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# Field Listing

## Military service age and obligation

This entry gives the required ages for voluntary or conscript military service and the length of service obligation.

### **Afghanistan**

service is voluntary; there is no conscription (2023)

**note:** the Taliban dismissed nearly all women from the former Afghan National Defense and Security Forces, except those serving in detention facilities and assisting with body searches

### **Albania**

18-27 (up to 32 in some cases) for voluntary military service for men and women; conscription abolished 2010 (2024)

**note:** as of 2024, women comprised about 15% of the military's full-time personnel

### **Algeria**

18 is the legal minimum age for voluntary military service for men and women; 19-30 years of age for mandatory national service for men (all Algerian men must register at age 17); service obligation reduced from 18 to 12 months in 2014 (2024)

**note:** conscripts comprise an estimated 70% of the military

### **Angola**

20-45 years of age for compulsory and 18-45 years for voluntary military service for men (registration at age 18 is mandatory); 20-45 years of age for voluntary service for women; 24-month conscript service obligation; Angolan citizenship required; the Navy is entirely staffed with volunteers (2023)

### **Antigua and Barbuda**

18-23 years of age for voluntary military service for both men and women; no conscription (2023)

### **Argentina**

18-24 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women; conscription suspended in 1995; citizens can still be drafted in times of crisis, national emergency, or war, or if the Defense Ministry is unable to fill all vacancies to keep the military functional (2024)

**note:** as of 2023, women comprised nearly 20% of the active duty military

### **Armenia**

18-27 for voluntary (men and women), contract (men and women) or compulsory (men) military service; contract military service is 3-12 months or 3 or 5 years; conscripts serve 24 months; men under the age of 36, who have not previously served as contract servicemen and are registered in the reserve, as well as women, regardless of whether they are registered in the reserve can be enrolled in contractual military service; all citizens aged 27 to 50 are registered in the military reserve and may be called to serve if mobilization is declared (2024)

**note:** in 2023, Armenia approved six-month voluntary service for women, after which they have the option to switch to a five-year contract; previously, women served on a contract basis; as of 2021, women made up about 10% of the active duty military

### **Australia**

17 years of age (with parental consent; 18 years of age to deploy) for voluntary military service for men and women; no conscription (abolished 1972) (2024)

**note 1:** as of July 2024, New Zealanders who are permanent residents and have lived in Australia for at least 12 months could apply to join the ADF; from January 2025, eligible permanent residents from Canada, the UK, and the US will also be able to apply

**note 2:** women have served in all roles, including combat arms, since 2013; in 2024, they comprised slightly more than 20% of the military

### **Austria**

registration requirement at age 17, the legal minimum age for voluntary military service; men above the age of 18 are subject to compulsory military service; women may volunteer; compulsory service is for 6 months, or optionally, alternative civil/community service (Zivildienst) for 9 months (2024)

**note 1:** as of 2023, women made up about 4% of the military's full-time personnel

**note 2:** in a January 2013 referendum, a majority of Austrians voted in favor of retaining the system of compulsory military service (with the option of alternative/non-military service) instead of switching to a professional army system

### **Azerbaijan**

18-25 years of age for compulsory military service for men; 18-35 years of age for voluntary/contractual service for men and women; 18 months service for conscripts, 36 months for voluntary/contractual service (2023)

### **Bahamas, The**

18-30 years of age for voluntary service for men and women (18-60 for Reserves); no conscription (2024)

## **Bahrain**

18 years of age for voluntary military service; 18-55 to voluntarily join the reserves; no compulsory service (2024)

## **Bangladesh**

generally 17-21 for voluntary military service; length of service varies by military service (2024)

## **Barbados**

voluntary service only (men and women); 17 years, 9 months to 17 years, 11 months with letter of consent from a parent or guardian, or be in the age range of 18-25 years (18-30 for the Reserves) at the start of recruit training; citizens of Barbados by descent or naturalization (2024)

## **Belarus**

18-27 years of age for compulsory military or alternative service; conscript service obligation is 12-18 months, depending on academic qualifications, and 24-36 months for alternative service, also depending on academic qualifications; 17-year-olds are eligible to become cadets at military higher education institutes, where they are classified as military personnel (2023)

**note:** conscripts can be assigned to the military, to the Ministry of Interior, or to the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection (alternative service)

## **Belgium**

18 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women; conscription abolished in 1995 (2024)

**note 1:** in 2024, women comprised about 11% of the military's full-time personnel

**note 2:** foreign nationals 18-34 years of age who speak Dutch or French and are citizens of EU countries, Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland may apply to join the military

## **Belize**

18-23 years of age for voluntary military service; laws allow for conscription only if volunteers are insufficient, but conscription has never been implemented; initial service obligation is 12 years (2024)

## **Benin**

18-30 years of age for voluntary and selective compulsory military service for men and women; conscript service is 18 months (2024)

## **Bermuda**

men and women who are Commonwealth citizens and 18-45 years of age can volunteer for the Bermuda Regiment; service is for a minimum period of three years and two months from the date of enlistment; service can be extended only by volunteering or an executive order from the Governor; annual training

commitment is about 30 days a year, which includes a two-week camp, weekends, and drill nights (2024)

### **Bhutan**

18 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women; no conscription; militia training is compulsory for males aged 20-25, over a 3-year period (2023)

**note:** in 2021, the Royal Bhutan Army graduated from a year-long training course the first batch of 150 women to be allowed to serve in combat roles; previously, women were allowed to serve in medical and other non-combat roles

### **Bolivia**

compulsory for all men between the ages of 18 and 22; men can volunteer from the age of 16, women from 18; service is for 12 months; Search and Rescue service can be substituted for citizens who have reached the age of compulsory military service; duration of this service is 24 months (2024)

**note 1:** foreign nationals 18-22 residing in Bolivia may join the armed forces; joining speeds the process of acquiring Bolivian citizenship by naturalization

**note 2:** as of 2022, women comprised about 8% of the Bolivian military's personnel

### **Bosnia and Herzegovina**

18 years of age for voluntary military service; conscription abolished in 2005 (2024)

**note:** as of 2024, women made up about 9% of the military's full-time personnel

### **Botswana**

18 is the legal minimum age for voluntary military service for men and women; no conscription (2024)

### **Brazil**

18-45 years of age for compulsory military service for men (women exempted); only 5-10% of those inducted are required to serve; conscript service obligation is 10-12 months; 17-45 (18 for women) years of age for voluntary service (2024)

**note:** in 2024, women were reported to comprise approximately 10% of the Brazilian military

### **Brunei**

17 years of age for voluntary military service; non-Malays are ineligible to serve (2024)

**note:** the Gurkha Reserve Unit (GRU) employs hundreds of Gurkhas from Nepal, the majority of whom are veterans of the British Army and the Singapore Police Force who have joined the GRU as a second career

