
GHANA

Republic of Ghana

Population: 22.1 million (10.2 million under 18)

Government armed forces: 13,500

Compulsory recruitment age: no conscription

Voluntary recruitment age: 18

Voting age: 18

Optional Protocol: signed 24 September 2003

Other treaties ratified (see glossary):

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

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

Government

National recruitment legislation and practice

In 2005 the government reported to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child that the minimum age for voluntary enlistment into the army was 18, that there was no conscription and that by law under-18s were not allowed to join the armed forces.¹ There were no reports of under-18s in the armed forces.

Ghana's National Service Scheme (NSS), which lasted for one to two years and was compulsory for able-bodied persons between the ages of 18 and 40, consisted mainly of public service, but military training was an option for some.²

Developments

In 2005 significant numbers of Togolese refugees arrived in Ghana, fleeing political violence in their home country, joining the large numbers of Liberian refugees. In its planning for 2008 the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) estimated that there were present in the country almost 10,000 Togolese refugees and asylum seekers and over 32,000 Liberians.³

An increase in sexual exploitation, in particular for commercial purposes, was raised by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in its concluding observations on Ghana's second periodic report, in March 2006. The committee also expressed concern about the existence of discrimination against girls and street children and other groups of vulnerable children. It welcomed the National Plan for Action entitled "Ghana Fit for Children" and the passing of the Human Trafficking Act of 2005.⁴

At a February 2007 ministerial meeting in Paris, Ghana and 58 other states endorsed the Paris Commitments to protect children from unlawful recruitment or use by armed forces or armed groups and the Paris Principles

and guidelines on children associated with armed forces or armed groups. The documents reaffirmed international standards and operational principles for protecting and assisting child soldiers and followed a wide-ranging global consultation jointly sponsored by the French government and UNICEF.

- 1 Second periodic report of Ghana to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, UN Doc. CRC/C/GHA/CO/2, 14 July 2005.
- 2 Ghana's National Service, History and Profile Section.
- 3 UNHCR, *Global Appeal 2008–2009*.
- 4 Committee on the Rights of the Child, Consideration of report submitted by Ghana, Concluding observations, UN Doc. CRC/C/GHA/2, 17 March 2006.