INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP OF RECONCILIATION (IFOR) and CONSCIENCE AND PEACE TAX INTERNATIONAL (CPTI)

Submission to the 110th Session of the Human Rights Committee for the attention of the Country Report Task Force on SWEDEN

(Military service, conscientious objection and related issues)


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Basic Information

Population (November 2012, estimated\(^1\)) 9,104,000

Conscription was in force throughout the 20th Century, but was suspended with effect from 1st July 2010.

Conscientious objection provisions had first been introduced in 1920.

Replying to the question from the Council of Europe, “Can professional members of the armed forces leave the armed forces for reasons of conscience?”, Sweden said “yes” without giving any details.\(^2\) One possible question for the List of Issues might therefore be:

What procedures would be followed in the event that a serving member of the armed forces applied to be released, having developed conscientious objections?

Minimum recruitment age\(^3\): 18

Manpower reaching “militarily significant age” in 2010: 54,960
Armed forces active strength, November 2012: 20,500
as a percentage of the number of men reaching “military age” 37.3%

Military expenditure US $ equivalent, 2012 6,209m
Per capita $682

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1 Source: The Military Balance 2013 (International Institute of Strategic Studies, London), which bases its estimate on “demographic statistics taken from the US Census Bureau”.


3 Source: Child Soldiers International (formerly Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers), Louder than words: an agenda for action to end state use of child soldiers, London, September 2012.

4 Source: CIA World Factbook. https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html. The CIA defines “militarily significant age” as 16. However its estimates have not been updated since 2010 and therefore relate to the cohort of the male population reaching 19 (a more common recruitment age in most countries) in 2013. This figure is more meaningful than total population in assessing the comparative impact of military recruitment in different countries.


6 Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), April 2013
| As % of GDP | 1.2% |