## **Bulgaria**

18-40 years of age for voluntary military service; conscription ended in 2007; service obligation 6-9 months (2023)

**note 1:** in 2021, women comprised about 17% of the Bulgarian military's full-time personnel

**note 2:** in 2020, Bulgaria announced a program to allow every citizen up to the age of 40 to join the armed forces for 6 months of military service in the voluntary reserve

## **Burkina Faso**

18-26 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women; citizens 18-77 years of age are eligible to volunteer for the VDP (2023)

**note:** the military government implemented an emergency law in 2023 that allows the president extensive powers to combat terrorist groups operating in the country, including conscripting citizens into the security services

## **Burma**

18-35 years of age (men) and 18-27 years of age (women) for voluntary and conscripted military service; 24-month service obligation; conscripted professional men (ages 18-45) and women (ages 18-35), including doctors, engineers, and mechanics, serve up to 36 months; service terms may be extended to 60 months in an officially declared emergency (2024)

**note:** in February 2024, the military government announced that the People's Military Service Law requiring mandatory military service would go into effect; the Service Law was first introduced in 2010 but had not previously been enforced; the military government also said that it intended to call up about 60,000 men and women annually for mandatory service; during the ongoing insurgency, the military has recruited men 18-60 to serve in local militias

## **Burundi**

18 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women (2023)

## **Cabo Verde**

18-35 years of age for male and female selective compulsory military service; 24-month conscript service obligation; 17 years of age for voluntary service (with parental consent) (2024)

## **Cambodia**

18 is the legal minimum age for compulsory and voluntary military service (conscription only selectively enforced since 1993; service is for 18 months); women may volunteer (2024)

## **Cameroon**

18-24 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women; no conscription; high school graduation required; service obligation 4 years (2024)

## **Canada**

17 years of age for voluntary male and female military service (with parental consent); 16 years of age for Reserve and Military College applicants; Canadian citizenship or permanent residence status required; maximum 34 years of age; service obligation 3-9 years (2023)

**note 1:** Canada opened up all military occupations to women in 2001; women in 2023 comprised about 16% of the CAF

**note 2:** the CAF offers waivers to foreign nationals applying for military service only in exceptional cases — to individuals on international military exchanges, for example, or to candidates who have specialized skills in high demand

### **Central African Republic**

18 years of age for military service; no conscription although the constitution provides for the possibility of conscription in the event of an imminent threat to the country (2023)

### **Chad**

20 is the legal minimum age for compulsory military service for men with an 18-36 month service obligation (information varies); women are subject to 12 months of compulsory military or civic service at age 21; 18-35 for voluntary service (18-25 for officer recruits); soldiers released from active duty are in the reserves until the age of 50 (2023)

### **Chile**

17 or 18 for voluntary military service for men and women; selective compulsory service (there are usually enough volunteers to make compulsory service unnecessary); service obligation is a minimum of 12 months for Army and 22 months for Navy and Air Force (2024)

**note:** as of 2021, women comprised approximately 18% of the armed forces

### **China**

18-22 years of age for men for selective compulsory military service, with a 2-year service obligation; women 18-19 years of age who are high school graduates and meet requirements for specific military jobs are subject to conscription (2024)

**note:** the PLA's conscription system functions as a levy; the PLA establishes the number of enlistees needed, which produces quotas for the provinces; each province provides a set number of soldiers or sailors; if the number of volunteers fails to meet quotas, the local governments may compel individuals to enter military service

### **Colombia**

18-24 years of age for compulsory (men) and voluntary (men and women) military service; conscript service obligation is 18 months or 12 months for those with a college degree; conscripted soldiers reportedly include regular soldiers (conscripts without a high school degree), drafted high school graduates (bachilleres), and rural (campesino) soldiers who serve in their home regions (2024)

**note:** the Colombian military first incorporated women in 1976 in administrative positions; women were incorporated as non-commissioned officers in 1983 and

officers in 2009; as of 2023, about 6,000 women served in the uniformed military while more than 30,000 served in the National Police

### **Comoros**

18-25 years of age for 2-year voluntary military service for men and women; no conscription (2021)

### **Congo, Democratic Republic of the**

18-35 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women; 18-45 years of age for compulsory military service for men; it is unclear how much conscription is used (2024)

**note:** in eastern Congo, fighters from armed groups, including some associated with government security forces, have been accused of forced recruitment of child soldiers

### **Congo, Republic of the**

18-25 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women; conscription ended in 1969 (2024)

### **Cote d'Ivoire**

18-26 years of age for compulsory and voluntary military service for men and women; conscription is reportedly not enforced (2023)

### **Croatia**

18-27 years of age for voluntary military service; conscription abolished in 2008 but slated to be reinstated in January 2025 (2024)

**note:** as of 2024, women comprised about 14% of the military's full-time personnel

### **Cuba**

17-28 years of age for compulsory (men) and voluntary (men and women) military service; conscripts serve for 24 months (2024)

### **Cyprus**

Cypriot National Guard (CNG): 18-50 years of age for compulsory military service for all Greek Cypriot males; 17 years of age for voluntary service; 14-month service obligation (2023)

**note:** the CNG accepts all foreign nationals of at least partial Cypriot descent under age 32 as volunteers; dual citizenship Cypriot origin citizens, who were born in Cyprus or abroad, have the obligation to serve in the CNG on repatriation, regardless of whether or not they possess a foreign citizenship; a person is considered as having Cypriot origin where a grandparent or parent was/is a Cypriot citizen

### **Czechia**

18-28 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women; conscription abolished 2004 (2024)

**note:** as of 2023, women comprised nearly 14% of the military's full-time personnel

### **Denmark**

18 years of age for compulsory and voluntary military service; conscripts serve an initial training period that varies from 4 to 12 months depending on specialization; former conscripts are assigned to mobilization units; women eligible to volunteer for military service; in addition to full time employment, the Danish military offers reserve contracts in all three branches (2023)

**note 1:** women have been able serve in all military occupations, including combat arms, since 1988; as of 2022, they made up about 9% of the military's full-time personnel; in 2024, Denmark announced that it would extend military conscription to women in 2026

**note 2:** Denmark has had compulsory military service since 1849; conscripts are chosen by lottery; conscientious objectors can choose to instead serve 6 months in a non-military position, for example in Beredskabsstyrelsen (dealing with non-military disasters like fires, flood, pollution, etc.) or overseas foreign aid work

**note 3:** foreigners who have lived in Denmark for at least one year or in another EU country for six years may apply to join the armed forces, provided they are fluent in Danish

### **Djibouti**

18 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women; 16-25 years of age for voluntary military training; no conscription (2023)

### **Dominican Republic**

16-23 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women (ages vary slightly according to the military service; under 18 admitted with permission of parents); recruits must have completed primary school and be Dominican Republic citizens (2024)

