



MINIMUM AGE TO RECRUITMENT IN TO THE ARMY: INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL LAWS

African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of eth Child, 1990

Article 22 Armed Conflicts

2. States Parties to the present Charter shall take all necessary measures to ensure that no child shall take a direct part in hostilities and refrain in particular, from recruiting any child.

Article 2: Definition of a Child

For tile purposes of this Charter a child means every human being below the age of 18 years.

Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989

Article 38

3. States Parties shall refrain from recruiting any person who has not attained the age of fifteen years into their armed forces. In recruiting among those persons who have attained the age of fifteen years but who have not attained the age of eighteen years, States Parties shall endeavor to give priority to those who are oldest.

Optional Protocol; to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, 2000

Article 3

1. States Parties shall raise the minimum age for the voluntary recruitment of persons into their national armed forces from that set out in article 38, paragraph 3, of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, taking account of the principles contained in that article and recognizing that under the Convention persons under 18 are entitled to special protection.

3. States Parties that permit voluntary recruitment into their national armed forces under the age of 18 shall maintain safeguards to ensure, as a minimum, that:

(a) Such recruitment is genuinely voluntary;

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- (b) Such recruitment is done with the informed consent of the persons parents or legal guardians;
- (c) Such persons are fully informed of the duties involved in such military service;
- (d) Such persons provide reliable proof of age prior to acceptance into national military service.

Article 2

States Parties shall ensure that persons who have not attained the age of 18 years are not compulsorily recruited into their armed forces.



COUNTRY	MINIMUM AGE OF RECRUITMENT TO THE ARMY UNDER THE LAWS OF AFRICAN COUNTRIES
Algeria	<p>19 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ordinance establishing the National Service Code, 1975</p> <p>Article 1: The term of service is compulsory for all persons of Algerian nationality from the age of 19 years</p>
Angola	<p>20 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Law on Military Service, 1993</p> <p>Article 1: 2. The military service is mandatory. Article 2. 1. Male Angolans, since the 1st of January of the year in which they reach the age of 20, until 31 December of the year in which they reach 45 years of age, are required to serve in the military in the form and terms established by this Law 2. Women older than 20 years may join voluntarily in the Armed Forces</p>
Benin	<p style="text-align: center;">21 years Second periodic report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child: Benin, 2005</p> <p>Voluntary enlistment into the army and military service are allowed only above the age of 21. Forced conscription into the armed forces does not exist in Benin.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Child Soldiers Global Report 2008, www.childsoldiersglobalreport.org</p> <p>A new law on national service came into effect in October 2007. It provided that citizens between 18 and 35 would be liable for compulsory selection for military service in the national interest. Recruits, who had to have higher-education diplomas, would undertake military training before being deployed in sectors deemed to be in the national interest, including education and health.</p> <p>Benin's declaration on ratifying the Optional Protocol stated that the minimum age for voluntary recruitment into the</p>

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	armed forces or gendarmerie was 18, and that applicants had to submit a birth certificate and a certificate of school attendance. Previously it had stated to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child that the age for voluntary and compulsory recruitment was 21.
Botswana	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Child Act, 2009</p> <p>Section 26(1) Right to protection from involvement in armed conflict: Every child has a right to be protected from involvement in armed conflict and other forms of violent conflict.</p> <p>(2) Any person who recruits or enlists a child for purposes of engaging in or supporting armed conflict or any other form of violent conflict shall be guilty of an offence and shall be sentenced to a fine of not less than P30 000but not more than P50 000, or to imprisonment for a term of not less than five years but not more than fifteen years.</p> <p>Article 2 : “child” means any person who is below the age of 18 years;</p>
Burkina Faso	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Initial state party report to the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child: Burkina Faso, 2006</p> <p>At national level, Article 33 of Law 9-98 AN of 16 April 1998 on the General Status of the Personnel of the National Armed Forces stipulates that any Burkinabè national between 18 and 25 years old may freely engage in military service or be called upon automatically to serve in the national army. The same condition is applicable for military reservists.</p>
Burundi	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Constitution, 2005</p> <p>Article 45: No child can be used directly in armed conflict. Child protection is ensured in armed conflict.</p>

