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Jan Olsen

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Til: Jan Olsen
Emne: Information concerning draft evasion in Guinea Conakry

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Dear Mr Olsen,

Reference is made to your letter dated 12 July 2004 concerning draft evasion in Guinea Conakry.

First of all, I should like to apologise that it has taken so long to provide feedback on this issue. We have now recieved the following information, which we hope could still be of interest to you.

UNHCR can confirm that military service is not mandatory under Guinean Law, since 1984 (when Lansana Conte, former military officer, first came to power in a bloodless military coup d'etat). The law from the former regime re: mandatory military service was then abolished.

According to UNHCR's source in the Ministry of Defense, when the military wants to recruit they make special campaigns throughout the country. According to the same source, it is not difficult for them to find candidates as the military career is interesting to many young people who see it as a way out of poverty (although salaries are not good).

Order No. 072/PRG/SGG/90 of 25 June 1990 states in its Article 1 that all Guinean citizens between the ages of 18 and 25 may be called to military service for 18 months only in times of need. We are trying to double check if this law is still in force as it was not mentioned by our source.

Please note also that it is prior to the Constitution (entry into force : 1/03/92). Art. 19 (last sentence) of the Constitution states the right of the Guineean people to resist oppression ("Il a le droit a resister a l'oppression.") and Art. 20 (last sentence) of the Constitution the sacred duty of each citizen to defend his Motherland ("Chaque citoyen a le devoir sacre de defendre la Patrie").

Having said that, UNHCR is aware of several human rights reports re: forced circumscription, namely, the Child Soldiers Global Report 2004 (by the Coalition Against the Use of Child Soldiers) that mentions recruitment of children as young as 15 by government militias in 2001 and 2002. However we are unable to confirm the events mentioned in the letter from the Danish Immigration Service, namely that "young men (...) were notified by the Guinean Military authorities that they were to perform military service in the military camp of Guekedou close to the Liberian border beginning from end-1999."

Regards

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