

Myanmar discharges 68 underage soldiers

Yangon, 7 Aug—A ceremony to hand over 68 discharged underage soldiers to their parents was held at No.1 Transit Centre here this morning. Under the arrangement of the Commander-in-Chief's Office (Army) and a Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR), underage soldiers are allowed to discharge from respective commands across the country.

Maj-Gen Than Soe of the Commander-in-Chief's Office and Co-chair of CTFMR Mr Ashok Nigam delivered speeches on the occasion. Afterwards, officials handed over resignation letters and Citizenship Scrutiny Cards to the minors and handed over them to their parents and relatives.

After the ceremony, Tatmadaw has transported those to the transit care camps which are arranged by CTFMR and the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement. Plans are underway to help those under 18 contact their parents, pursue their education, get job, provide necessary health care and make arrangements for their return trips.

This is the fourth time since the handover of 42 children under 18 years of age on 3 September, 2012 for the first time; 24 on 15 February, 2013 for the second time; and 42 on 7 July, 2013 for the third time. On 27 June, 2012, Myanmar and UN signed an action plan to prevent the recruitment of minors by Army forces.

Arrangements are being made to discharge all underage soldiers from Tatmadaw within 18 months. Tatmadaw has been scrutinizing the recruitment and discharge of underage children. Action is being taken against those who commit the cases in accord with military rules.

It was also attended by senior military officers of the Commander-in-Chief's Office and, deputy ministers, managing directors and directors from the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security, the Union Attorney-General's Office, responsible persons from UNICEF, UNHCR, ILO, Save the Children, World Vision, World Food Programme and UNDP, parents of underage soldiers.
