**The greylist to an alleged Pak child army**

**[Senator Rehman Malik](https://nation.com.pk/Columnist/senator-rehman-malik)**

July 06, 2021

It was really shocking to see yet new allegations on Pakistan by being included in the Child Soldiers Prevention Act (CSPA). No Pakistani can join any civil or defence services including Army unless one attains the age of 18 .Any Citizen of Pakistani applying for Pak Army must have a computerised National Identity Card which by law/the NADRA Act cannot be issued unless is 18 year and above. I failed to understand that even though our own law is very stringent, how come without examining our law being a sovereign State the United States has thought of applying the Child Soldiers Protection Act of the United States on Pakistan, which international law permits to slap such fabricated tales. It looks clear that the USA government response is signalling some more negative policies towards Pakistan .

The United States has added Pakistan and Turkey to the CSPA list (Child Soldiers Prevention Act) that includes Afghanistan, Burma, Democratic Republic of Congo, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Mali, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, Turkey, Venezuela and Yemen. The publication of the report did not involve consultation from any state institution by the US and no details were provided of the basis on which the conclusion was reached. The United States must have at least taken the views of the Pakistan Government before pushing us into CSPA. The inclusion of Pakistan in the list means that it wouldn’t be able to further get licenses for direct commercial sales of military equipment, cannot be a part of several US programmes, including international military education and training, foreign military financing, excess defence articles and peacekeeping operations. It means the process of imposing restrictions on Pakistan is already in action.

[Russian, Tajik presidents discuss situation in Afghanistan](https://nation.com.pk/06-Jul-2021/russian-tajik-presidents-discuss-situation-in-afghanistan)

It is unfortunate that despite our best cooperation with the USA it has entirely forgotten the role of Pakistan in the war on terror—we have sacrificed 70,000 people and lost $150 billion in this war.

It seems that the USA wants something in Pakistan and perhaps it is yet an arm twisting technique to put pressure on Pakistan and apparently it is connected to the Afghan issue. The term child soldier means any person under 18 years of age who takes a direct part in hostilities or who has been compulsorily recruited into governmental armed forces, police, or other security forces. It also means any person under 15 years of age who has been voluntarily recruited into governmental armed forces, police, or other security forces or any person under 18 years of age who has been recruited or used in hostilities by armed forces distinct from the armed forces of a state. It also includes any such person who is serving in any capacity, including in a support role, such as a cook, porter, messenger, medic, guard or sex slave. I reinforce the point of the government of Pakistan that these assertions are baseless and motivated. Age limit for some civilian armed personnel is from 17 years to 22 years and 17 years to 23 years for serving Armed Forces Personnel except the army as army soldiers have given the age limit of 17 to 25 years. For those who have passed four years BS or BA Hons or BBA, the age limit is from 17 to 24 years. While there are currently no conscription in Pakistan, government armed forces recruit volunteers at the age of 16, the UK is the only country in Europe which routinely recruits minors into the armed forces. Worldwide, 134 countries have prohibited the practice. 37 countries recruit from the age of 17. The UK is one of only 20 countries in the world to recruit 16-year-olds. There is, however, no evidence of deployment before the age of 18 in Pakistan. The government has signed but not ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC-OP-CAC) on the involvement of children in armed conflict. Let me assure the American Administration that we neither have any 14-year-old child as army personnel nor our law permits anybody under aged employment in Pak Army.

[US forces shoot down armed drone over US embassy in Baghdad](https://nation.com.pk/06-Jul-2021/us-forces-shoot-down-armed-drone-over-us-embassy-in-baghdad)

Senator Rehman Malik

The writer is former Interior Minister of Pakistan, Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Interior and Chairman of Think Tank “Global Eye”. He is the author of four books and his fifth book is about to get published. He can be reached at: rmalik1212@gmail.com, Twitter

@Senrehmanmalik