student from Kawthaung expressed concerns about the new system, stating, *“The card contains all personal information, from eye scans to fingerprints. The junta is just doing this for their purposes. If you don’t have it, you can’t do anything.”*

A young resident who recently traveled to Ranong, Thailand, reported that the Immigration Department at the Thai-Burma border in Kawthaung is now checking electronic registration cards. The Burmese Passport Issuing Office announced mid-March that it would no longer issue cross-border passports to individuals without a 10-digit UID.

The junta has also been collaborating with China to implement electronic registration cards. The project began in December of the 2022 initially for government employees and their families. By the end of 2023, it was extended to citizens over ten years old. HURFOM is concerned that the junta will use the collected personal information to track personal data and violate privacy rights in addition to conscription operations.

Thailand and other countries must show compassion towards those seeking refuge. With an active war prolonged by the junta and no education or livelihood opportunities, the enactment of the Conscription Law is only the latest deterrent in the quest to leave the country.



## FIELDWORKERS NOTE

HURFOM has fieldworkers in Mon State, Karen State, and Tanintharyi Region, as well as human rights networks. Several reporters work from Mon and Karen State in areas controlled by ethnic revolution organizations. Given the extreme daily risks, our field workers continue to document human rights violations as best they can.

The growing threats to their safety only speak to the society of fear the junta has created. HURFOM's documentation and data are sourced from our network of field staff reporting on the ground. The restrictions imposed by the junta have made it much more challenging to access our target areas freely and without repercussions. HURFOM field staff are facing severe risks to their physical and digital security. Secure methods of communication, such as encrypted technology, have been adopted. However, there are still many challenges to ensure that the Burma Army does not infiltrate our work and documentation.

The Burma Army is known for intimidating and harassing fieldworkers documenting human rights violations. Soldiers often threaten survivors who share their stories with rights groups as well. Currently, HURFOM can safely work in ceasefire areas and armed controlled territories of the Karen National Union and the New Mon State Party. Recording events and testimonies are extremely high-risk outside of these areas.

The military's movement restrictions limit the documentation possible. The information outlined in this short briefing paper includes HURFOM data from the ground. Given the challenges we face collecting these data, many of our estimates are likely significantly higher. Our team is immensely grateful to those who shared their fears and hopes for the future with HURFOM.



**CONSCRIPTION  
OVERVIEW IN MON  
STATE, KAREN  
STATE, AND IN THE  
TANINTHARYI REGION**

## CONCERNS OF FORCED CONSCRIPTION IN SOUTHEASTERN BURMA

### MON AND KAREN STATES

On March 13th, 2024, the military junta called a meeting with village and ward Administrators in Kyaikmayaw Township, Mon State, and instructed them to select 100 young men to join compulsory military service. Based on the village's population, the Administrator was forced to select between two to ten young men per village and send their list to the junta no later than March 20, 2024.

Depending on the population, a village has 3–10 people per ward selected by the ward or village administrator. The list came with instructions for completion by the fourth week of March 2024.

*“None of the young men and their parents like the compulsory conscription law. The NMSP (AD) and other revolutionary forces have released statements and stood with the young population. These actions have motivated us a lot,”* said a young man.

On March 19, 2024, the junta's Township General Administration Department (GAD) and villages' Administration began issuing military conscription notices to male residents via their parents. The first batch was reported to target 100 men for military service in Chaung Zone Township, Mon State, alone.

On March 17, 2024, the GAD administrative office in Mudon village, Mon State distributed summoning letters to local men aged 18 and 35 for a mandatory “meeting and discussion.”

A local villager from Mudon disclosed: *“Notices for a meeting have been spreading since March 16, 2024. Each household was called to attend a gathering at the Rajadhiraj Hall on March 17. The village is experiencing a shortage of young men, many of whom have migrated abroad, especially to Thailand.”*

A resident of Kaloh village, also in Chaung Zon Township, expressed concern over the impending arrival of conscription notices in their town:

*“We're anticipating the notices soon. Rumors are circulating that the administrator will impose a fee of MMK 50,000 per household, although the purpose remains unclear. Additionally, there's talk of fines for those who fail to respond to the order.”*

The Mon State Chief Minister, U Aung Kyi Thein, claimed that 47 young men from Chaung Zone Township, Mon State, had to join military service.

The aftermath of the issuance of conscription notices in villages in Chaung Zone Township has sparked fears indicating that non-compliance with military service could result in monetary fines. This development has raised concerns among the local population, with the news spreading rapidly across the township.

On February 17, 2024, the Chief Minister met with sunflower farmers at Bee village, Chaung Zone Township. At this time, the minister said a young man from each of the 47 villages in the area must join the military service.

