

# Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

[Home](#)

> [Research Program](#)

> Responses to Information Requests

---

## Responses to Information Requests

---

Responses to Information Requests (RIR) respond to focused Requests for Information that are submitted to the Research Directorate in the course of the refugee protection determination process. The database contains a seven-year archive of English and French RIRs. Earlier RIRs may be found on the UNHCR's [Refworld](#) website. Please note that some RIRs have attachments which are not electronically accessible. To obtain a PDF copy of an RIR attachment please email [Basesdedonnees.DatabaseUnit@irb-cisr.gc.ca](mailto:Basesdedonnees.DatabaseUnit@irb-cisr.gc.ca).

22 July 2013

### **MRT104506.FE**

Mauritania: Military service, including whether it is compulsory; potential consequences if a person evades military service (2012-July 2013)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

#### **1. Military Service**

The website of the Mauritanian National Army states that, pursuant to Article 7 of Act No. 62.132 of 1962, army recruitment conditions are the following:

[translation]

Any Mauritanian can join the Mauritanian army under articles 13, 14, 15, 17 and 18 of Act No. 61.112 dated 12 June 1961 (the Mauritanian Nationality Code) if they meet the following conditions:

- Minimum of 16 years old
- Not married
- Physically fit
- Never been sentenced
- Obtained consent of parent(s)/guardian(s) or, in their absence
- Previously obtained permission from the Ministry of Defence, for youth under 18 years old

The commitment is for two, three or five years. Incorporation can take place at any time of the year.

...

The Minister of Defence determines the number of participants for each corps or service. (Mauritania n.d.)

Article 1 of Act No. 62.132 of 1962 states the following on recruitment:

[Mauritania English version]

Every Mauritanian citizen must perform military service in person, except where [their] physical incapacity has been duly established.

Recruitment into the army shall be:

1. By call-up of the annual contingent;
2. By enlistment and re-enlistment.

Under articles 13, 14, 15, 17 and 18 of Act No. 61.112 of 12 June 1961 containing the Mauritanian Nationality Code, only Mauritanian citizens or naturalized Mauritanians may enlist in the army, whether as conscripts or as volunteers. (Mauritania 10 Jan. 2001, para. 29)

Sources state that legislation passed in 1962 on compulsory two-year military service has seemingly never been applied (IFOR and CPTI Dec. 2012; Coalition pour mettre fin à l'utilisation d'enfants soldats 2008, 229) and that "it remain[s] unclear whether the 1962 [l]aw ... [is] still in force" (ibid.). In its 15 May 2013 version, the *World Factbook* of the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) states that military service in Mauritania is compulsory for 18-year-old men, for a period of two years, but that the "majority of servicemen [are] believed to be volunteers" (US 15 May 2013). In a 10 July 2013 version, the *World Factbook* points out that military service is not compulsory in Mauritania (ibid. 10 July 2013).

In its written replies to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, which were drafted for the 2009 periodic review, Mauritania states that [Mauritania English version] "there is no compulsory military service in Mauritania, so enrolment is voluntary" (Mauritania 22 Apr. 2009, 17). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, the official in charge of the French cell of the Mauritanian Human Rights Association (Association mauritanienne des droits de l'homme, AMDH), an apolitical and not-for-profit human rights organization in Mauritania that was founded in Nouakchott (AMDH 20 June 1999) in 1991 (ibid. n.d.), stated on behalf of the delegated president that there is no compulsory military service in Mauritania (ibid. 12 July 2013). The official also pointed out that [translation] "a quota system is in place based on ethnic origin" (ibid.). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

## 2. Consequences for a Person Who Evades Military Service

The official in charge of the AMDH cell in France wrote the following:

[translation]

Conscientious objection does not exist in Mauritania. Soldiers who leave the army may be subjected to two forms of repression for their action:

1. In times of war, the military deserter is prosecuted for high treason.
2. In normal times, the person in question is retained for two months, during which their professional equipment (uniform, weapons, cards, shoes) is confiscated, and at the same time, the person is punished (head shaved, imprisoned, duties within the camp, and so on). They are released following the punishment. (12 July 2013)

Corroborating information or information on the consequences faced by a person who evades military service could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

## 3. Possibility that a Person Could Be Enrolled Against Their Will

The official in charge of the AMDH cell in France is of the opinion that

[translation]

[s]ince service is not compulsory and a quota system is in place, no citizen is enrolled against their will. The army has become a service that is highly sought after by youth because the military occupation is valued. (12 July 2013)

Corroborating information or information on forced enrolment could not be found 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 sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

## References

Association mauritanienne des droits de l'homme (AMDH). 12 July 2013. Correspondence sent to the Research Directorate by the official in charge of the AMDH cell in France on behalf of the delegated president.