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COUNTRY	MINIMUM AGE OF RECRUITMENT TO THE ARMY UNDER THE LAWS OF AFRICAN COUNTRIES
	<p style="text-align: center;">Law on the Status and Strength of the Armed Forces Act, 2006</p> <p>Article 6: To be committed within the national defense force in a man must c. at least be 18 years of age and not older than 25 years</p>
Cameroon	<p>17 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Second periodic report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child: Cameroon, 2008</p> <p>No one under 17 years of age may be enrolled in the armed forces.</p>
Cape Verde	<p>17 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Initial state party report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child: Cape Verde, 1999</p> <p>In order to perform military service as a volunteer, a minor must be at least 17 years old and have the authorization of his parents or his legal representative. Military service is compulsory for all men aged between 18 and 35 years.</p>
Central African Republic	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Initial state party report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child: Central African Republic, 1998</p> <p>The principle of majority at 18 years of age was reaffirmed both by the age at which a person is entitled to vote and also the age of conscription or enlistment in the armed forces.</p>
Chad	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Second periodic report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child: Chad, 2007</p>

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	The age of recruitment into the army is fixed at 18 years (Ordinance No. 001 of 16 January 1991).
Comoros	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Central Intelligence Agency(CIA)https://www.cia.gov</p> <p>18 years of age for 2-year voluntary military service; no conscription; women first inducted into the Army in 2004 (2011)</p>
Congo Brazzaville	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Child Law, 2010</p> <p>Article 49:It is prohibited to recruit or use children in any form of armed conflict. The child under eighteen years shall be engaged in law enforcement.</p> <p>However, the voluntary recruitment of children under eighteen in the national armed forces is subject to the consent of the child, the parent or legal guardian unless the child is emancipated and issuance of a medical certificate attesting to his actual age.</p>
Cote d'Ivoire	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Initial state party report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child: Cote d'Ivoire, 1999</p> <p>Article 82 of Act No. 95-965 of 7 September 1995 concerning the Armed Forces Code establishes the age of national service for young men and young women as 18 years. A postponement or exemption may be granted (art. 88) for school or university reasons. The age of voluntary enlistment is fixed at 18 years</p>
Democratic Republic of Congo	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Second periodic report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child: Democratic Republic of Congo, 2007</p>

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	Act No. 04/023 of 12 December 2004, setting out the general organization of defence and the armed forces, whose article 7 provides: “Congolese of both sexes who have reached the age of 18 may be conscripted in the event of mobilization.
Djibouti	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Initial state party report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child: Djibouti, 1998</p> <p>As is the case for all civilian and military jobs, young people under 18 may not be accepted into the army. Moreover, there is still no compulsory military service in Djibouti.</p>
Egypt	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Child Act, 2008</p> <p>Article 7-bis (b): The State shall ensure the protection of the life of the child, his safe and secure upbringing away from armed conflicts, and ensure that he shall not engage in any acts of war. Furthermore, the State shall, in cases of emergency, disasters, wars, and armed conflicts, ensure the respect of all his rights, and shall take all necessary measures to prosecute and penalize any person who commits against the child any acts of war crimes, genocide, or crimes against humanity.</p> <p>Article 2: For the purpose of this Law, the term “child” within the context of care and welfare, shall mean all individuals who have not reached the age of eighteen (18) complete calendar years.</p>
Equatorial Guinea	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Central Intelligence Agency(CIA)https://www.cia.gov</p> <p>18 years of age for selective compulsory military service; service obligation 2 years; women hold only administrative positions in the Coast Guard (2011)</p>