*“No one knows who has to join military service. We must be careful with our movement. Now, no one goes outside at night. Young men are frightened,”* said a young man.

On February 22nd, 2024, the Chief of the Township General Administration Department and government staff delivered “lobbying pamphlets” about the conscription law in the city and area villages.



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ပြည်ထောင်စုအစိုးရအဖွဲ့

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၁၃၈၅ ခုနှစ်၊ တပို့တွဲလဆန်း ၄ ရက်  
(၂၀၂၄ ခုနှစ်၊ ဖေဖော်ဝါရီလ ၁၃ ရက်)

ပြည်သူ့စစ်မှုထမ်းဆင့်ခေါ်ရေးဗဟိုအဖွဲ့ ဖွဲ့စည်းခြင်း

နိုင်ငံသားတိုင်းသည် ပြည်ထောင်စုမပြိုကွဲရေး၊ တိုင်းရင်းသားစည်းလုံးညီညွတ်မှု မပြိုကွဲရေး၊ အချုပ်အခြာအာဏာတည်တံ့ခိုင်မြဲရေးဟူသည့် ဒို့တာဝန်အရေးသုံးပါးကို စောင့်ထိန်းရန် တာဝန်ရှိသဖြင့် ယင်းတာဝန်ကို ထမ်းဆောင်နိုင်ရေးအလို့ငှာ စစ်ပညာသင်ကြားရန်နှင့် နိုင်ငံတော် ကာကွယ်ရေးအတွက် ပြည်သူ့စစ်မှုထမ်းဥပဒေကိုပြဋ္ဌာန်းခဲ့ပြီး ယင်းဥပဒေကို အကောင်အထည် ဖော်ဆောင်ရွက်နိုင်ရန် ပြည်သူ့စစ်မှုထမ်းဥပဒေ ပုဒ်မ ၆ အရ ပြည်သူ့စစ်မှုထမ်းဆင့်ခေါ်ရေး ဗဟိုအဖွဲ့ကို အောက်ပါပုဂ္ဂိုလ်များဖြင့် ဖွဲ့စည်းလိုက်သည်-

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| (ခ) ညွှန်ကြားကွပ်ကဲရေးမှူး(ကြည်း၊ရေ၊လေ)<br>ကာကွယ်ရေးဦးစီးချုပ်ရုံး(ကြည်း) | ဒုတိယဥက္ကဋ္ဌ |
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**Photo:** The announcement released by the Burma Army of the Conscription Law going into effect.

“There are pro-military groups. That is who the junta should select first. The junta has started to organize a campaign to enforce the Conscription Law, but we don’t know how they select a young man per village tract,” said another young man.

Further reports indicate that administrative officials across various towns and villages in Mon State are using the conscription law to intimidate residents and demand exorbitant fees. However, the Mon community has yet to confirm these claims.

Residents face significant challenges due to aggressive conscription efforts by junta forces amid a strict curfew. Local reports indicate that while some village administrators have rejected calls for military service, the threat of extortion is high. The local population is anxiously awaiting more developments regarding the military conscription in Mon State.

In response to the announcement by The New Mon State Party (anti-military dictatorship) that it would punish those who abide by the Conscription Law, many administrative officials have resigned. According to the Than Lwin Times, administrative officials in various Mon State townships, including Kyaikto, Bilin, Thaton, Kyaikmayaw, and Thanbyuzayat, are submitting resignation letters.

Those from the remaining townships also closely monitor the situation and are likely to abandon their posts. The 100 house group elders and community leaders were among those who tendered their resignations.

While many plan to leave Burma, the junta has increased its security along familiar roads and established checkpoints throughout the country to prevent people from doing so. There are also new requirements to permit travel. A national identity card and travel history must be filled out when buying a ticket to travel at the highway gates in Mon State. Tickets are only sold to those who can show a recommendation letter from the police.

A 30-year-old villager from Kyainnseikyi Township said he would leave the country to avoid being forced into the Burma Army, stating he would rather survive as an illegal migrant worker in another country than face what happens in the military.

The Mon State Revolution Force (MSRF) has invited young people to join to avoid military service. On February 13, the MSRF announced that they needed more comrades, and within hours of the announcement, hundreds of young people contacted them. A Mon youth said, *“If there’s no choice but to join the army, I’d rather join an ethnic armed group.”*

The Karen National Union (Mu Ta Yaw District) also released a statement on March 1st, 2024, urging people to oppose the junta’s conscription law and to take shelter in villages under their control if joining military service is inevitable.

