

Joint Press Release

Action Plan on Child Recruitment Signed

2 December, Colombo - The Government of Sri Lanka, the TMVP, and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) signed an Action Plan on Monday to ensure that the recruitment and use of children by the TMVP comes to an end, and that all children currently with the TMVP are released and provided with reintegration assistance.

The Action Plan – which gives a clear timetable of required actions by the signatories over the next three months – was signed by the leader of the TMVP, Mr V Muralitharan, in the presence of Chief Minister of the Eastern Province, Mr Sivanesathurai Santhirakanthan; and by the Commissioner General for Rehabilitation, Mr Suhada Gamalath; and the UNICEF Representative in Sri Lanka, Mr Philippe Duamelle.

"Monday's signing clearly states the commitment of the three parties to efficiently tackle the issue of the use and recruitment of children, which is against Sri Lankan and international law and does great physical and psychological damage to children," said the Commissioner General for Rehabilitation, Mr Suhada Gamalath.

The Government of Sri Lanka regards the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict as a serious child rights' violation and has consistently asserted its "zero tolerance" position on the practice.

"This agreement shows a clear political commitment and is a very important step in putting an end to the recruitment and use of children by the TMVP," said UNICEF's Representative in Sri Lanka, Mr Philippe Duamelle. "The Action Plan must now be translated into concrete actions on the ground which will then lead to significant results for children in the very near future."

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