**note:** as of 2023, women made up approximately 18% of the active duty military

### **Ecuador**

18-22 years of age for selective conscript military service for men, although conscription was suspended in 2008; 18 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women; 12-month service obligation (2023)

**note:** in 2022, women made up an estimated 3-4% of the military

### **Egypt**

voluntary enlistment possible from age 16 for men and 17 for women; 18-30 years of age for conscript service for men; service obligation 14-36 months, followed by a 9-year reserve obligation; active service length depends on education; high school drop-outs serve for the full 36 months, while college graduates serve for lesser periods of time, depending on their education level (2023)

**note:** conscripts make up a considerable portion of the military and the Central Security Force

### **El Salvador**

18-30 years of age for selective compulsory military service; 16-22 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women; service obligation is 12 months, with 11 months for officers and non-commissioned officers (2023)

### **Equatorial Guinea**

18 years of age for selective compulsory military service, although conscription is rare in practice; 24-month service obligation (2023)

### **Eritrea**

Eritrea mandates military service for all citizens age 18-40; 18-month conscript service obligation, which includes 4-6 months of military training and 12 months of military or other national service (military service is most common); in practice, military and national service is often extended indefinitely; citizens up to the age of 55 eligible for recall during mobilization (2023)

### **Estonia**

18-27 for compulsory military or governmental service for men; conscript service requirement 8-11 months depending on education; non-commissioned officers, reserve officers, and specialists serve 11 months; women can volunteer, and as of 2018 could serve in any military branch (2024)

**note 1:** conscripts comprise approximately 3,000-3,300 of the Estonian military's 7,000 active-duty personnel and serve in all branches, except for the Air Force; after conscript service, reservists are called up for training every 5 years; Estonia has had conscription since 1991

**note 2:** in 2021, women comprised about 10% of the full-time professional military force; the Defense League includes a Women's Voluntary Defense Organization of more than 3,000 members

### **Eswatini**

18-35 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women; no conscription (2023)

### **Ethiopia**

18-22 years of age for voluntary military service (although the military may, when necessary, recruit a person more than 22 years old); no compulsory military service, but the military can conduct callups when necessary and compliance is compulsory (2023)

### **Fiji**

18-25 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women (2024)

**note:** as of 2024, women comprised approximately 8% of the Fiji Military Forces

## **Finland**

at age 18, all Finnish men are obligated to serve 5.5-12 months of service within a branch of the military or the Border Guard (length of service depends on the type of duty); women 18-29 may volunteer for service; there is also an option to perform non-military service which lasts for 8.5 or 11.5 months; after completing their initial conscript obligation, individuals enter the reserves and remain eligible for mobilization until the age of 50 for rank-and-file and 60 for non-commissioned and commissioned officers (2024)

**note 1:** Finland has had conscription since 1951; each year, the military inducts and trains approximately 21,000 conscripts; women have served on a voluntary basis since 1995, and as of 2022 made up about 19% of the military's full-time personnel

## **France**

generally 17-30 years of age for both men and women with some variations by service, position, and enlisted versus officer; basic service contract is for 12 months; no conscription (abolished 2001) (2024)

**note 1:** in 2023, women comprised more than 16% of the uniformed armed forces

**note 2:** French citizens can also volunteer for the Voluntary Military Service (VMS), which allows unemployed youth aged 18-25 to learn a trade or gain work experience while receiving basic military training and sports activities; French citizens may also join the military operational reserve up to age 72

**note 3:** men between the ages of 17.5 and 39.5 years of age, of any nationality, may join the French Foreign Legion; those volunteers selected for service sign five-year contracts

## **Gabon**

18-24 years of age for voluntary military service; no conscription (2024)

## **Gambia, The**

18-25 years of age for voluntary service for men and women (18-22 for officers); no conscription; service obligation six months (2024)

## **Georgia**

18-27 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women; conscription was abolished in 2016, but reinstated in 2017 for men 18-27 years of age; conscript service obligation is 12 months (2024)

**note 1:** approximately 6-7,000 individuals are called up annually for conscription for service; conscripts serve in the Defense Forces, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, or the Ministry of Corrections

**note 2:** as of 2022, women made up about 8% of the military's full-time personnel

## **Germany**

17-23 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women (must have completed compulsory full-time education and have German citizenship); conscription ended July 2011; service obligation 7-23 months or 12 years; in

July 2020, the government launched a new voluntary conscript initiative focused on homeland security tasks; volunteers serve for 7 months plus 5 months as reservists over a 6 year period (2024)

**note:** women have been eligible for voluntary service in all military branches and positions since 2001 and accounted for about 12% of the active-duty German military in 2023

### **Ghana**

18-27 years of age for voluntary military service, with basic education certificate; no conscription (2024)

**note:** as of 2024, women comprised approximately 15% of the military; Ghanaian women first began serving in the late 1950s

### **Greece**

19-45 years of age for compulsory military service for men; 12-month obligation for all services (note - as an exception, the duration of the full military service is 9 instead of 12 months if conscripts, after the initial training, serve the entire remaining time in certain areas of the eastern borders, in Cyprus, or in certain military units); 18 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women (2023)

**note 1:** compulsory service applies to any individual whom the Greek authorities consider to be Greek, regardless of whether the individual considers himself Greek, has a foreign citizenship and passport, or was born or lives outside of Greece; Greek citizens living permanently outside of Greece have the right to postpone their conscription; they are permanently exempted from their military obligations when they reach the age of 45 years old

**note 2:** as of 2023, women comprised nearly 17% of the military's full-time personnel

### **Guatemala**

all male citizens 18-50 are eligible for military service; most of the force is volunteer; a selective draft system is employed, resulting in a small portion of 17-21 year-olds being conscripted; conscript service obligation varies from 12-24 months; women may volunteer (2023)

### **Guinea**

18 years of age for voluntary and selective conscripted service; 9-12 months of service (2023)

### **Guinea-Bissau**

18-25 years of age for selective compulsory military service for men and women (Air Force service is voluntary); 16 years of age or younger, with parental consent, for voluntary service (2023)

### **Guyana**

18-25 years of age or older for voluntary military service; no conscription (2024)

## Haiti

men and women 18-25 may volunteer for the FAdH (2023)

## Holy See (Vatican City)

Pontifical Swiss Guard Corps: 19-30 years of age for voluntary military service; no conscription; must be a single Roman Catholic male with Swiss citizenship who has completed basic training with the Swiss military and can obtain a certificate of good conduct; qualified candidates must apply to serve; the service contract is between 2 and 25 years (2024)

## Honduras

18-22 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women; 24-36 month service obligation; no conscription (2024)

**note:** as of 2023, women made up about 9% of the active duty military

## Hungary

18-25 years of age for voluntary military service; no conscription (abolished 2005); 6-month service obligation (2023)