Soldiers and ward Administrators are collecting personal information of the residents in Mawlamyine, claiming the data will be used for the 2024 census. However, there are suspicions this information may be used to implement conscription of young people.

The recruitment for Regular Military Service Program No. 1 has drawn individuals from 10 townships across Mon State, with many conscripts coming from Chaung Zon Township. The total number of trainees in this batch is reported to be around 200 young people from at least five townships in Mon State.

Local sources report aggressive recruitment efforts. Junta administrators from wards, village levels, and townships are mobilizing even migrant workers who work in Mon State and offering lucrative incentives to enlist them in military service.

Promising financial aid for families is used extensively in the recruitment strategy. According to a resident of Mawlamyine, *“The junta-backed authorities are currently organizing these workers. They promise money and then forcefully enlist them into military service with less financial support than what was agreed upon.”*

The exact number of participants in Regular Military Service Program No.1 is not precisely known, but the junta’s released photographs suggest at least 200.

Training ceremonies are held at military academies in various townships, including Thanbyuzayat, Thaton, and even Mawlamyine and Chaung Zon townships.

Currently, military training is only provided at specific schools in Mon State; however, if there are too many participants, training sessions will also be conducted in schools in Mawlamyine and Chaung Zon townships, according to former military personnel.

The ongoing forced conscription campaign under Regular Military Service Week 1 has been extensively reported in Mon State and other regions and states, including the capital Naypyidaw, Yangon, and Mandalay.



At least 13 military training schools participated across nine provinces and states.

This military conscription drive by the junta in Mon State not only disrupts the lives of the youth but also represents a significant violation of human rights, as it coerces civilians into military service under the threat of violence or economic deprivation.

## TANINTHARYI REGION

In the first week of February 2024, the military junta initiated a conscription campaign in the Tanintharyi Region, drafting approximately 280 individuals from ten townships, including Dawei, Myeik, Yebyu, Thayet Chaung, Long Lone, and Kawthaung. These individuals are currently undergoing health examinations to prepare them for military training, as reported by relatives from the western Dawei Region.

The majority of the conscripts come from Myeik Township in southern Tanintharyi, where reports indicate a coercive recruitment strategy involving intimidation, forced lotteries, and monetary bribes.

Additionally, local administrative members across various villages, such as the newly established Mi Kyaung Hlaung in Yebyu, are engaged in fundraising activities to financially support the families of those forced to fight.

***Forced to Fight*** | *The Human Rights Foundation of Monland*



**Photos:** According to the conscription bill, men in the 18–35 age range and women in the 18–27 age range can be selected for military service.

As of March 22, 2024, the SAC's local administration has gathered data, conducted conscription lotteries, and registered eligible men for military service in 172 townships.

These efforts are taking place in most townships in the Ayeyarwaddy, Yangon, Bago, and Naypyidaw regions, with some progress reported in other regions as well.

Local reports also highlight that administrators in regions like Ye Phyu and Dawei enforce mandatory contributions to aid those drafted, imposing further financial strains on the already burdened local populations.

The junta's compulsory conscription law has created worry and fear among the young population and their parents but now it is also having a socioeconomic impact on communities. The loss of people is leading to a labour shortage on plantations, farms, and in the construction and fishing industry.

*“Only the old and children are left in our villages as all young men are fleeing abroad,”* said a woman from the Kan Bauk area, Yebyu Township.

Charities and social groups, such as blood donation groups and free cremation services, have also experienced hardships:

*“It is difficult to get blood as no young men can donate blood. It's challenging to run the organization for the long term,”* said a source.

In Yebyu Township, there have been reports of district and village administrators imposing a levy of 3 million kyat on each village. This fee is purportedly to support individuals selected for military conscription and provide for their families during service.

Ka Laing Aung town residents have disclosed their obligation to cover expenses for conscripted individuals and their dependents. One local explained the differential payment system based on financial status:

*“Wealthier households are being asked for fifty thousand kyat, while an average family pays ten thousand. For families with adult children, it's ten thousand per child. For a family of three, that would mean thirty thousand kyat. It's unclear whether this is a monthly or one-time payment.”*

Meetings were held by the administrators in Yebyu town's upper wards and Paung Taw village, where discussions about this compulsory financial contribution took place. A Paung Taw resident told HURFOM:

*“We're required to collect 3 million Myanmar kyat per village. The collection has begun, but most haven't paid yet.”*

By the third week of March, a secret gathering had already identified the young individuals from Yebyu ward, Ka Laing Aung ward, and Paung Taw village for military service and instructed them to contribute an additional subsidy.