\_\_\_\_\_. 20 June 1999. *Statuts/AMDH*. <<http://www.amdhrim.org/accueil/qui-sommes-nous/statuts-r%C3%A9glement-int%C3%A9rieur/>> [Accessed 16 July 2013]

\_\_\_\_\_. N.d. "L'association." <<http://www.amdhrim.org/accueil/qui-sommes-nous/>> [Accessed 16 July 2013]

Coalition pour mettre fin à l'utilisation d'enfants soldats. 2008. "Mauritania." *Child Soldiers Global Report 2008*. <[http://www.child-soldiers.org/global\\_report\\_reader.php?id=97](http://www.child-soldiers.org/global_report_reader.php?id=97)> [Accessed 18 July 2013]

International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR) and Conscience and Peace Tax International (CPTI). December 2012. "Submission to the 107th Session of the Human Rights Committee for the Attention of the Country Report Task Force on Mauritania." <[http://www.ecoi.net/file\\_upload/1930\\_1371814732\\_ifor-cpti-mauritania-hrc107.pdf](http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1930_1371814732_ifor-cpti-mauritania-hrc107.pdf)> [Accessed 18 July 2013]

Mauritania. 22 April 2009. *Réponses écrites du gouvernement de la Mauritanie à la liste des points à traiter (CRC/C/MRT/Q/2) établie par le Comité des droits de l'enfant à l'occasion de l'examen du second rapport périodique de la Mauritanie*. (CRC/C/MRT/Q/2/Add.1) <<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/crcs51.htm>> [Accessed 3 July 2013]

\_\_\_\_\_. 10 January 2001. *Examen des rapports présentés par les États parties en application de l'article 44 de la Convention*. (CRC/C/8/Add.42) <<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G01/401/45/PDF/G0140145.pdf?OpenElement>> [Accessed 18 July 2013]

\_\_\_\_\_. N.d. Armée nationale mauritanienne. "Conditions de recrutement." <<http://www.armee.mr/fr/index.php/2012-06-05-11-02-06>> [Accessed 4 July 2013]

United States (US). 10 July 2013. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). "Mauritania." *The World Factbook*. <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mr.html>> [Accessed 18 July 2013]

\_\_\_\_\_. 15 May 2013. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). "Mauritania." *The World Factbook*. <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mr.html>> [Accessed 3 July 2013]

## Additional Sources Consulted

**Oral sources:** Attempts to contact representatives of the Commission nationale des droits de l'homme de Mauritanie, the Canadian consulate in Mauritania, a military professor at the U.S. Naval War College and a political sciences professor at the Université de Nouakchott en Mauritanie were unsuccessful. Representatives of the Armée nationale mauritanienne; the Mauritanian consulate in Alberta, in Canada; and the Permanent Mission of Mauritania to the United Nations did not respond to a request for information within the time constraints of this Response.

**Internet sites, including:** Africa Confidential; *Africa Research Bulletin*; Afrik.com; AllAfrica; Association mauritanienne des droits de l'homme; Avocats sans frontières; Child Soldiers International; ecoi.net; Factiva; Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'homme; France – Cour nationale du droit d'asile; Freedom House; Global Security; Institute for War and Peace Reporting; International Institute for Strategic Studies; Internationale des résistant(e)s à la guerre; Jamestown Foundation; Jane's Terrorism and Security Monitor; Jeune Afrique; Small Arms Survey; United Kingdom – Border Agency; United Nations – Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations Development Programme, RefWorld; United States – American Embassy in Mauritania, Department of Labor, Department of State.

[Tips on how to use this search engine.](#)

[Top of Page](#)

Date modified: 2015-08-13