



**OFFICE OF THE SUPREME HEADQUARTERS  
KAREN NATIONAL UNION  
KAWTHOOLEI**

**KNU Press Statement on Report of UNSG**

*For immediate Release*

April 27, 2009

The UN Secretary General's report regarding children and armed conflict, under the title of "Developments in Myanmar" in Agenda Item 60 (a), at the General Assembly Sixty-third Session mentioned 'one case of a child recruited by the Karen National Union (KNU)'. In clarification of the matter, we, the KNU would like to say as follows.

1. In years gone by, the KNU had allowed those who had attained the age of 16 years to join the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA). However, in the year 2003, KNU issued directives to the KNLA not to recruit persons, who had not attained the age of 18 years.
2. Since 2003, the KNU has not only banned the use of child soldiers, under the age of 18, but has also strengthened the ban by instructing the KNLA officers at all levels to follow the directive precisely and to verify and enforce the ban.
3. On a number of occasions, we have affirmed our readiness to cooperate with human rights and UN or UN affiliated organizations. The KNU and the KNLA, always welcome their monitoring and verification in the field. In addition, we have signed the "Deeds of Commitment" on March 4, 2007 to cease the recruitment and use of children in armed forces.
4. The mention in UNSG's current report of discovery of 'one case of a child recruited by the Karen National Union (KNU)' is probably a case of mistaken identity. However, we will launch an investigation and publish our findings, as soon as possible. The KNU and KNLA are resolved to prevent the use of child soldiers and violations of child rights.
5. We invite the UN country team and other relevant organizations to come to our areas for monitoring and verification purposes, and to assist our programs for child protection, prevention of the use of children in armed conflict and reintegration of the victims into civil society, including provision of education and healthcare to them. In conclusion, we reaffirm our commitment to adhere to the international conventions against the use of child soldiers and call upon the SPDC military regime not to limit access to our areas by the UN country team and other organizations working against the use of children in armed conflict.

----- ◊ -----