**note:** as of 2021, women comprised over 20% of Hungary's full-time military personnel

## India

ages vary by service, but generally 16.5-27 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women; no conscription (2023)

**note 1:** in 2022, the Indian Government began recruiting men aged 17.5-21 annually to serve on 4-year contracts under a process called the Agnipath scheme; at the end of their tenure, 25% would be retained for longer terms of service, while the remainder would be forced to leave the military, although some of those leaving would be eligible to serve in the Coast Guard, the Merchant Navy, civilian positions in the Ministry of Defense, and in the paramilitary forces of the Ministry of Home Affairs, such as the Central Armed Police Forces and Assam Rifles

**note 2:** as of 2023, women made up less than 1% of the Army, about 1% of the Air Force, and about 6% of the Navy

**note 3:** the Indian military accepts citizens of Nepal and Bhutan; descendants of refugees from Tibet who arrived before 1962 and have resided permanently in India; peoples of Indian origin from nations such as Burma, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Uganda, and Vietnam with the intention of permanently settling in India; eligible candidates from "friendly foreign nations" may apply to the Armed Forces Medical Services

**note 4:** the British began to recruit Nepalese citizens (Gurkhas) into the East India Company Army during the Anglo-Nepalese War (1814-1816), and the Gurkhas subsequently were brought into the British Indian Army; following the partition of India in 1947, an agreement between Nepal, India, and Great Britain allowed for the transfer of the 10 regiments from the British Indian Army to the separate British and Indian armies; six regiments of Gurkhas (aka Gorkhas in

India) regiments went to the new Indian Army; a seventh regiment was later added

### **Indonesia**

18-45 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women, with selective conscription authorized (men, age 18), but not utilized; 24-month service obligation, with reserve obligation to age 45 (officers) (2024)

**note:** as of 2023, women comprised about 7% of the Indonesian military

### **Iran**

military service is compulsory for all Iranian men 18-19 to approximately age 40; 16 for voluntary military service (may be as low as 15 for the Basij); conscript military service obligation is up to 24 months, depending on the location of service (soldiers serving in places of high security risk and deprived areas serve shorter terms); women exempted from military service (2023)

**note:** conscripts serve in the Artesh, IRGC, and Law Enforcement, while Navy and Air/Air Defense Force personnel are primarily volunteers

### **Iraq**

18-40 years of age for voluntary military service; no conscription (2023)

**note:** service in the armed forces was mandatory in Iraq from 1935 up until 2003; in 2021, the Iraqi cabinet approved a draft law to reinstate compulsory military service and referred the proposed law to the Iraqi parliament; as of 2023, the proposed law had been shelved

### **Ireland**

18 years of age for men and women for voluntary military service; 12-year service (5 active, 7 reserves) (2024)

**note 1:** as of 2024, women made up about 7.5% of the military's full-time personnel

**note 2:** the Defense Forces are open to refugees under the Refugee Act of 1996 and nationals of the European Economic Area, which include EU member states, Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway

### **Israel**

18 years of age for compulsory military service; 17 years of age for voluntary military service; Jews and Druze can be conscripted; Christians, Circassians, and Muslims may volunteer; both sexes are obligated to military service; conscript service obligation is 32 months for enlisted men and about 24 months for enlisted women (varies based on military occupation); officers serve 48 months; Air Force pilots commit to 9 years of service; reserve obligation to age 41-51 (men), age 24 (women) (2024)

**note:** the IDF recruits foreign Jews and non-Jews with a minimum of one Jewish grandparent, as well as converts to Judaism; each year the IDF brings in about 800-1,000 foreign recruits from around the world

### **Italy**

17-25 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women (some variations on age depending on the military branch); voluntary service is a minimum of 12 months with the option to extend in the Armed Forces or compete for positions in the Military Corps of the Italian Red Cross, the State Police, the Carabinieri, the Guardia di Finanza, the Penitentiary Police, or the National Fire Brigade; recruits can also volunteer for 4 years military service; conscription abolished 2004 (2024)

**note:** women serve in all military branches; as of 2023, women made up about 8% of the military's full-time personnel

### **Jamaica**

18-23 for voluntary military service (17 with parental consent) for men and women; 18-28 for the reserves; no conscription; since 2017, the JDF's standard mode of recruitment is to enroll recruits ages 18-23 through the Jamaica National Service Corps (JNSC), which has a service requirement of 12 months (2024)

**note:** as of 2022, women made up about 20% of the JDF's uniformed personnel

### **Japan**

18-32 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women; no conscription (2024)

**note:** as of 2023, women made up about 9% of the military's full-time personnel

### **Jordan**

17 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women); initial service term is 24 months, with option to reenlist for up to 18 years; conscription was abolished in 1991, but in 2020 Jordan announced the reinstatement of compulsory military service for jobless men aged between 25 and 29 with 12 months of service, made up of 3 months of military training and 9 months of professional and technical training; in 2019, Jordan announced a voluntary 4-month National Military Service program for men and women aged between 18-25 years who have been unemployed for at least 6 months; service would include 1 month for military training with the remaining 3 months dedicated to vocational training in the sectors of construction and tourism (2023)

**note:** women comprised about 3% of the military as of 2023

### **Kazakhstan**

all men 18-27 are required to serve in the military for 12-24 months; women may volunteer (2023)

**note:** as of 2022, more than 10,000 women served in the Armed Forces and the National Guard

### **Kenya**

no conscription; 18-26 years of age for voluntary service for men and women (under 18 with parental consent; upper limit 30 years of age for specialists, tradesmen, or women with a diploma; 39 years of age for chaplains/imams); 9-year service obligation (7 years for Kenyan Navy) and subsequent 3-year re-enlistments; applicants must be Kenyan citizens (2024)

## **Korea, North**

17 years of age for compulsory military service for men and women; service obligation varies from 5-13 years; reportedly up to 10 years (7 for women) for those serving in combat units and 13 years (7 for women) for specialized combat units, such as missile forces (2024)

**note:** the bulk of the KPA is made up of conscripts; as many as 20% of North Korean males between the ages of 16 and 54 are in the military at a given time and possibly up to 30 percent of males between the ages of 18 and 27, not counting the reserves or paramilitary units; women comprise about 20% of the military by some estimates

## **Korea, South**

18-35 years of age for compulsory military service for all men; minimum conscript service obligation varies by service - 18 months (Army, Marines, auxiliary police), 20 months (Navy, conscripted firefighters), 21 months (Air Force, social service), 36 months for alternative service; 18-29 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women (2024)

**note 1:** women, in service since 1950, are able to serve in all branches and as of 2024 more than 15,000 served in the armed forces

