

Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyz Republic

SUMMARY

CRC-OP-CAC: Declaration:	Ratified. ¹
Other treaties ratified:	CRC, GC/API+II, ICC signed.
Legal minimum recruitment age: Conscripts: Volunteers:	18 18. ²
Government Armed Forces:	Active 10,900; paramilitary 5,000. ³
RECRUITMENT AND USE OF CHILD SOLDIERS: There is no information about the recruitment of under-18s to government armed forces.	

GOVERNMENT

National Recruitment Legislation

Article 24 of the 1993 Constitution states that: "Citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic have the right and duty to defend the Motherland. Citizens perform military service within the limits and in the forms established by law".⁴ The legal basis of conscription is the 1992 "Law on general military duties", as amended in 1994.⁵ Military service can be performed in the Kyrgyz armed forces or with the Russian border guards. The Armed Forces of Kyrgyzstan are currently in transition to a fully professional army and this process is expected to take about eight years.⁶

Kyrgyzstan's second report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child states that Article 25 of the "Law on the defence and protection of the rights of minors", which came into force in 1999, criminalizes the recruitment of minors for participation in military operations and armed conflict [and that this law came into force in 1999].⁷

Child recruitment

The Coalition is not aware of any reports of recruitment of under-18s into the Kyrgyz armed forces.

Armed Opposition Groups

The summers of 1999 and 2000 saw Islamic militants from the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) cross the border from Tajikistan into Kyrgyzstan, seize villages and take hostages.⁸ It is possible that these fighters may have included under-18s. Bomb blasts in December 2002 and May 2003 have also been linked to the IMU.

Another radical Islamic group, the Hizb ut-Tahrir, which seeks to overthrow Central Asian governments and create an Islamic caliphate in the region, is believed to be becoming increasingly popular in southern Kyrgyzstan. Hizb ut-Tahrir has renounced violence, but the government of Kyrgyzstan, along with other regional governments has banned the group, claiming it has links with more militant groups such as the IMU.⁹ As a proscribed organisation, Hizb ut-Tahrir's membership statistics are not publicly available.

Military Training and Military Schools

There are two military schools in Kyrgyzstan – the Kyrgyz State National Military Lycée and the Bishkek Higher Military Specialized School.¹⁰ The Kyrgyz State National Military Lycée is a “school for young people with a military inclination”.¹¹ It is open to students who have completed 9 years of school (from the age of 16).¹² The Bishkek Higher Military Specialized School trains officer cadets.¹³ Young people from Kyrgyzstan can also attend military educational centres in the Russian Federation to receive training in various areas of specialization, though to do this they have to sign up for five years' service in Kyrgyzstan's armed forces.¹⁴

A class called “Elementary Military Training” during the final two years of school was re-introduced after 1999 incursions into southern Kyrgyzstan by Islamic militant groups. The classes had been dropped following the country's independence in the early 1990s. At the classes boys study weaponry such as AK-47s, military tactics and “civil defence” in the class. After the two years they go to camps in the countryside for a week of practical exercises, including shooting and physical training. Girls are taught first aid over the same two-year period.¹⁵

International standards

The government of Kyrgyzstan acceded to the CRC-OP-CAC on 13 August 2003. The declaration made on accession confirmed that the minimum age for recruitment in the country is 18.

QUESTIONS TO STATE REPRESENTATIVES

- Can the government confirm that in practice no under-18s are recruited into the armed forces?
- How many children take part in the elementary military training classes? Are the participants subsequently recruited to the armed forces?

RECOMMENDATIONS

- If it has not already done so, the government should take steps to bring national legislation on enforced and voluntary recruitment into line with the OP-CRC-CAC.
- The government should ensure that students at the military schools do not take part in any hazardous military training involving the use of live or dangerous ammunition.

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- ¹ <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu2/6/crc/treaties/status-opac.htm>
- ² Universal Military Service Act, Initial report to UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, CRC/C/41/Add.6, 20 December 1999, [http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(Symbol\)/CRC.C.41.Add.6.En?OpenDocument](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/CRC.C.41.Add.6.En?OpenDocument)
- ³ The Military Balance 2002-2003, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, October 2003.
- ⁴ Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, <http://www.kyrgyzstan.org/Law/constitution.htm#c1a>, accessed 19 January 2004.
- ⁵ Horeman B and Stolwijk M, *Refusing to Bear Arms: A World Survey of Conscription and Conscientious Objection to Military Service*, War Resisters International, 1998.
- ⁶ RIAN, "Kyrgyzstan to form professional army", at Pravda website <http://english.pravda.ru/cis/2002/08/02/33715.html>, 2 August 2002, accessed 6 January 2004.
- ⁷ 2nd Report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, CRC/C/104/Add.4, <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu2/6/crc/doc/report/srf-kyrgyzstan-2-ru.pdf>, accessed 9 January 2004.
- ⁸ BBC News website, "Timeline: Kyrgyzstan" at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/country_profiles/1296570.stm, accessed 7 January 2004
- ⁹ Carlson, "Kyrgyzstan: Hizb ut-Tahrir Accused Of Increased Militancy", Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty website <http://www.rferl.org/nca/features/2003/03/03032003164958.asp>, accessed 9 January 2004.
- ¹⁰ Ministry of Defence of the Kyrgyz Republic, *Voennoe obrazovanie [Military Education]* at http://www.mil.kg/index.php?name=EZCMS&menu=9&page_id=70, accessed 9 January 2004.
- ¹¹ Ministry of Defence of the Kyrgyz Republic, *Voennoe obrazovanie [Military Education]* at http://www.mil.kg/index.php?name=EZCMS&menu=9&page_id=70, accessed 9 January 2004.
- ¹² Ministry of Defence of the Kyrgyz Republic, *Voennoe obrazovanie [Military Education]* at http://www.mil.kg/index.php?name=EZCMS&menu=9&page_id=70, accessed 9 January 2004.
- ¹³ Ministry of Defence of the Kyrgyz Republic, *Voennoe obrazovanie [Military Education]* at http://www.mil.kg/index.php?name=EZCMS&menu=9&page_id=70, accessed 9 January 2004.
- ¹⁴ Ministry of Defence of the Kyrgyz Republic, *Voennoe obrazovanie [Military Education]* at http://www.mil.kg/index.php?name=EZCMS&menu=9&page_id=70, accessed 9 January 2004.
- ¹⁵ Information received from Aslan Sydykov, Akipress News Agency, Bishek, Kyrgyzstan, January 2004.