

On 25 May 2000 the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child regarding the involvement of children in armed conflicts, which complements the Convention on the Rights of the Child regarding the involvement of children in armed conflict.

Pursuant to the decision of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina No. 34/02 dated 7 April 2002, at the 130th meeting held on 19 April 2002, the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, adopted the Decision on the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child relating to the engagement of children in armed conflict ("Official Gazette", No. 5 / 02).

As Bosnia and Herzegovina signed the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is related to the engagement of children in armed conflict, on 7 September 2000 and ratified it on 10 October 2003, reporting period covers the period from the date of ratification of the Protocol to the date of filing the report.

Ratifying the Optional Protocol, Bosnia and Herzegovina committed to take all appropriate actions to ensure that servicemen of the armed forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina who had not turned 18 years of age did not take part directly in fighting and were subject to conscription and to adopt legislation to prohibit such practices and criminalize such a practice.

In the legal system of Bosnia and Herzegovina the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on involvement of children in armed conflicts has a position of a national law, and in case of conflict with national legislation it can be directly applied.

When signing and ratifying the Protocol, Bosnia and Herzegovina did not make a reservation in respect of any particular provision of the Protocol, which confirmed dedication of Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities to ensure that children who had not reached the age of 18 were not subject to conscription and this provision is an integral part of the applicable national law.

The Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities gave a binding declaration, which was deposited with the General Secretary of the United Nations, which reads "The State of Bosnia and Herzegovina will not allow enlistment or recruitment in the armed forces of any person under 18."

There is a general ban on recruitment of children on the basis of national legislation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The 1 January 2006 Law on Defence of Bosnia and Herzegovina abolished conscription throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Despite the fact that Bosnia and Herzegovina went through a tragic period of conflict between 1992 and 1995 and proceedings against the persons indicted for war crimes have so far conducted by the

International Criminal Court and national courts, none of the cases have involved children as indictee nor has any of war crimes indictees been charged with recruiting or using children in the armed conflict.

The Initial Report gives an overview of legislative, administrative, judicial and other measures applied in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which relate to provisions of the Protocol.

Representatives of government institutions at all levels of government in Bosnia and Herzegovina took part in the process of preparing the report and gave answers to questions regarding the implementation of the provisions of the Protocol within the competence of the institutions they come from.

Pursuant to the Law on Ministries and other administrative bodies of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina is responsible for coordination and preparation of reports for competent national bodies and institutions and international institutions and organizations regarding the implementation of obligations under international conventions and international instruments.

In terms of this legal provision, the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees is responsible for

coordination of activities in preparation the report submitted.

After the Draft Initial Report on the implementation of the provisions of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child regarding the involvement of children in armed conflict was prepared, public discussions were organized in order to inform the general public about the obligations which Bosnia and Herzegovina assumed by ratifying the Protocol and provide the final proposals and comments on the working text of reports for its finalization and submission to the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina for consideration and adoption. The governmental and non-governmental sectors and the international community took part in the public discussion. Comments and suggestions given are an integral part of the report submitted.