



CHILD SOLDIERS: CRC COUNTRY BRIEFS

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Prepared by The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers

GEORGIA

Republic of Georgia

I. SUMMARY

CRC-OP-CAC:	Not signed, nor ratified
Other treaties ratified:	CRC; GC/API+II; ILO 138+182
Legal minimum recruitment age:	
Conscripts:	18
Volunteers:	18
"Straight-18" position:	Supports
Government Armed Forces:	27,000 active ⁱ ; 250,000 reserves
CHILD SOLDIERS: There are no indications of under-18s in government armed forces. Children were reportedly recruited forcibly during the civil war in Abkhazia.	

II. COUNTRY PROFILE

GOVERNMENT

National Recruitment Legislation and Practice

Article 101 of the 1995 Constitution states: "1. The defence of Georgia is the duty of every citizen. 2. The defence of the country and the performance of the duties of military obligations is the duty of able-bodied citizens of Georgia. The form of military obligations is determined by law."

Pursuant to the 1992 Law on Military Service, as amended in 1996, all men of 18 are liable for two years of military service. In its 1997 report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the government asserted that the law "does not provide for the possibility of accepting volunteers in the army at a lower age [than conscripts]".ⁱⁱ UNICEF confirmed in 1999 that the recruitment of children under the age of 18 and their participation in military activities in Georgia is prohibited by law.ⁱⁱⁱ

Military Training and Military Schools

There are reportedly three military schools in Georgia with a minimum age for entry of 15 years. Up to 400 children attend these schools where they receive military training. Students are not considered part of the armed forces, not allowed to participate in any kind of military operations, nor obliged to continue military training upon graduation.^{iv}

Child Recruitment

It is alleged that during the civil war in Abkhazia, illegal recruitment methods, including press-ganging, were used by the armed forces when legal forms of recruitment failed to achieve the necessary number of recruits. There were reports that children under 18 were among those forcibly recruited.^v According to UNICEF, there are currently no under-age recruits in the country.^{vi}

OPPOSITION

It is not known whether either of opposition Abkhazia and South Ossetia forces use child soldiers.

III. URGENT ACTIONS RECOMMENDED

- ⇒ The government of Georgia should ratify the CRC-OP-CAC and also declare its commitment to a 'straight-18' standard for recruitment
- ⇒ Non-state armed groups in Georgia should declare their commitment to the standards set in the CRC-OP-CAC and also a 'straight-18' standard for recruitment.
- ⇒ The government and non-state armed groups should establish mechanisms to implement provisions of the CRC-OP-CAC, and to monitor implementation
- ⇒ The government should protect children from recruitment and use for military purposes by any armed force or group
- ⇒ The government should ensure that military and criminal code provisions regarding children who take part in hostilities or are recruited into armed forces or groups, are in accordance with international standards of juvenile justice.

IV. QUESTIONS TO STATE REPRESENTATIVES

- What steps has the Government of Georgia taken to ensure the protection of children from recruitment in conflict areas?

ⁱ See Government of Georgia's website: <http://www.parliament.ge/ARMY/quanarm.html>

ⁱⁱ Initial Report of Georgia submitted to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, UN Doc. CRC/C/41/Add.4/, 26/5/97, para. 18.

ⁱⁱⁱ Information provided by UNICEF, 25/6/99.

^{iv} Ibid.

^v Bart Horeman and Marc Stoljijk, *Refusing to Bear Arms: a world survey of conscription and conscientious objection to military service*, War resisters International, 1998.

^{vi} Information provided by UNICEF, 25/6/99.