



Immigration and
Refugee Board of Canada

Commission de l'immigration
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31 October 2007

MAR102604.E

Morocco: Whether military service is compulsory for men in Morocco; whether all persons of age receive a call-up notice; penalties imposed upon those who refuse to enlist; whether persons who refuse to serve are prosecuted (2004-2007)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

The Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Morocco in Ottawa stated in a telephone interview with the Research Directorate that conscription was eliminated on 31 August 2006 by government decree (9 Oct. 2007). The Research Directorate was unable to obtain a copy of the decree within the time constraints of this Response. Media and non-governmental sources corroborate that Morocco ended mandatory military conscription in 2006 (*The Weekly Standard* 2 Oct. 2006; Jamestown Foundation 15 Feb. 2007; *IOL* 30 Nov. 2007; *Washington Post* 29 Sept. 2006).

In 19 September 2007 correspondence with the Research Directorate, a professor at the Royal Military College in Canada who specializes in military and strategic issues as they pertain to the Middle East and North Africa provided information regarding the period before mandatory military service was abolished. This information is contained in the following three paragraphs.

The Professor stated that up until 31 August 2006, military service was mandatory for men between 19 and 39 years of age; service was voluntary for women. Conscripts were expected to serve for 12 months - the required time period was reduced from 18 months by a law passed in 1999. The law requiring mandatory military service was "insufficiently enforced" due to limited government resources. Also, the military had more volunteers than they could handle.

According to the Professor, if a man refused to serve in the military after receiving a call-up notice, he risked being fined or imprisoned. The most usual fine was 1,200 Moroccan dirhams [approximately 150 Canadian dollars (Canada 4 Oct. 2007)]. Jail terms for men found guilty of avoiding compulsory military service ranged from eight days to one month. However, the laws regarding military service were not fully enforced. Further, the Professor stated that, "the rich could buy their freedom from military service; the educated could remain in school for a longer time to avoid the military service...."

The Professor indicated that military deserters were punished with long-term imprisonment or the death penalty, "depending the circumstances and the severity of the situation."

The information provided by the Professor could not be corroborated among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

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 additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

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Independent Online (IOL). 30 September 2006. "Morocco Scraps Mandatory Military Service." <http://www.int.iol.co.za/index.php?from=rss_Africa&set_id=1&click_id=0&art_id=qw1164922206918B256> [30 Sept. 2007]

Jamestown Foundation. 15 February 2007. Matthew Chebatoris. "Islamic Infiltration of the Moroccan Armed Forces." *Terrorism Monitor*, Vol. 5, Issue 3. <<http://www.jamestown.org/terrorism/news/article.php?articleid=2370252>> [Accessed 19 Sept. 2007]

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Professor, International Relations at the Royal Military College of Canada, Kingston. 19 September 2007.
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The Washington Post. 29 September 2007. John Thorne. "Extremist Islam May Be Rising in Morocco." <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/09/29/AR2006092900750.html>> [Accessed 4 Oct. 2007]

The Weekly Standard. 2 October 2006. Vol. 12, Issue 3. Olivia Guitta. "Extremism is Displacing Moderation in the North African Kingdom." <<http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/012/740boykt.asp>> [Accessed 4 Sept. 2006]

Additional Sources Consulted

Publications, including: *Jane's Terrorism and Security Monitor*.

Internet sites, including: Amnesty International (AI), Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Freedom House, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), War Resisters' International.