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Eritrea	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Proclamation of National Service, 1995</p> <p>Article 8: Compulsory Active National Service</p> <p>Under this Proclamation all Eritrean citizens from the age of 18 to 40 years have the compulsory duty of performing Active National Service</p>
Ethiopia	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Criminal Code, 2004</p> <p>Article 270 War Crimes against the Civilian Population: Whoever, in time of war, armed conflict or occupation organizes, orders or engages in, against the civilian population and in violation of the rules of public international law and of international humanitarian conventions:</p> <p>Recruiting children who have not attained the age of eighteen years as members of defence forces to take part in armed conflict.</p> <p>Regulations issued by the Ministry of Defense on recruitment procedure and requirements provide for the minimum age of 18 years.</p>
Gabon	<p>20 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Initial state party report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child: Gabon, 2000</p> <p>Gabonese legislation provides for enlistment in the armed forces as from the age of 20 (Act No. 004/98 of February 1998 on the general organization of national defence and public security). Enlistment is not compulsory, as the country has never been involved in an armed conflict.</p>
Gambia	<p>18 years</p>

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	<p style="text-align: center;">Child Act, 2005</p> <p>Section 59: a child shall not be recruited in to any of the branches of the armed forces of The Gambia or other security agencies</p> <p>Section 2(1): child means a person under the age of 18 years</p>
Ghana	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2nd periodic report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child: Ghana, 2005</p> <p>The minimum age for enlistment into the army is 18 years.</p>
Guinea	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Child Code, 2008</p> <p>Article429: a Child under18 should not participate, directly or indirectly, in hostilities or be recruited into the armed forces or armed groups. Conscripting or enlisting children under the age of 18into the armed forces or armed groups, or to engage in hostilities shall be punished with imprisonment from 2to 5 years or a fine of50,000 to 500,000Guinean francs or both of these penalties</p>
Guinea-Bissau	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Combined 2nd, 3rd and 4th periodic report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child: guinea Bissau,2009</p> <p>The compulsory nature of the military service as prescribed in Law No. 3/80, 2 Supplement of the Official Gazette No. 20 of 17 May and detailed in Law No. 4 /99 of 7 September, does not include people who are under 18 years of age. Only from this age (18), a person may be enlisted, in other words, only those at the age of 18 and above have the obligation to serve in the military service</p>

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Kenya	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Children Act, 2001</p> <p>Section 10(2): “No child shall take part in hostilities or be recruited in armed conflict and where armed conflict occurs, respect for and protection and care of children shall be maintained in accordance with the law”.</p> <p>Article 2:“child” means any human being under the age of eighteen years;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Armed Forces Act, 1968</p> <p>Section 173(2):A recruiting officer shall not recruit a person under the apparent age of eighteen years unless written consent to the enlistment has been given by his parents or guardian or, where his parents or guardian are dead or unknown, by the District Commissioner of the district in which the person resides.</p>
Lesotho	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Children’s Protection and Welfare Act, 2011</p> <p>Section 22. The state has a duty to formulate policies which will ensure</p> <p>(o). that children do not take part in hostilities or are not recruited into armed forces, and ensure the protection and care of children who are affected by armed conflict;</p> <p>Section 2: "child" means a person under the age of eighteen years;</p>
Liberia	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Children’s Law, 2011</p> <p>Section 22: every child shall have the rights to be protected from involvement in armed or any kind of violent conflicts. The Ministry of National Defense shall not recruit or conscript any child into military service.</p>

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	Section 3: child shall mean any person below the age of 18 years
Libya	<p>17 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Second periodic report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child: Libya, 2000</p> <p>In accordance with article 6 (b) of the Military Service Act No. 40 of 1974, the minimum age for voluntary enlistment in the armed forces is 17 years. Exemption from the age limitation may be granted by a decision of the Chief of General Staff of the Armed Forces, as permitted under Act No. 6 of 1977.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Combined 3rd and 4th periodic report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child: Libya, 2009</p> <p>A bill has been drafted to amend the Mobilization Act by raising to 18 years the age of persons called up for deployment in a transition from a state of peace to a state of war,</p>
Madagascar	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">National Service Ordinance, 1978</p> <p>Article 11: boys and girls aged eighteen years or older may apply to be included in the Armed Forces.</p>
Malawi	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Defense Force Act, 2004</p> <p>Enlistment and terms of service in the Regular Defense Force</p> <p>Section 19(2): A recruiting officer shall not enlist a person under the age of eighteen years or over the age of twenty-four years.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Defense Force (Militia) Regulations, 2004</p> <p>Enlistment in the Militia</p>

