



International Fellowship of Reconciliation
Internationaler Versöhnungsbund
Mouvement International de la Réconciliation
Movimiento Internacional de la Reconciliación

The International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFR) is an international, ecumenical, peace-
oriented organization of individuals, churches, and groups of churches, working in a variety of
fields of human service — political, social, educational, cultural,
and other fields of human service — with the United Nations, UNESCO, and other agencies of the United Nations.

Human Rights Council, 24th Session

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Agenda Item 6

Adoption of the UPR Report on Cape Verde

Oral Intervention by the International Fellowship of Reconciliation

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The issue of military service did not feature in the review of Cape Verde, but the State is to be commended for having included in its 1992 Constitution an article: "Conscientious objectors and those who are unfit for military service shall perform civic service, as provided by law."¹

It is not clear to what extent Cape Verde has had to resort to conscription to meet its small needs for military manpower, but it would be interesting to hear, perhaps in the next cycle of the UPR, whether this constitutional provision has ever been invoked in practice.

On the other hand, in its declaration on accession to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, on 10th May 2002, Cape Verde indicated that it had a system of "Special voluntary recruitment", which was available, subject to parental consent, to citizens aged 17. We would encourage Cape Verde to join the growing global and regional consensus that 18 should be the minimum age for military service in any circumstances.

Mr President, providing comprehensive information to the UPR process can stretch the resources and information networks of even the largest international non-governmental organisations. Sometimes, small island states like Cape Verde almost slip through the net entirely. But their citizens have human rights like all others – and the UPR is a unique opportunity to redress the balance. For this it is essential to hear the voice of domestic civil society. We call on Cape Verde – and other states – to support the active engagement of their civil society with the UPR process. This Council would also do its bit to encourage this, if it enabled all stakeholders who have contributed to the UPR, and not just ECOSOC NGOs, to participate in the adoption of the report.

¹ Child Soldiers Global Report 2008 (Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, London)