**note 2:** the military brings on over 200,000 conscripts each year

## **Kosovo**

any citizen of Kosovo over the age of 18 is eligible to serve in the Kosovo Security Force; upper age for enlisting is 30 for officers, 25 for other ranks, although these may be waived for recruits with key skills considered essential for the KSF (2024)

## **Kuwait**

18-55 years of age for voluntary military service; Kuwait reintroduced 12-month mandatory service for men aged 18-35 in May 2017 after having suspended conscription in 2001; mandatory service is divided in two phases – 4 months for training and 8 months for military service; women were allowed to volunteer in 2021 (2023)

**note:** the National Guard is restricted to citizens, but in 2018, the Army began allowing non-Kuwaitis to join on contract or as non-commissioned officers; that same year, it also began allowing stateless people (Bidoon) to join

## **Kyrgyzstan**

18-27 years of age for compulsory or voluntary service for men in the Armed Forces or Interior Ministry; 12-month service obligation (9 months for university graduates), with optional fee-based 3-year service in the call-up mobilization reserve; women may volunteer at age 19; 16-17 years of age for military cadets, who cannot take part in military operations (2023)

## **Laos**

18 years of age for compulsory or voluntary military service; minimum 18-month service obligation (2023)

**Latvia**

18 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women; 12 months mandatory military service for men 18-27 years of age (2024)

**note 1:** conscription was reintroduced in 2024

**note 2:** as of 2024, women comprised about 16.5% of the military's full-time personnel

**Lebanon**

17-25 years of age for men and women for voluntary military service; no conscription (2024)

**note:** women were allowed to volunteer for military service in the 1980s; as of 2023, they comprised about 5% of the active duty military

**Lesotho**

18-30 years of age for voluntary military service for both men and women (women can serve in combat arms); no conscription (2024)

**Liberia**

18-35 years of age for men and women for voluntary military service; no conscription (2024)

**Libya**

not available

**Lithuania**

19-26 years of age for conscripted military service for men; 9-month service obligation; in 2015, Lithuania reinstated conscription after having converted to a professional military in 2008; 18-38 for voluntary service for men and women (2024)

**note 1:** Lithuania conscripts up to 4,000 males each year; conscripts are selected using an automated lottery system

**note 2:** as of 2020, women comprised about 12% of the military's full-time personnel

**Luxembourg**

18-26 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women; no conscription (abolished 1969) (2024)

**note 1:** since 2003, the Army has allowed EU citizens 18-24 years of age who have been a resident in the country for at least 36 months to volunteer

**note 2:** 2024, women made up about 12% of the military's full-time personnel

**Madagascar**

18-25 years of age for men and women; service obligation 18 months; no conscription; women are permitted to serve in all branches (2023)

#### **Malawi**

18-30 years of age for men and women for voluntary military service; high school equivalent required for enlisted recruits and college equivalent for officer recruits; initial engagement is 7 years for enlisted personnel and 10 years for officers (2023)

#### **Malaysia**

17 years 6 months of age for voluntary military service for men and women (younger with parental consent and proof of age); maximum age of 27 to enlist; mandatory retirement age 60; no conscription (2023)

**note:** in 2020, the military announced a goal of having 10% of the active force comprised of women

#### **Maldives**

18-28 years of age for voluntary service; no conscription; 10th grade or equivalent education required; must not be a member of a political party (2023)

#### **Mali**

18 years of age for men and women for selective compulsory and voluntary military service; 24-month compulsory service obligation (2023)

#### **Malta**

18-30 years of age for men and women for voluntary military service; no conscription (2024)

#### **Mauritania**

18 is the legal minimum age for voluntary military service; has a compulsory two-year military service law, but the law has reportedly never been applied (2023)

#### **Mexico**

18 years of age (16 with parental consent) for voluntary enlistment for men and women; 18 years of age for compulsory military service for men (selection for service determined by lottery); conscript service obligation is 12 months; those selected serve on Saturdays in a Batallón del Servicio Militar Nacional (National Military Service Battalion) composed entirely of 12-month Servicio Militar Nacional (SMN) conscripts; conscripts remain in reserve status until the age of 40; cadets enrolled in military schools from the age of 15 are considered members of the armed forces; National Guard: single men and women 18-30 years of age may volunteer (2023)

**note:** as of 2023, women comprised about 10% of the active-duty Army, Air Force, and Navy, and about 14% of the National Guard

#### **Moldova**

18-27 years of age for compulsory or voluntary military service; male registration required at age 16; 12-month service obligation (2024)

**note:** as of 2024, women made up about 23% of the military's full-time personnel

### **Monaco**

the Compagnie des Carabiniers du Prince is staffed by French nationals (2024)

### **Mongolia**

18-25 years of age for compulsory and voluntary military service (can enter military schools at age 17); 12-month conscript service obligation for men can be extended 3 months under special circumstances; conscription service can be exchanged for a 24-month stint in the civil service or a cash payment determined by the Mongolian Government; after conscription, soldiers can contract into military service for 2 or 4 years; volunteer military service for men and women is 24 months, which can be extended for another two years up to the age of 31 (2024)

### **Montenegro**

18 is the legal minimum age for voluntary military service; conscription abolished in 2006 (2024)

**note:** as of 2024, women made up over 11% of the military's full-time personnel

### **Morocco**

19-25 years of age for 12-month compulsory and voluntary military service for men and women (conscription abolished 2006 and reintroduced in 2019) (2023)

### **Mozambique**

registration for military service is mandatory for all men and women at 18 years of age; 18-35 years of age for selective compulsory military service; 18 years of age for voluntary service for men and women; 24-month service obligation (note - in 2023, the Mozambique Government said it intended to raise the length of service from two to five years) (2023)

### **Namibia**

18-25 years of age for men and women for voluntary military service; no conscription (2024)

**note:** as of 2022, women comprised about 23% of the active-duty military

### **Nepal**

18 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women; no conscription (2023)

**note:** as of 2023, about 7,000 women served in the Nepalese Armed Forces

### **Netherlands**

17 years of age for voluntary service for men and women; the military is an all-volunteer force; conscription remains in place, but the requirement to show up for compulsory military service was suspended in 1997; must be a citizen of the Netherlands (2024)

**note:** in 2023, women made up about 14% of the military's full-time personnel

### **New Zealand**

17 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women; soldiers cannot be deployed until the age of 18; no conscription (2024)

**note:** New Zealand opened up all military occupations to women in 2000; as of 2024, women accounted for about 20% of Regular Force personnel

### **Nicaragua**

18-30 years of age for voluntary military service; no conscription; tour of duty 18-36 months (2024)

### **Niger**

18 is the legal minimum age for selective compulsory or voluntary military service for unmarried men and women; 24-month service term (2023)

### **Nigeria**

18-26 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women; no conscription (2023)

### **North Macedonia**

18 years of age for voluntary military service; conscription abolished in 2007 (2024)