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	Section 219(1) No person shall be enlisted in the Militia if he is less than eighteen years or more than forty years of age.
Mali	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Child Protection Code, 2002</p> <p>Article17: The child has all the guaranties of international humanitarian law cited by the ratified conventions. It is for bidden to engage or involve the child in armed conflict, or enlist in the armed forces and before the age of 18groups.</p>
Mauritania	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Child Protection in the Justice System, 2005</p> <p>Article 43.-The initiation or to the involvement of a child under the age of 18 in armed forces or armed groups is punishable by six months imprisonment and a fine of120,000 to 200,000UM</p>
Mauritius	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Second periodic report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child: Mauritius,2004</p> <p>Mauritius does not have armed forces, and the age of entry into the Police force and the Emergency Response Unit, (ERU), is 18 years of age.</p>
Morocco	<p>20 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Second periodic report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child: Morocco,2000</p> <p>The age of conscription has been raised to 20.</p>
Mozambique	18 years

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	<p style="text-align: center;">Law on Compulsory Military Service, 1978</p> <p>Article 1: In order to organize the active participation in the defense of the country and the revolution, honor and highest duty of every citizen of the People's Republic of Mozambique, and instituted compulsory military service for all citizens of both sexes above the age of 18 years, regardless of their race, ethnic origin, place of birth, religion, level of instruction, social position, or profession</p>
<p>Namibia</p>	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Second periodic report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child: Namibia, 2009</p> <p>The age for voluntary recruitment is 18, and recruits are required to provide certified copies of identity documents and birth certificates before they are accepted</p>
<p>Niger</p>	<p>Not provided by law</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Initial state party report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child: Niger, 2000</p> <p>Admission to the Prytanée takes place through competitive examination and is open to young men holding a primary school leaving certificate. Prytanés follow a general course of education leading to the BEPC and baccalaureate degrees together with military training administered by the military instruction division. The Decree does not provide for an age of admission into the Prytanée. However, the leaving age for the primary level varies from 11 to 13 years.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Concluding observation to the 2nd periodic report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child: Niger, 2009</p> <p>Minimum age for voluntary or compulsory recruitment is not specified by law</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Central Intelligence Agency(CIA)https://www.cia.gov</p> <p>17-21 years of age for selective compulsory or voluntary military service; enlistees must be Nigerien citizens and</p>

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	unmarried; 2-year service term; women may serve in health care (2009)
Nigeria	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Child Rights Act, 2003</p> <p>Section 34. Prohibition of recruitment of children into the Armed Forces</p> <p>(1) No child shall be recruited into any of the branches of the armed forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.</p> <p>(2) The Government or any other relevant agency or body shall ensure that no child is directly involved in any military operation or hostilities.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Police Act, 1943</p> <p>Section 72 Qualifications for enlistment: (1) Only citizens of Nigeria shall be accepted for enlistment.</p> <p>(2) The qualifications of a male candidate seeking enlistment in the Police Force as a recruit constable shall be as follows-</p> <p>(a) <i>age-not</i> less than seventeen nor more than 25 years of age;</p>
Rwanda	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Law on the Rights and Protection of The Child, 2012</p> <p>Chapter VI section 1: Military service is prohibited for children under the age of eighteen.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Law Against Violence, 2001</p> <p>Article 19: Military service is prohibited for children less than 18 years</p>

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<p>Sao Tome & Principe</p>	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Constitution, 1975</p> <p>Article 63: National defence obligations</p> <p>2. Every citizen has the duty of rendering military service under the terms of the law.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Initial state party report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child: Sao Tome and Principe, 2003</p> <p>The minimum age for beginning compulsory military service is 18. Volunteers may enlist at the age of 17, with the prior authorization of their parents or legal representative. Compulsory military service lasts two years.</p>
<p>Senegal</p>	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Initial state party report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child: Senegal, 1998</p> <p>Senegal's legislation on recruitment into the armed services and military service is based on both obligation and voluntary service. The age established by law is between 18 and 21 years.</p>
<p>Seychelles</p>	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Defense Act, 1980</p> <p>Section 23: Enrolment of person under 18 years of 18 years of age</p> <p>No person who is under the age of 18 years shall be enrolled without the consent in writing of his parents or his guardian or, when the parents or guardian are dead or unknown, of the President.</p>
<p>Sierra Leone</p>	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Children Act, 2007</p>

