



**The Human Rights Foundation of Monland Releases a New Report:  
“Forced to Fight: Military Conscription in Southeastern Burma”**

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*For Immediate Release*

Today, the Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) releases our latest report, “Forced to Fight: Military Conscription in Southeastern Burma.” The report documents how civilians have been impacted by the announcement of mandatory military service for all men aged 18-35 and women aged 18-27 who must serve for at least two years in the Burma Army. The news has been incredibly distressing for families who are struggling to cope amid the already deeply challenging post-coup situation.

It is estimated that around 600 young individuals are currently undergoing forced military training across several regions within HURFOM's targeted documentation area, including Mon State, Karen State, and the Tanintharyi Region. The junta has scaled up its recruitment tactics by sending directives to ward and village administrators to send lists of new conscripts. The recruitment process was set to begin after the annual New Year holidays in April 2024, but HURFOM documentation shows that it started much earlier. This regime is set to enlist 60,000 new troops before the end of the year.

The impacts of the unjust law are already being felt on the ground. In response to the uncertainty of their futures, young men and women have dropped out of school, left their jobs and joined ethnic revolution organizations or work opportunities in neighbouring countries.

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 in conscript numbers underscores the aggressive recruitment strategies implemented by military authorities in the region.

The reality is that the junta is increasingly losing bases, territory and camps. The conscription law is evidence of their desperation and willingness to put young people's

lives at the forefront of the battlefields. It is also indicative of the Burma Army's disregard for life and their ongoing sinister intentions to see the derailment of an educated and informed society. They must not be successful, and ensuring they do not prevail will require the international community's intervention, which has a moral responsibility to offer protection pathways and alternative options they can access through livelihood and education opportunities to ensure their protection.

**Media Contact**

Nai Aue Mon, HURFOM Program Director

Email: [auemon@rehmonnya.org](mailto:auemon@rehmonnya.org)

Signal: +66 86 167 9741

*HURFOM was founded by exiled pro-democracy students from the 1988 uprisings, recent activists, Mon community leaders, and youth. Its primary objective is to restore democracy, human rights, and genuine peace in Burma. HURFOM is a non-profit organization, and all its members are volunteers with a shared vision for peace in the country.*