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AGO42622.E

21 April 2004

Angola: Conscription and military registration, including people who are exempted from conscription, the existence of alternative service and specifically, whether conscription or forced recruitment has been discontinued (April 2004)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

No information on whether conscription or forced recruitment has been discontinued could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. Furthermore, efforts to obtain information from the Angolan Embassy and the UNHCR in Ottawa were unsuccessful within the time constraints of this response.

Regarding military registration, several reports refer to a January 2004 communiqué of the Angolan Ministry of National Defence, that ordered male Angolans born in 1986 to register for military conscription (Angola Press Agency 6 Jan. 2004; *ibid.* 5 Jan. 2004; Radio Nacional de Angola 5 Jan. 2004). One of the reports refers also to female Angolans born in the same period (Radio Nacional de Angola 5 Jan. 2004).

The registration, which was held between 6 January and 29 February 2004, also concerned those born between 1981 and 1985 who did not register during previous years (*ibid.*; Angola Press Agency 5 Jan. 2004; *ibid.* 6 Jan. 2004) as well as those born between 1970 and 1974, who had not regularised their military status (Angola Press Agency 5 Jan. 2004).

Citing the Angolan Defence Ministry release, the Angola Press Agency indicated that persons who for "unjustified reasons failed to turn up in the registration offices, will be considered as in fault and will be subject to punishment according to the law on the military service." (Angola Press Agency 6 Jan. 2004). The same source of information did not provide additional information on the "unjustified reasons" or on types of punishment. However, a 14 January 2004 report noted that to obtain academic certificates that would permit them to be accepted in various schools in the Angolan capital, "student[s] over the age of 18 must produce certificates proving they have complied with military registration formalities" (Radio Nacional de Angola).

During a 19 April 2004 telephone interview, the head of the Africa Program at the Royal Institute of International Affairs of London, stated that in Angola, males who have reached the age of 18 must register for military service, which is still mandatory in Angola. However, he added that unlike during the war when some people were rounded up and forced to enrol by both government forces and by the National Union for the

Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), no call ups or instances of forced recruitment have recently been observed in Angola (ibid.).

Referring to Angolan law, *Country Reports 2003* stated that military service is obligatory (25 Feb. 2004, sect. 1.f). The report also added that "unlike in previous years, there were no reports of the armed forces and police conducting forced conscription drives." (ibid.).

Information on the existence of alternative service to military service and additional information to that provided in AGO41675.E of 5 August 2003 and AGO41322.E of 5 March 2003 on persons who are granted military exemptions could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

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

Angola Press Agency (APG). 6 January 2004. "New Military Conscription Starts Tuesday." (Dialog/AllAfrica)

_____. 5 January 2004. "Defence Ministry Announces New Conscription." (Dialog/AllAfrica)

Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2003. 25 February 2004. United States Department of State. Washington, DC.
<<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2003/27711.htm>> [Accessed 19 Apt. 2004]

Radio Nacional de Angola [Luanda, in Portuguese]. 14 January 2004. "Program Summary." (Dialog/WNC)

_____. 5 January 2004. "Angola: Defence Minister Announces Military Registration Exercise." (Dialog/WNC)

Royal Institute of International Affairs, London. 19 April 2004. Telephone interview with the head of Africa Program.

Additional Sources Consulted

Publication s: *Africa Confidential*. Resource Centre country file.

Internet sites, including : AllAfrica.com, Amnesty International (AI), Angola Press Agency (APA), Angolan Anti-Militarism Initiative for Human Rights, BBC Africa, Dialog, Human Rights Watch, Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), Relief Web

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