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Responses to Information Requests

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1 May 2018

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Chad: Military service, including age of recruitment, the registration process and length of service; whether conscripts receive a notice from a recruitment office (bureau de recrutement); grounds for exemption and the possibility of alternative service (2016-May 2018)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

1. Legislation

The Constitution of the Republic of Chad (*Constitution de la République du Tchad*) provides the following:

[translation]

Article 51:

The defence of the country and of the integrity of the national territory is the duty of

every Chadian.

Military service is obligatory.

The conditions for fulfilling this duty are determined by law. (Chad 1996)

Law No. 012/PR/2006 of 10 March 2006 to Reorganize the Armed and Security Forces (*Loi n° 012/PR/2006 du 10 mars 2006 portant réorganisation des Forces armées et de sécurité*) provides the following:

[translation]

Article 27: Military service is mandatory for all Chadian citizens, except in cases of duly established medical unfitness.

Article 28: Recruitment in the armed and security forces is done through:

- Drafting;
- Reenlistment following completion of legal military service;
- Enlistment, exceptionally, for highly skilled technical specialists.

Article 29: Legal military service is mandatory for everyone. Individuals who have been convicted of a crime or a very serious offence are excluded. Exemptions are subject to specific provisions determined by Order.

Article 30: The legal length of military service is eighteen (18) months. Soldiers released from active duty are classified in the reserve class until the age of fifty (50). They may be called back to serve the country.

Article 31: Armed and security forces personnel to be recruited are determined annually by decree of the Council of Ministers.

Article 32: The legal age of recruitment is set at the age of twenty (20) years for members of the contingent and at a minimum of eighteen (18) years and a maximum of thirty-five (35) years for enlisted soldiers.

Young members of the contingent who are fit for duty are classified into two (2) groups:

- Only the first group whose personnel is determined each year by decree is in fact recruited and subject to active duty;
- The second group remains at the disposal of the military authorities for active duty for two (2) years. It may also be called on to perform work in the community by order of the Government of the Republic. (Chad 2006)

2. Application of Legislation

In correspondence sent to the Research Directorate, a military and defence attaché at the Embassy of Chad in Ottawa indicated the following:

[translation]

[A]t the moment, military service is voluntary in the Republic of Chad. The only citizens who are currently subject to mandatory military service ranging from 45 days to 3 months are students graduating from professional schools such as the National School of Administration (École nationale d'administration, ENA) and the National Graduate School of Public Works (École nationale supérieure des travaux publics, ENSTP). Upon completion of their military training, they are given the title of “reservists,” but are not employed by the army. (Chad 20 Apr. 2018)

According to the *World Factbook* of the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), “18 is the legal minimum age for voluntary service,” there is “no minimum age restriction for volunteers with consent from a parent or guardian,” there is a three-year service obligation and “women are subject to 1 year of compulsory military or civic service at age 21” (US 10 Apr. 2018). The same source states that “while provisions for military service have not been repealed, they have never been fully implemented” (US 10 Apr. 2018).

3. Recruitment

The military and defence attaché at the Embassy of Chad in Ottawa explained that military service is [translation] “open to both male and female Chadians who enjoy their full rights as citizens, are single and have no dependent children. Officers and non-commissioned officers are recruited through competitions and rank and file members are recruited through drafts” (Chad 20 Apr. 2018).

African media articles from 2015 mention recruitment operations conducted by the Chadian authorities encouraging young people to sign up (Alwihda Info 15 June 2015; *Cameroon Tribune* 15 June 2015; APA News 13 June 2015). According to Alwihda Info, an Internet site covering Chadian and African current affairs, [translation] “opening the army up to young people, without any regional or ethnic restrictions, has encouraged numerous young people, who have been quick to add their names to the open list and register to be among those who will make up the

future battalions of the Chadian army” (Alwihda Info 15 June 2015). Other sources report on a recruitment activity carried out over a two-month period intended to attract 10,000 young people to the army (*Cameroon Tribune* 15 June 2015; APA News 13 June 2015). According to the Agence de presse africaine (APA News), a news portal, this campaign [translation] “is aimed at recruiting 10,000 young people, girls and boys, aged 18 to 25, from all Chadian regions, in 2015” (APA News 13 June 2015).

4. Conscientious Objection

The Constitution of the Republic of Chad provides the following:

[translation]

Article 54:

One may not invoke religious beliefs or philosophical opinions to avoid an obligation dictated by the national interest. (Chad 1996)

In a 2016 report, the Observatory of Religious Freedom (Observatoire de la liberté religieuse) [1] states that [translation] “article 54 limits ... the right to conscientious objection” (ACN 2016). In its *International Religious Freedom Report for 2016*, the US Department of State indicates the following about Chad:

[US English version]

The constitution states military service is obligatory and prohibits invoking religious belief to “avoid an obligation dictated by the national interest.” The government does not enforce conscription, however. (US 15 Aug. 2017, 3)

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

Note

[1] Reports by the Observatory of Religious Freedom are published every two years by Aid to the Church in Need (ACN), an [translation] “international Catholic charity” (ACN n.d.). The 2016 report assesses the [translation] “situation regarding

religious freedom in 196 countries in the world” and was prepared by “24 independent journalists, academics and authors, based mainly in the area concerned” (ACN n.d.).

References

Agence de presse africaine (APA News). 13 June 2015. “Recrutement dans l'armée nationale tchadienne.” (Factiva) [Accessed 25 Apr. 2018]

Aid to the Church in Need (ACN). 2016. Observatoire de la liberté religieuse. “Tchad.” Rapport 2016. [Accessed 19 Apr. 2018]

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Alwihda Info. 15 June 2015. Abu Adil. “Tchad : un recrutement à ciel ouvert dans l'armée.” [Accessed 25 Apr. 2018]

Cameroon Tribune. 15 June 2015. “10 000 jeunes à recruter dans l'armée au pays.” (Factiva) [Accessed 25 Apr. 2018]

Chad. 20 April 2018. Embassy in Ottawa. Correspondence from a military and defence attaché to the Research Directorate.

Chad. 2006. __ Loi n° 012/PR/2006 portant réorganisation des Forces armées et de sécurité. [Accessed 18 Apr. 2018]

Chad. 1996. __ Constitution de la République du Tchad. [Accessed 19 Apr. 2018]

United States (US). 10 April 2018. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). “Chad.” The World Factbook. [Accessed 19 Apr. 2018]

United States (US). 15 August 2017. Department of State. “Tchad.” __ Rapport 2016 sur la liberté de religion dans le monde. [Accessed 20 Apr. 2018]

Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Chad – Honorary Consul in Montreal; educator-researcher in political science interested in the profession of arms in Chad.

Internet sites, including: Amnesty International; BBC; Chad – official site of the presidency, official site of the primature, official site of the government; Child Soldiers International; ecoi.net; Freedom House; Human Rights Watch; International Crisis Group; *Journal du Tchad*; *Le Monde*; *Political Handbook of the World*; Radio France internationale; UN – Refworld, UNICEF; War Resisters' International.

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