
CAPE VERDE

Republic of Cape Verde

Population: 454,000 (216,000 under 18)

Government armed forces: 1,200 (estimate)

Compulsory recruitment age: 18

Voluntary recruitment age: 17

Voting age: 18

Optional Protocol: acceded 10 May 2002

Other treaties ratified (see glossary):

CRC, GC AP I and II, ILO 182; ACRWC

17 year olds may volunteer for military service with parental consent. No information was available on the presence of under-18s in the armed forces.

Context

A number of people were sentenced to prison terms for vote rigging in connection with presidential elections in January 2001. The International Monetary Fund reported “encouraging economic growth” in Cape Verde. However, local sources and trade unions complained at rising prices and that privatization of basic utilities had placed them beyond the reach of many Cape Verdeans.¹

Government

National recruitment legislation and practice

Under the 1992 constitution, all individuals “shall have the duty to contribute to the defence of the nation” (Article 83). The constitution also states that “Military service shall be compulsory” and that “Conscientious objectors and those who are unfit for military service shall perform civic service, as provided by law” (Article 271).

Military service is compulsory for all men aged between 18 and 35 years. Volunteers may enlist at the age of 17, with parental consent.² Military service is reportedly for two years.³

Other developments

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, in considering the initial report of Cape Verde in October 2001, welcomed improvements in children’s rights, a fall in the mortality rate of children under five, and a rise in school enrolment. It expressed concern at the number of births that remained unregistered, violence against children within the family, practices of child labour, increasing sexual violence and exploitation, and the possibility of child trafficking.⁴

- 1 *Afrol news*, “Cape Verdean election delegates to prison”, 26 June 2003; “Continued economic growth in Cape Verde”, 14 June 2003; “Protests against Cape Verdean price hikes”, 17 January 2003.
- 2 Initial report by Cape Verde to UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, UN Doc. CRC/C/11/Add.23, 9 January 2001; Summary record of the 746th meeting: Cape Verde, UN Doc. CRC/C/SR.746, 7 November 2001, <http://www.ohchr.org>.
- 3 B. Horeman and M. Stolwijk, *Refusing to Bear Arms: A World Survey of Conscripted and Conscientious Objection to Military Service*, War Resisters International, London, 1998, <http://www.wri-irg.org/co/rtba>.
- 4 Concluding observations of UN Committee on the Rights of the Child: Cape Verde, UN Doc. CRC/C/15/Add.168, 7 November 2001.