



**Republic of the Union of Myanmar**  
**National Unity Government**  
**Ministry of Defence**

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**Press Release**  
**Prohibition of Military Service for Minors**

29<sup>th</sup> August, 2025

1. The Ministry of Defence of the National Unity Government has issued directives to all levels of command strictly prohibiting the recruitment of persons under the age of 18 into the People's Defence Force. In the process of integrating local defence groups—which took up arms in resistance to the military dictatorship—into battalions and units under the Ministry of Defence, any individuals found to be under 18 shall be identified in accordance with established procedures, and returned to their parents or guardians. During this process, counselling and awareness-raising activities shall be undertaken, and coordination shall be made with relevant organizations to ensure that such children are provided with access to education.

2. Pursuant to Chapter (17), Section 60, Subsection (c) of the Child Rights Law (The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Law No. 22 of July 23, 2019), as well as Myanmar's ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (CRC-OPAC) on September 27, 2019, the Ministry of Defence is enforcing the following measures to ensure that no persons under the age of 18 are recruited or engaged in the People's Defence Force or in People's Defence Organizations under its command:

- (a) The Ministry of Defence Statement (1/2021), issued on May 17, 2021, paragraph (3), affirms that all military personnel must uphold military values, including strict adherence to international military law, particularly the Law of Armed Conflict.
- (b) The Code of Conduct for the People's Defence Force, issued on June 25, 2021, paragraph (6), mandates the special protection of and assistance to vulnerable

groups, including children, persons with disabilities, women, and the elderly.

- (c) The Guidelines for the Protection of Children in Armed Conflict for People’s Defence Forces, issued on March 4, 2022, paragraph (3), emphasize the obligation to prevent the commission of the “Six Grave Violations” against children under 18.
- (d) The President’s Office Declaration No. (1/2024) on the Military Code of Conduct for People’s Defence Organizations, issued on March 22, 2024, stipulates in paragraph (5), concerning the treatment of women, persons of diverse sexual orientations (LGBTIQ), and children, that the “Six Grave Violations” against children—namely killing and maiming, recruitment and use by armed forces, sexual violence, abduction, attacks on schools and hospitals, and denial of humanitarian access—are strictly prohibited. Paragraph (6) further prohibits the recruitment of persons under 18 years of age and their involvement in armed activities or other hazardous duties.
- (e) The Ministry of Defence’s 10-point recruitment policy, issued on March 29, 2024, stipulates that only persons aged 18 and above are eligible to be enlisted in the People’s Defence Force.
- (f) The Standing Order for Battalions, issued on May 5, 2025, specifies the duties and responsibilities of battalions and units, including compliance with military legal directives, standing orders, and regulatory manuals that must be strictly observed. These measures are being implemented to develop the People's Defence Force into a capable and disciplined force that adheres to all rules and regulations.

3. The Ministry of Defence here by affirms that all levels of command are responsible for enforcing compliance with the laws, regulations, and directives cited in paragraph (2). Any personnel subject to military law who violate these provisions shall be investigated and held accountable in accordance with military law and established procedures.

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