**note:** as of 2024, women made up about 10% of the military's full-time personnel

### **Norway**

19-35 years of age for selective compulsory military service for men and women; 17 years of age for male volunteers; 18 years of age for women volunteers; 12-19 month service obligation; conscripts first serve 12 months between the ages of 19 and 28, and then up to 4-5 refresher training periods until age 35, 44, 55, or 60 depending on rank and function (2024)

**note 1:** Norway has had compulsory military service since 1907; individuals conscripted each year are selected from a larger cohort who are evaluated through online assessments and physical tests

**note 2:** Norway was the first NATO country to allow women to serve in all combat arms branches of the military (1985); it also has an all-female special operations unit known as Jegertroppen (The Hunter Troop), which was established in 2014; as of 2023, women comprised about 20% of the military's full-time personnel

**note 3:** beginning in 1995, the military began offering Icelandic citizens the opportunity to apply for admission to officer schools in Norway with an associated education and service contract under special reasons and based on

recommendations from Icelandic authorities; as early as 1996, Norway and Iceland entered into a cooperation agreement on the voluntary participation of Icelandic personnel in Norwegian force contributions in foreign operations

### **Oman**

18 for voluntary military service for men and women (women have been allowed to serve since 2011); no conscription (2023)

### **Pakistan**

16 (or 17 depending on service) to 23 years of age for voluntary military service; soldiers cannot be deployed for combat until age 18; women serve in all three armed forces; reserve obligation to age 45 for enlisted men, age 50 for officers (2023)

### **Papua New Guinea**

18-27 for voluntary military service for men and women; no conscription (2024)

### **Paraguay**

18 years of age for compulsory (men) and voluntary (men and women) military service; conscript service obligation is 12 months for Army, 24 months for Navy; conscripts also serve in the National Police (2024)

**note:** as of 2021, women made up about 6% of the active military

### **Peru**

18-30 years of age for voluntary military service (12 months); no conscription (abolished in 1999) (2023)

**note:** as of 2019, women made up about 10% of the active duty military

### **Philippines**

18-27 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women; no conscription (2023)

**note:** as of 2023, women made up about 8% of the active military; women have attended the Philippine Military Academy and trained as combat soldiers since 1993

### **Poland**

18-28 years of age for male and female voluntary military service; conscription phased out in 2009-12; professional soldiers serve on a permanent basis (for an unspecified period of time) or on a contract basis (for a specified period of time); initial contract period is 24 months; women serve in the military on the same terms as men (2024)

**note 1:** as of 2024, women made up about 16.5% of the military's full-time personnel

**note 2:** in May 2022, Poland announced a new 12-month voluntary military service program with recruits going through a one-month basic training period with a military unit, followed by 11 months of specialized training; upon

completion of service, the volunteers would be allowed to join the Territorial Defense Forces or the active reserve, and have priority to join the professional army and be given preference for employment in the public sector; the program is part of an effort to increase the size of the Polish military

### **Portugal**

18-30 years of age for voluntary or contract military service; no compulsory military service (abolished 2004) but conscription possible if insufficient volunteers available; women serve in the armed forces but are prohibited from serving in some combatant specialties; contract service lasts for an initial period of 2-6 years, and can be extended to a maximum of 20 years of service; initial voluntary military service lasts 12 months; reserve obligation to age 35 (2023)

**note:** as of 2023, women made up about 14% of the military's full-time personnel

### **Qatar**

conscription for men aged 18-35 introduced in 2013; compulsory service times range from 4-12 months, depending on educational and professional circumstances; since 2018, women have been permitted to serve as volunteers in the armed forces, including as uniformed officers and pilots (2023)

**note:** the military incorporates about 2,000 conscripts annually and recruits foreign contract soldiers to overcome manpower limitations

### **Romania**

18 years of age for voluntary service for men and women; all military inductees contract for an initial 5-year term of service, with subsequent successive 3-year terms until age 36; conscription ended in 2006 (2023)

### **Russia**

18-27 years of age for compulsory service for men; 18-40 for voluntary/contractual service; women and non-Russian citizens (18-30) may volunteer; men are registered for the draft at 17 years of age; 12-month service obligation (Russia offers the option of serving on a 24-month contract instead of completing a 12-month conscription period); reserve obligation for non-officers to age 50 (Russian men who have completed their compulsory service to re-enter the army up to the age of 55); enrollment in military schools from the age of 16 (2023)

**note 1:** in May 2022, Russia's parliament approved a law removing the upper age limit for contractual service in the military; in November 2022, President Vladimir PUTIN signed a decree allowing dual-national Russians and those with permanent residency status in foreign countries to be drafted into the army for military service

**note 2:** historically, the Russian military has taken in about 260,000 conscripts each year in two semi-annual drafts (Spring and Fall)

**note 3:** prior to the invasion of Ukraine in 2022, approximately 40-45,000 women served in the Russian Armed Forces

**note 4:** since 2015, foreigners 18-30 with a good command of Russian have been allowed to join the military on five-year contracts and become eligible for Russian citizenship after serving three years; in October 2022, the Interior Ministry opened up recruitment centers for foreigners to sign a one-year service contract with the armed forces, other troops, or military formations participating

in the invasion of Ukraine with the promise of simplifying the process of obtaining Russian citizenship

### **Rwanda**

18 years of age for men and women for voluntary military service; no conscription; Rwandan citizenship is required; enlistment is either as contract (5-years, renewable twice) or career professional (2024)

**note:** as of 2022, women comprised approximately 6% of the Rwanda Defense Force

### **Saint Kitts and Nevis**

18 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women (under 18 with written parental permission); no conscription (2023)

### **San Marino**

18 is the legal minimum age for voluntary military service; no conscription; government has the authority to call up all San Marino citizens from 16-60 years of age to serve in the military (2024)

### **Sao Tome and Principe**

18 is the legal minimum age for compulsory military service (reportedly not enforced); 17 is the legal minimum age for voluntary service (2023)

### **Saudi Arabia**

men (17-40) and women (21-40) may volunteer for military service; no conscription (2023)

**note:** in 2021, women were allowed to serve in the Army, Air Defense, Navy, Strategic Missile Force, medical services, and internal security forces up to the rank of non-commissioned officer

### **Senegal**

19 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women (18 years of age for cadets); 24-month service commitment (2024)

### **Serbia**

18 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women; conscription abolished in 2011 (2024)

**note:** as of 2024, women made up about 11% of the military's full-time personnel

### **Seychelles**

18-28 (18-25 for officers) years of age for voluntary military service for men and women; 6-year initial commitment; no conscription (2023)

## Sierra Leone

18-30 for voluntary military service for men and women (25-40 for specialists); no conscription (2023)

