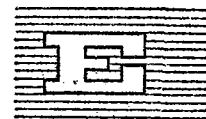


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Thirty-seventh session
Agenda item 18

THE ROLE OF YOUTH IN THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION
OF HUMAN RIGHTS, INCLUDING THE QUESTION OF
CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION TO MILITARY SERVICE

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

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GHANA

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[23 March 1981]

Full time military service in the Ghana Armed Forces is on voluntary basis and every citizen entering into such service accepts to do so after being acquainted with the full terms and conditions of service applicable. Indeed our laws know of no conscription or draft. In these circumstances therefore, the question of conscientious objection to military service does not arise.

Besides, Article 22 of our Constitution protects any person from forced labour. But Article 22(3) goes on to specify situations which will not be considered to be forced labour and conscientious objection. Military service is cited to be one of such exceptions when pleaded by a person who is a member of the Armed Forces.

However, it does not mean that anyone who is not a member of the Armed Forces can use conscientious objection to military service as an excuse when there is the need to take up arms to defend the nation. This is made clear by Article 27(6)(a). For even though Article 27(i) guarantees freedom of conscience, the said Article 27(6)(a) states that despite Article 27, laws which are inconsistent with Article 27 can be made if the purpose is inter alia 'in the interest of defence'.

Thus despite the voluntary nature of our military service, there may be occasions when conscientious objection to military service may be raised on grounds of freedom of conscience but this will not be countenanced, due to the exception made in Article 27(6)(a) of the Constitution.