



CHILD SOLDIERS: CRC COUNTRY BRIEFS

Pre-sessional working group 34th session 09/06/03 – 13/06/03

Prepared by The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

Brunei Darussalam

I. SUMMARY

CRC-OP-CAC: Declaration:	Not signed N/A
Other treaties ratified:	CRC; GC/API+II
Legal minimum recruitment age: Conscripts: Volunteers:	no conscription unclear
"Straight-18" position:	No
Government Armed Forces:	5,000 active; 700 reserves; 3,750 paramilitary
CHILD SOLDIERS: It is not known if there are under-18s in government armed forces due to insufficient information regarding recruitment age.	

II. COUNTRY PROFILE

GOVERNMENT

Recruitment Policy and Practice

There is no conscription in Brunei, and the government has no plans for its introduction.ⁱ However, Article 83 of the 1959 Constitution on State of Emergency states that "when a proclamation of emergency has been made and as long as such proclamation is in force, his Majesty the Sultan and Yang di-Pertuan may make any orders whatsoever which he considers desirable in the public interest." Such orders may be made with regard to: Article 83(4)(i) "requiring persons to do work or render services" and Article 83(4)(j) "constituting a special police force."ⁱⁱ

Reportedly, only ethnic Malays, who form 67 per cent of the population, are allowed to join the armed forces.ⁱⁱⁱ Women may join but may not serve in combat.^{iv} It is reported that there are 945 Gurkhas, Nepalese soldiers who are part of the British Army, stationed in Brunei.^v

Military Training and Military Schools

The Training Centre of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces is made up of the following units, Recruit Company, Course Company, School Cadets, Boys Company, School of Studies, Officers

Education Development Wing, Administration Company, and Range Control Organisation.^{vi} There is no available information regarding minimum age of entry into these units, but certain names such as “School Cadets” and “Boys Company” suggest under-18 involvement.

III. URGENT ACTIONS RECOMMENDED

- ⇒ The government of Brunei Darussalem should ratify the CRC-OP-CAC and also declare its commitment to a ‘straight-18’ standard for recruitment
- ⇒ The government should establish mechanisms to implement provisions of the CRC-OP-CAC, including child demobilisation and rehabilitation, and to monitor its implementation
- ⇒ The government should protect children from recruitment and use for military purposes by any armed force or group
- ⇒ The government of Brunei Darussalem should provide alternatives to military recruitment, such as increasing employment and education opportunities, particularly for vulnerable children
- ⇒ The government should ensure that military and criminal code provisions regarding children who take part in hostilities or are recruited into armed forces or groups, are in accordance with international standards of juvenile justice.

IV. QUESTIONS TO STATE REPRESENTATIVES

- ⇒ What is the minimum age of recruitment into the Royal Brunei Armed Forces?
- ⇒ What measures are in place to safeguard against underage recruitment?
- ⇒ What is the minimum age of enrolment in military schools?
- ⇒ What is the status of students in military schools? Are they members of the armed forces?

ⁱ Rachel Brett and Margaret McCallin, *Children: The Invisible Soldiers*, Radda Barnen, Sweden 1998; Bart Horeman and Marc Stoljijk, *Refusing to Bear Arms: a world survey of conscription and conscientious objection to military service*, War Resisters' International, 1998.

ⁱⁱ A. P. Blaustein and G. H. Flanz, *Constitutions of the countries of the world*, Oceana Publications, New York.

ⁱⁱⁱ Horeman and Stoljijk, *Refusing to Bear Arms*

^{iv} "RBAF-the nation's sentinel", *Borneo Bulletin*, 29/5/98; US Department of State, *Brunei Country Report on Human Rights Practice for 1998*, 26/2/99.

^v "UK Government: Gurkha pensions to double in 2000", *M2 Presswire*, 24/12/99.

^{vi} See the official web site of the Ministry of Defence, <<http://www.mindef.gov.bn>>.