

---

# BURKINA FASO

---

## Burkina Faso

**Population:** 13.2 million (7.2 million under 18)

**Government armed forces:** 10,800

**Compulsory recruitment age:** no conscription

**Voluntary recruitment age:** 18

**Voting age:** 18

**Optional Protocol:** ratified 6 July 2007

**Other treaties ratified (see glossary):**

CRC, GC AP I and II, ICC, ILO 138, ILO 182, ACRWC

***There were no reports of under-18s in the armed forces.***

---

## Context

A report by a UN international commission of inquiry mandated to investigate allegations of serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law which occurred in Côte d'Ivoire from 19 September 2002 to 15 October 2004 called for the role of neighbouring states, including Burkina Faso, to be clarified. It found neighbouring states to be directly or indirectly involved, including through arms transfers, the use of their territories as rear bases and involvement in a war economy.<sup>1</sup>

---

## Government

### National recruitment legislation and practice

According to the 1991 constitution, "Each citizen of Burkina Faso is required to contribute to the defence and preservation of territorial integrity" (Article 10).

Recruitment to the armed forces was voluntary. Ordinance No. 84-037/CNR/PRES of 17 July 1984, modifying Law No. 49/62/AN, set the minimum age for recruitment into the armed forces at 20 years. However, Decree No. 2000-374/PRES/PM/DEF of 1 September 2000 allowed for recruitment from the age of 18, provided that the recruit was unmarried and enjoying full civic rights. Recruits reportedly underwent two years of training before entering into active service.<sup>2</sup> There were no reports of under-18s in the armed forces.

National development service (Service national pour le développement, SND) was compulsory for all Burkinabès aged between 18 and 30. The SND comprised civic education, basic education and vocational training.<sup>3</sup>

---

## Developments

In December 2004 the government wrote to the Child Soldiers Coalition, stating that while

members of an Ivorian armed political group, the Patriotic Movement of Côte d'Ivoire (Mouvement patriotique de Côte d'Ivoire, MPCI) might have been present temporarily in Burkina Faso at some point, they had never received training or military equipment of any sort from the Burkina government. It also stated that it had repeatedly requested the government of Côte d'Ivoire to take the necessary measures to allow members of the Ivorian armed forces who had sought refuge in Burkina Faso to return home.<sup>4</sup>

## International standards

In July 2007 Burkina Faso ratified the Optional Protocol. In its Declaration at the time of ratification, the government stated that the minimum age for voluntary recruitment into the armed forces was 18, that recruitment was voluntary, and that proof of age had to be provided.<sup>5</sup> In April 2004 it ratified the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

- 1 Rapport de la Commission d'enquête internationale sur les allégations de violations des droits de l'homme en Côte d'Ivoire, <http://fr.wikisource.org>.
- 2 Letter received from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in response to the Child Soldiers Coalition, *Global Report 2004*, ref: 004675/MAECR/SG/DAM, 22 December 2004.
- 3 Decree No. 99-445/PRES/PM of 7 December 1999.
- 4 Letter received from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, above note 2.
- 5 Multilateral treaties deposited with the Secretary-General, Optional Protocol to the Convention on Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, Declarations and Reservations, [www2.ohchr.org](http://www2.ohchr.org).