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	<p>Article 28 (1) Minimum age of recruitment into armed forces:</p> <p>Every child has the right to be protected from involvement in armed or any other kind of violent conflicts, and accordingly, the minimum age of recruitment into the armed forces shall be eighteen.</p>
<p>Somalia</p>	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Constitution, 2012</p> <p>Article 29 Children</p> <p>(5): Every child shall have the right to legal aid paid for by the state if the child might otherwise suffer injustice.</p> <p>(6) Every child has the right to be protected from armed conflict, and not to be used in armed conflict.</p> <p>(8) In this Article a “child” is defined as any person under 18 years of age.</p>
<p>South Africa</p>	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Defense Act, 2002</p> <p>Section 52: The Regular Force consists of persons not younger than 18 years of age and not older than 65 years, whether in a permanent or temporary capacity, and is organized in the manner prescribed.</p>
<p>South Sudan</p>	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Child Act, 2010</p> <p>Article 31: The minimum age for conscription or voluntary recruitment into armed forces or groups shall be eighteen years.</p> <p>Article 32 Penalties for Recruitment of a Child into an Armed Force: Any person involved in the recruitment of a child into an armed force or use of a child in any activity set forth above, commits an offence and shall upon conviction,</p>

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	be sentenced to imprisonment for a term not exceeding ten years or with a fine or with both.
Sudan	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Armed forces Act, 2007</p> <p>Article 14(1): There shall be required from whoever joins service of the armed forces that he shall (d) not be less than eighteen years of age upon recruitment or appointment</p>
Swaziland	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Initial state party report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child: Swaziland, 2005</p> <p>The Umbutfo Swaziland Defence Force Order (1977) provides for both voluntary enlistment and conscription of persons aged 18 years. No military conscription is practiced in Swaziland.</p>
Tanzania	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Defence Forces Regulations, 1966</p> <p>Section 29(4): No person under the apparent age of eighteen years shall be enrolled without the consent in writing of one of his parents or his guardian or, where the parents or guardian are dead or unknown, by the Area Commissioner of the district in which such person resides.</p>
Zanzibar	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Children's Code, 2007</p> <p>Article 426: No child can take part in hostilities or be enrolled in the armed forces or incorporated into a militia. No child can participate in any war effort.</p> <p>Article 2: Under the terms of this code, a child means every human being under age eighteen (18) years</p>

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<p>Togo</p>	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Child Protection Code, 1995</p> <p>Article 18: The child has all the guarantees of international humanitarian rights cited by international conventions ratified. It is forbidden to engage children in wars and armed conflicts.</p> <p>Article 3: Is a child, the effects of this code, every human being below the age of eighteen years and has not yet reached the age of majority by special provisions.</p>
<p>Tunisia</p>	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Uganda People’s Defense Force (UPDF) Act, 2005</p> <p>Section 52 (2): no person shall be enrolled into the defense forces unless he/she is (c) at least 18 years of age and has attained such level of education as may be prescribed</p>
<p>Uganda</p>	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Defense Act, 1964</p> <p>Section 14(2)A recruiting officer shall not enlist a person under the apparent age of eighteen years unless consent to the enlistment has been given in writing by his parent or guardian or, where the parents or guardian are dead or unknown, by the District Secretary of the district in which such person resides.</p>
<p>Zambia</p>	<p>18 years</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Defense Act (Chap 94) and National Services Act No 19 of 1979</p> <p>The minimum age for Voluntary enlistment and conscription in the armed forces as provided by section 27 of the defence act (Chap 94) and National Services Act No 19 of 1979 is 18 years.</p>

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Zimbabwe	

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