

Iran

Islamic Republic of Iran

SUMMARY

CRC-OP-CAC: Declaration:	Not signed
Other treaties ratified:	CRC, GC/AP 1+II, ILO 138, ILO 182, ICC signed.
Legal minimum recruitment age: Conscripts: Volunteers:	19 Not known, possibly no minimum age for paramilitary forces
Government Armed Forces:	Total: 540,000 Army 350,000; Revolutionary Guard Corps 120,000, Air Force 52,000. Paramilitary 40,000 active ¹
RECRUITMENT AND USE OF CHILD SOLDIERS: There is no indication of children being used in the official armed forces, but under-18s may be involved in the <i>Basij</i> paramilitary force.	

GOVERNMENT

National Recruitment Legislation

Article 3, section 11 of the Iran Constitution stipulates that “All round strengthening of the foundations of national defence to the utmost degree by means of universal military training” as a state goal. Article 144 states, “The Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran must be an Islamic Army, i.e. committed to Islamic ideology and the people, and must recruit into its service, individuals who have faith in the objectives of the Islamic Revolution and are devoted to the cause of realising its goals.” Article 151 states “the government is obliged to provide a programme of military training, with all requisite facilities for all its citizens, in accordance with the Islamic criteria, in such a way that all citizens will be able to engage in the armed defence of the Islamic Republic of Iran.”²

In its initial report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Iranian Government stated that “according to article 2 of the Public Conscription Act, every Iranian citizen is eligible for military service as of 21 March of the year he reaches 19”. Persons found eligible to serve are recruited for military service during the year they have reached the age of 19. However, according to the report “the minimum employment age for the armed forces for the purpose of receiving military training is 16 and the minimum age of employment for the Police Forces is 17”. Girls are exempt from military service.³

Child Recruitment and Deployment

Some 40,000 peacetime volunteers, “mostly youth”, are active in the *Basij* or Popular Mobilization Army.⁴ It is not known whether there is a minimum age for recruitment or voluntary enlistment, or whether under-18s are deployed in this force.

International Standards

The government has not yet signed or ratified the CRC-OP-CRC. It ratified ILO convention 182 on the worst forms of child labour on 8 May 2002, but did not provide any specific information to the Committee on the Rights of the Child on any measures taken to protect under-18s from being recruited into the paramilitary force.

QUESTIONS TO STATE REPRESENTATIVES

- Are there 16 to 18 year olds currently serving in the Iranian armed forces?
- What is the recruitment age for paramilitary forces such as the *Basij*?
- Are under-18s currently serving in such groups and if so how many?
- Do under-18 participate in military operations?

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Government of Iran should sign the OP-CRC-CAC and support a “straight-18” standard for recruitment.
- Once ratified, the government should take steps to bring national legislation on enforced and voluntary recruitment into line with the OP-CRC-CAC.
- The government should take steps to demobilize any under-18s currently serving in the armed forces.

¹ *The Military Balance 2003-2004*, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, October 2003

² Islamic Republic of Iran Constitution, www.iranonline.com/iran-info/government/constitution.html

³ Initial report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, CRC/C/41/Add.5, 23 July 1998.

⁴ *The Military Balance 2003-2004*, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, October 2003