## Singapore

18-21 years of age for compulsory military service for men; 16.5 years of age for voluntary enlistment (with parental consent); 24-month conscript service obligation, with a reserve obligation to age 40 (enlisted) or age 50 (officers); women are not conscripted, but they are allowed to volunteer for all services and branches, including combat arms (2023)

**note 1:** under the Enlistment Act, all male Singaporean citizens and permanent residents, unless exempted, are required to enter National Service (NS) upon attaining the age of 18; most NS conscripts serve in the Armed Forces, but some go into the Police Force or Civil Defense Force; conscripts comprise over half of the defense establishment

**note 2:** women began serving in the SAF in 1986; as of 2022, women made up about 8% of the regular force

**note 3:** the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) also has a uniformed volunteer auxiliary branch known as the Volunteer Corps (SAFVC); the SAFVC allows citizens and residents not subject to the National Service obligation, including Singaporean women, first generation permanent residents, and naturalized citizens, to contribute towards Singapore's defense; the volunteers must be 18-45 and physically fit

**note 4:** members of the Gurkha Contingent (GC) of the Singapore Police Force are mostly recruited from a small number of hill tribes in Nepal; the GC was formed in 1949 originally from selected ex-British Army Gurkhas

## Slovakia

18-30 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women; conscription in peacetime suspended in 2004 (2023)

**note:** as of 2021, women made up nearly 13% of the military's full-time personnel

## Slovenia

18-30 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women; must be a citizen of the Republic of Slovenia; recruits sign up for 3-, 5-, or 10-year service contracts; conscription abolished in 2003 (2023)

**note:** as of 2023, women comprised about 16% of the military's full-time personnel

## Somalia

18 is the legal minimum age for voluntary military service for men and women; conscription of men aged 18-40 and women aged 18-30 is authorized, but not currently utilized (2023)

## South Africa

18-22 (18-26 for college graduates) years of age for voluntary military service for men and women; 2-year service obligation (2023)

**note:** in 2023, women comprised nearly 30% of the military

### **South Sudan**

18 is the legal minimum age for compulsory (men) and voluntary (men and women) military service; 12-24 months service (2023)

### **Spain**

18 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women; 24-36 month initial obligation; women allowed to serve in all branches, including combat units; no conscription (abolished 2001), but the Spanish Government retains the right to mobilize citizens 19-25 years of age in a national emergency; 18-58 for the voluntary reserves (2024)

**note 1:** as of 2024, women comprised about 13% of the military's full-time personnel

**note 2:** the military recruits foreign nationals with residency in Spain from countries of its former empire, including Argentina, Costa Rica, Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela

### **Sri Lanka**

18-22 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women; no conscription (2023)

### **Sudan**

18-33 years of age for compulsory or voluntary military service for men and women; 12-24 month service obligation (2023)

**note:** implementation of conscription is reportedly uneven

### **Suriname**

18 is the legal minimum age for voluntary military service for men and women; no conscription (2024)

### **Sweden**

18-47 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women; service obligation: 7-15 months (Army), 7-15 months (Navy), 8-12 months (Air Force); after completing initial service, soldiers have a reserve commitment until age 47; compulsory military service, abolished in 2010, was reinstated in January 2018; conscription is selective, includes both men and women (age 18), and requires 6-15 months of service (2024)

**note 1:** Sweden conscripts about 5,500 men and women each year; it plans to increase this number to 8,000 by 2025; conscientious objectors in Sweden have the right to apply for alternative service (called vapenfri tjänst); after completing alternative service, the conscript then belongs to the civilian reserve

**note 2:** as of 2023, women made over 20% of the military's personnel

## Switzerland

18-30 years of age for compulsory military service for men; 18 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women; every Swiss male has to serve at least 245 days in the armed forces; conscripts receive 18 weeks of mandatory training, followed by six 19-day intermittent recalls for training during the next 10 years (2024)

**note:** conscientious objectors can choose 390 days of community service instead of military service; as of 2023, women comprised about 1% of the active Swiss military

## Syria

prior to the fall of the ASAD regime in December 2024, men 18-42 were obligated to perform military service; compulsory service obligation was up to 30 months; women were not conscripted but could volunteer to serve, including in combat arms (2024)

**note:** the military was comprised largely of conscripts; men in their late 40s and 50s reportedly had been drafted into military service during the civil war

## Taiwan

men 18-36 years of age may volunteer or must complete 12 months of compulsory military service; civil service can be substituted for military service in some cases; women may enlist but are restricted to noncombat roles in most cases (2024)

**note 1:** in January 2024, Taiwan extended compulsory service from 4 to 12 months for men born in 2005 and thereafter

**note 2:** as of 2023, women made up about 15% of the active-duty military

## Tajikistan

18-27 years of age for compulsory (men only) or voluntary (men and women) military service; 24-month conscript service obligation (2023)

**note:** in August 2021, the Tajik Government removed an exemption for university graduates but began allowing men to pay a fee in order to avoid conscription, although there is a cap on the number of individuals who can take advantage of this exemption

## Tanzania

18-25 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women; 6-year commitment (2-year contracts afterwards); selective conscription for 2 years of public service (2024)

## Thailand

18 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women; 21 years of age for compulsory military service for men; men register at 18 years of age; volunteer service obligation may be as short as 6 or 12 months, depending on educational qualifications; conscript service obligation also varies by educational qualifications, but is typically 24 months (2023)

**note:** serving in the armed forces is a national duty of all Thai citizens; conscription was introduced in 1905; it includes women, however, only men

over the age of 21 who have not gone through reserve training are conscripted; conscripts are chosen by lottery (on draft day, eligible draftees can request volunteer service, or they may choose to stay for the conscription lottery); approximately 75-100,000 men are drafted for military service each year

### **Timor-Leste**

18 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women; compulsory service was authorized in 2020 for men and women aged 18-30 for 18 months of service, but the level of implementation is unclear (2023)

### **Togo**

18 years of age for military service for men and women; 24-month service obligation; no conscription (2023)

**note:** as of 2022, about 7% of the military's personnel were women

### **Tonga**

voluntary military service for men and women 18-25; no conscription (2023)

### **Trinidad and Tobago**

18-25 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women (some age variations between services, reserves); no conscription (2024)

### **Tunisia**

18-23 years of age for voluntary service for men and women; 20-23 years of age for compulsory service for men with a 12-month service obligation; individuals engaged in higher education or vocational training programs prior to their military drafting are allowed to delay service until they have completed their programs (up to age 35); exemptions allowed for males considered to a family's sole provider; (2023)

**note:** women have been allowed in the service since 1975 as volunteers; as of 2023, women constituted about 8% of the military and served in all three services

### **Turkey (Turkiye)**

mandatory military service for men at age 20; service can be delayed if in university or in certain professions (researchers, professionals, and athletic, or those with artistic talents have the right to postpone military service until the age of 35); 6-12 months service; women may volunteer (2023)

