



Conscience and Peace Tax International

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Conscientious Objection to Military Service: Issues for the Task Forces on State Reports

MADAGASCAR

Compulsory military recruitment is believed to be conducted under the authority of Order No. 78-003 (6 March 1978) on national service, and the term of service is laid down as 18 months. It is however not known what proportion of the armed forces strength of some 13,500 are in fact conscripts, or on what basis the selection is made, given that well over 150,000 young men per annum reach the relevant age range - again, nothing is known about precise recruitment ages.

Article 4 of Order No. 78-003, states: "Military personnel assigned to the armed forces may be transferred outside the armed forces, and vice versa, either at their own request or on official orders, provided that those assigned outside the armed forces have been found medically fit for military service." Although such a provision might in practice be available to permit conscientious objectors who are called up to perform a variety of national service compatible with the reasons for the conscientious objection, the Government of Madagascar indicated in its contribution to the survey presented to the Commission on Human Rights in 1991 that there was no legal provision for conscientious objection and explicitly that these possibilities of non-military national service were not available to conscientious objectors. We are unaware of any subsequent pronouncements by the Government on this subject.

(Sources: Horeman, B. & Stolwijk, M., Refusing to Bear Arms, War Resisters International, London, 1998; Institute for Strategic Studies, The Military Balance 2005/2006; Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, Child Soldiers Global Report 2004.)

We recommend that the Government of Madagascar be asked to give details of the basis on which recruitment for obligatory military service takes place, and of the provisions for national service outside the armed forces, and that it be asked whether it has reconsidered its previous position and is now contemplating legislation to recognise the right of conscientious objection to military service.