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# COMOROS

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## Union of the Comoros

**Population:** 706,000<sup>1</sup>

**Government armed forces:** unclear<sup>2</sup>

**Compulsory recruitment age:** no conscription

**Voluntary recruitment age:** unknown

**Voting age:** 18

**Optional Protocol:** not signed

**Other treaties ratified** (see glossary):

CRC, GC AP I and II, ILO 138, ILO 182; ACRWC

***Armed political groups allegedly recruited children during internal conflict which ended in 2002.***

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## Context

After three years of peace talks aimed at national reconciliation, a new constitution was approved in March 2002, reuniting the three islands, Grande Comore (Ngazidja), Anjouan and Mohéli, each with its own elected President. Colonel Assoumani Azali, who had seized power in a coup in 1999, was inaugurated as President of the Union in May 2002 following elections that were marred by serious irregularities and violence.<sup>3</sup> In February security forces said that they had foiled a coup plot against President Assoumani.<sup>4</sup>

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## Government

### National recruitment legislation and practice

No information was available on legislation or whether there were under-18s in the armed forces.

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### Armed political groups

There was little information available about armed political groups and their recruitment practices. There were several groups on Anjouan reported to be armed, including paramilitary forces, militias and civilian groups. The two separatist groups on Anjouan allegedly recruited young boys between 13 and 16 years old during internal conflict that ended in 2002.<sup>5</sup>

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### Other developments

In 2004 Comoros ratified the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.<sup>6</sup>

- 2 The military resources of Comoros consist of a small standing army, a 500-member defence force and a 500-member police force. A defence treaty with France provides naval resources for protection of territorial waters, training of Comorian military personnel, and air surveillance. France maintains a small maritime base and a foreign legion contingent on Mayotte, which remains under French administration. (US Department of State, *Background Note: Comoros*, November 2003, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5236.htm>).
- 3 *Amnesty International Report 2003*, <http://web.amnesty.org/library/engindex>.
- 4 BBC, "Timeline: Comoros – A chronology of key events", <http://news.bbc.co.uk>.
- 5 Global March Against Child Labour, *Worst Forms of Child Labour Data, 2002: Comoros*, <http://www.globalmarch.org/worstformsreport/world/comoros.html>.
- 6 African Union, <http://www.africa-union.org>.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Statesman's Yearbook 2004*, ed. Barry Turner, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.