**note 1:** after completing six months of service, if a conscripted soldier wants to and is suitable for extending his military service, he may do so for an additional six months in return for a monthly salary; all male Turkish citizens over the age of 20 are required to undergo a one month military training period, but they can obtain an exemption from the remaining 5 months of their mandatory service by paying a fee

**note 2:** as of 2021, women made up about 0.4% of the military's full-time personnel

## **Turkmenistan**

18-27 years of age for compulsory military service for men; 24-month conscript service obligation (30 months for the Navy); 20 years of age for voluntary service for men and women; men may enroll in military schools from age 15 (2023)

## **Uganda**

18-25 years of age for voluntary military duty for men and women; 18-30 for those with degrees/diplomas in specialized fields such as medicine, engineering, chemistry, and education, or possess qualifications in some vocational skills; 9-year service obligation (2024)

## **Ukraine**

18 years of age for voluntary service; conscription abolished in 2012, but reintroduced for men in 2014; 25 years of age for conscription; prior to the Russian invasion of February 2022, conscript service obligation was 12-18 months, depending on the service (2024)

**note 1:** following the Russian invasion in 2022, all nonexempt men ages 18-60 were required to register with their local recruitment offices and undergo medical screening for possible service; the Territorial Defense Forces (TDF) accepts volunteers, 18-60 years of age; since the invasion, hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians have volunteered for the regular armed forces, the TDF, or to work in civilian defense activities

**note 2:** women have been able to volunteer for military service since 1993; as of 2024, nearly 70,000 women were serving in the armed forces in both uniformed and civilian positions

**note 3:** since 2015, the Ukrainian military has allowed foreigners and stateless persons, 18-45 (in special cases up to 60), to join on 3-5-year contracts, based on qualifications; following the Russian invasion in 2022, the military began accepting medically fit foreign volunteers on a larger scale, with an emphasis on persons with combat experience; wartime volunteers typically serve for 6 months

## **United Arab Emirates**

18-30 years of age for compulsory military service for men (compulsory service initiated in 2014); 18-40 for voluntary service; 36-month service obligation for men without a secondary education and 11 months for secondary school graduates; women may volunteer (11-month service obligation regardless of education) (2023)

**note 1:** compulsory service may be completed in the uniformed military, the Ministry of Interior, or other security institutions designated by the military leadership

**note 2:** the UAE military employs a considerable number of foreign personnel on contracted service

## **United Kingdom**

some variations by service, but generally 16-36 years of age for enlisted (with parental consent under 18) and 18-29 for officers; minimum length of service 4 years; women serve in all military services including combat roles; conscription abolished in 1963 (2024)

**note 1:** women made up 11.7% of the military's full-time personnel in 2024

**note 2:** the British military allows Commonwealth nationals who are current UK residents and have been in the country for at least 5 years to apply; it also accepts Irish citizens

**note 3:** the British Army has continued the historic practice of recruiting Gurkhas from Nepal to serve in the Brigade of Gurkhas; the British began to recruit Nepalese citizens (Gurkhas) into the East India Company Army during the Anglo-Nepalese War (1814-1816); the Gurkhas subsequently were brought into the British Indian Army and by 1914, there were 10 Gurkha regiments, collectively known as the Gurkha Brigade; following the partition of India in 1947, an agreement between Nepal, India, and Great Britain allowed for the transfer of the 10 regiments from the British Indian Army to the separate British and Indian armies; four of the regiments were transferred to the British Army, where they have since served continuously as the Brigade of Gurkhas

### **United States**

18 years of age (17 years of age with parental consent) for voluntary service for men and women; no conscription (currently inactive, but males aged 18-25 must register with Selective Service in case conscription is reinstated in the future); maximum enlistment age 34 (Army), 42 (Air Force/Space Force), 39 (Navy), 28 (Marines), 31 (Coast Guard); 8-year service obligation, including 2-5 years active duty (Army), 2 years active duty (Navy), 4 years active duty (Air Force, Coast Guard, Marines, Space Force) (2024)

**note 1:** the US military has been all-volunteer since 1973, but an act of Congress can reinstate the draft in case of a national emergency

**note 2:** all military occupations and positions open to women; in 2022, women comprised 17.5% of the total US regular military personnel

**note 3:** non-citizens living permanently and legally in the US may join as enlisted personnel; they must have permission to work in the US, a high school diploma, and speak, read, and write English fluently; minimum age of 17 with parental consent or 18 without; maximum age 29-39, depending on the service; under the US Nationality Act, honorable service in the military may qualify individuals to obtain expedited citizenship; under the Compact of Free Association, citizens of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Palau, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands may volunteer; under the Jay Treaty, signed in 1794 between Great Britain and the US, and corresponding legislation, Native Americans/First Nations born in Canada are entitled to freely enter the US and join the US military

### **Uruguay**

18-30 years of age (18-22 years of age for Navy) for voluntary military service for men and women; up to 40 years of age for specialists; enlistment is voluntary in peacetime, but the government has the authority to conscript in emergencies (2024)

**note:** as of 2023, women comprised nearly 20% of the active military

### **Uzbekistan**

18-27 years of age for compulsory military service; 12-month conscript service obligation for men (those conscripted have the option of paying for a shorter service of 1 month while remaining in the reserves until the age of 27) (2023)

**note:** Uzbek citizens who have completed their service terms in the armed

forces have privileges in employment and admission to higher educational institutions

### **Venezuela**

18-30 (25 for women) for voluntary service; the minimum service obligation is 24-30 months; all citizens of military service age (18-50) are obligated to register for military service and subject to military training, although "forcible recruitment" is forbidden (2023)

### **Vietnam**

18-27 years of age for compulsory and voluntary military service for men and women (in practice only men are drafted); service obligation is between 24 (Army, Air Defense) and 36 (Navy and Air Force) months (2023)

### **Yemen**

18 is the legal minimum age for voluntary military service; conscription abolished in 2001; 2-year service obligation (note - limited information since the start of the civil war in 2014) (2022)

**note:** as late as 2022, all parties to the ongoing conflict were implicated in child soldier recruitment and use; during the beginning of the truce in April 2022, the Houthis signed a plan with the UN to end the recruitment and use of child soldiers; Houthi leaders previously pledged to end the use of child soldiers in 2012, as did the Government of Yemen in 2014

### **Zambia**

18-25 years of age (17 with parental consent) for voluntary military service for men and women; no conscription; 12-year enlistment period (7 years active, 5 in the Reserves) (2023)

**note:** Zambia had military conscription from 1975-1980

### **Zimbabwe**

18-22 years of age for voluntary military service for men and women (18-24 for officer cadets; 18-30 for technical/specialist personnel); no conscription (2023)