The new Mi Kyaung Hlaung village, Yebyu, is also seeing collections to aid the families of those bound for military training financially, say the locals of Ka Lain Aung.

This collection drive, which also occurs discreetly at the ward and village levels, intensified following the promulgation of the junta's Conscription Law. By late March 2024, these collections had commenced under the directives of local administrative authorities throughout Tanintharyi and Mon State.

In Dawei, on March 20, 2024, at 11 PM, as four military lorries arrived for a raid, the youth and elderly men from the village went into hiding. Locals reported that the military intended to arrest and force the men into mandatory service.

Despite being ordered to meet with appointed village heads and conduct a thorough search, the troops left at midnight. They could not find the men on their lists.

This incident has heightened alert among the youth, many of whom have reportedly fled the country in fear. The situation remains tense, with widespread opposition to the junta's policies within the affected communities.





**CONSCRIPTION AND THE ACTIONS OF SOLDIERS HAS SPARKED FEAR AMONGST PARENTS AND WORRY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE FALLING IN THE TARGETED AGE RANGE.**

## CONCLUSION

The military junta's desperation is abundantly clear. Morale is low, and the enactment of forced conscription further proves that they are trying to make up for its losses at the cost of innocent lives.

As indicated in this briefing paper, high-risk and vulnerable groups are being made to forfeit their future to fight in a battle they morally disagree with.

The Burma Army has consistently resorted to seeking pathways to violence across decades of civil war that have destroyed families and disrupted communities. The lack of accountability faced for their immoral actions continues to be a rallying call by civil society organizations and human rights defenders.

Projections for May 2024 indicate that over 400 new conscripts may be subjected to involuntary service within various battalions under junta military units. This steep increase underscores the aggressive recruitment strategies implemented by military authorities in the region.

Government officials must show compassion to those seeking opportunities in neighbouring countries, including Thailand, India, and China. Innocent lives are at risk as an illegitimate regime seeks yet another chance to derail the People's Revolution by forcing youth to the front lines of the battlefields.

The enactment is further evidence of the junta's corrupt policies, which only serve their interests, even at the cost of human life. The people do not recognize the military junta as a government entity, and therefore, they must not be engaged with any global or diplomatic actor.

A strong message can be sent to the junta by offering refuge, protection and asylum to the many who are refusing to take up arms and fight alongside a terrorist regime guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

In addition, there must be increased monitoring efforts on the human rights situation related to military conscription in Burma and regular reporting to international lawmakers and UN agencies. Civil society organizations need to be supported in their work to protect individuals from forced conscription.

Global actors must support and fund campaigns to raise awareness both within Burma and internationally about the implications of forced conscription and other unjust military practices.

Engagement with local administrators, including the National Unity Government, Ethnic Revolution Organizations, and locally established bodies, is critical to ensuring the response to forced conscription is met with urgent action. They must be provided with the necessary resources and international backing to maintain their effectiveness on the ground.

The power of the people has prevailed and will continue to do so. The international community should recognize the immense sacrifices that have contributed to the historic and significant gains, all while defying gender norms and expectations that analysts once thought impossible in the days that followed that attempted coup.

History is being made in Burma. The international community must stand with the people and their determination for a federal democracy.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A referral of the situation on the ground in Burma is to be made immediately by the United Nations Security Council to the International Criminal Court.
2. Concerted and coordinated action by global actors for an urgently mandated global arms embargo which would prevent the free flow of weapons into the hands of the murderous junta.
3. Aviation fuel sanctions to put an effective end to the airstrikes in Burma, which have contributed to significant loss of life, particularly among innocent civilians.
4. Targeted sanctions on military junta officials and their families and holds on their financial assets and possessions undercut their ability to conduct corrupt business dealings abroad.
5. Strengthened and renewed protection mechanisms grant civilians who are vulnerable and at risk of assault a position where they can access justice referral and accountability pathways.
6. Renewed and continued funding support for local organizations responding to the needs of their communities on the ground. Cross-border aid pathways must be accessed, and all humanitarian aid in the hands of local actors.
7. Foreign investors in Burma must immediately cease their operations and withdraw their involvement from all development projects in the country, including but not limited to airports, seaports, and cement businesses.
8. An abrupt and immediate halt to the use of torture by the military junta, and further, we call for investigations to probe the unlawful deaths of civilians in Burma who have been tortured to death, as well as those who have been forced to endure trauma and long-term injuries as a result.

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**FORCED TO FIGHT: MILITARY CONSCRIPTION IN  
SOUTHEASTERN BURMA**

**A SHORT REPORT BY THE  
HUMAN RIGHTS FOUNDATION OF MONLAND**

**MAY 2024**

