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Information on the enlisting of minors to the Ethiopian army?

A report by the *United States Department of State* under the heading 'Child Soldiers' states:

"During the year the Somali Regional Security and Administration Office increased recruitment of Special Police Forces and local militias in conflict zones. Both government forces and insurgent groups in Degehabur and Fik zones reportedly recruited children as young as 14." (United States Department of State (11 March 2010) *2009 Human Rights Reports: Ethiopia*)

A report by the *Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers* under the heading 'Government: National recruitment legislation and practice' states:

"Ethiopia set 18 as the minimum age for recruitment into the armed forces. However, because of the lack of adequate birth registration in Ethiopia the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed concern over possible flaws in the recruitment process. According to the government, recruits and conscripts were required to produce documents such as school or medical records testifying to their age. Military authorities reportedly refused to permit children under 18 to enlist." (Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers (20th May 2008) *Child Soldiers Global Report 2008 – Ethiopia*)

This report also states:

"There was no available evidence regarding child soldiers in Ethiopia, and reports of children being unofficially involved in either government or armed group activity were difficult to verify. There were no reports of child soldiers being used by Ethiopian forces in the conflict in Somalia." (ibid)

In a section titled 'Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR):' this report states:

"The Ethiopia Emergency Demobilization and Reintegration Project (EDRP), funded by a World Bank loan, ended on 30 June 2007. None of the soldiers supported under this program were under the age of 18 at the time of their demobilization. There were reportedly no programs in 2007 that specialized in supporting the demobilization of children" (ibid)

A report by the *UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC)* under the heading 'Children in armed conflict' states:

“The Committee notes that the State party has set 18 years as the minimum age for recruitment into the armed forces. However, the Committee is concerned about the possible gaps within the recruitment process due to a lack of adequate birth registration.” (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (1 November 2006) *UN Committee on the Rights of the Child: Concluding Observations, Ethiopia* -pg. 15 par. 67)

References:

Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers (20 May 2008) *Child Soldiers Global Report 2008 – Ethiopia*
<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/refworld/rwmain?page=printdoc&docid=486cb0fec>
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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

Sources Consulted:

All Africa
Amnesty International
BBC Monitoring
Electronic Immigration Network (EIN)
European Country of Origin Information Network (ECOI)
Freedom Houses
IRIN News
Lexis Nexis
UN Children's Fund (UNICEF)
UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
UN Commission on Human Rights
United Kingdom Home Office
United States Department of State