



**Convention on the
Rights of the Child**

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Committee on the Rights of the Child

**Consideration of reports submitted by States
parties under article 8 (1) of the Optional Protocol
to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on
the involvement of children in armed conflict**

Initial periodic reports of States parties due in 2008

Belarus

[27 August 2009]

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I. General measures of implementation

1. Belarus acceded to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict on 25 January 2006. The Optional Protocol entered into force for Belarus on 25 February 2006.
2. In accordance with article 8, paragraph 1, of the Optional Protocol, Belarus is submitting its initial report on the implementation of the Optional Protocol in the country.
3. The report was prepared on the basis of information submitted by the ministries and other government bodies responsible for the protection of the rights and legal interests of children and was approved by the National Commission on the Rights of the Child.
4. Belarus recognizes the primacy of universally acknowledged principles of international law and ensures that its laws comply with them (article 8 of the Constitution).
5. The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict has the status of law in Belarus.
6. The Act on the accession of the Republic of Belarus to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict was passed on 12 December 2005.
7. In conformity with article 33 of the International Agreements Act, the rules of law contained in the international agreements that Belarus has acceded to form part of national legislation and are directly enforceable, except where such enforcement requires the adoption (publication) of a domestic legal act.
8. Belarus made the following declaration when it acceded to the Optional Protocol:

Pursuant to article 3 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, the Republic of Belarus declares that citizens are recruited into the armed forces of the Republic of Belarus when they attain the age of majority (18 years).

Enrolment in a military academy, to which citizens aged 17 years or over, including those who attain the age of 17 during the year of enrolment, are entitled in accordance with article 43 of the Military Duty and Military Service Act of 5 November 1992, constitutes an exception to the above. Such enrolment may not be forced or coerced.

The legislation of the Republic of Belarus guarantees that enrolment for military service as a cadet at a military academy:

 - Shall be voluntary
 - Shall take place with the informed consent of the person's parents or legal guardians
 - Shall take place on condition that such persons are fully informed of the duties involved in military service
 - Shall be permitted on condition that such persons provide reliable proof of age prior to enrolment for military service
9. Belarus has a stable domestic political situation and no military, ethnic or religious conflicts. Thus, children are not recruited for armed conflicts.

10. A number of legislative acts have been adopted in Belarus to address questions associated with the rights of children and their protection and which reflect the provisions of international agreements in the area of the rights of the child.

11. The Constitution, international agreements, the Children's Rights Act No. 2570-XII of 19 November 1993 (with amendments and additions) and other laws and regulations concerning the rights and interests of children serve as the legal basis for the status of children in Belarus.

12. Pursuant to article 33 of the Children's Rights Act, children may not be recruited to participate in hostilities or armed conflicts. War and violence may not be propagated among children, nor may children join armed formations.

13. Persons who have reached the age of 18 are subject to military conscription into the armed forces and other military formations. Legislation regulates the enrolment for military service of cadets in military academies, students in military schools and pupils in military bands who have not reached the age of 18.

14. Written consent is required from a parent or legal representative and from applicants under 18 years of age who enrol in a specialized vocational school that trains personnel for the armed forces, other troops and military formations, bodies of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the divisions and subdivisions of the Ministry of Emergency Situations (paras. 9 and 10 of the rules of admission to higher education establishments, approved by Presidential Order No. 80 of 7 February 2006).

15. Act No. 365-Z of 8 July 2008 introduced amendments and additions to the Children's Rights Act. In particular, article 33 was amended to prohibit the recruitment of children for involvement in hostilities or for any other use in military conflicts.

16. Article 136 of the Criminal Code, on criminal violations of international humanitarian law in time of armed conflict, which contains a list of acts whose commission entails criminal responsibility, was amended by paragraph 5¹ of the Act, which makes it a criminal offence to recruit persons under 18 years of age into armed groups other than the national armed forces or to involve them in hostilities as part of such armed groups (Act No. 223-Z of 10 May 2007). Such acts are punishable by deprivation of liberty for a term of 5 to 20 years.

17. A national plan of action for 2004–2010 to improve the status of children and protect their rights, approved by Council of Ministers Order No. 1661 of 18 December 2003, includes measures to protect children from violence, trafficking, all forms of exploitation and involvement in armed conflicts.

18. The National Commission on the Rights of the Child, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour and Welfare are coordinating the implementation of the measures under the national plan of action.

19. Under the plan, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Information are organizing measures to familiarize both children and professionals working with and for children with the content of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict. The Ministry of Internal Affairs together with other government bodies concerned is taking steps to combat all forms of terrorism and prevent the hostage-taking of children. The Ministry of Labour and Welfare, the Ministry of Education, the Procurator-General, the local executive committees and the Minsk urban executive committee provide the necessary assistance to uphold the rights of child refugees to housing, integration and education.

20. One of the aims of the national plan is to improve the education system for pupils, students and professionals working with and for children in the area of international humanitarian law.
21. A unified system has been set up to disseminate information about the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols.
22. General schools teach a special course on children's rights, that includes exercises, training sessions and videos on the subject.
23. To ensure the proper teaching of human rights and the dissemination of information on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols, a compendium of international legal documents and three national schoolbooks have been issued, and a list of recommended literature has been drawn up and published to serve as a teaching aid.
24. During their schooling, pupils make broad use of thematic publications, including: "Your rights: on the tenth anniversary of the Children's Rights Act", "Handbook for children with special psychological and physical needs" (2004), "International humanitarian law for schoolchildren" (2003), "Human rights for schoolchildren" (2005), "Basic legal knowledge" (2006), "Juvenile law: a book for minors" (2006) and the handbook "I am a citizen of the Republic of Belarus" (2007).
25. As part of compulsory classes in general schools on social studies and "People and the world", schoolchildren are familiarized with human rights and freedoms in today's world. They learn about international legal documents, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, its Optional Protocols on the involvement of children in armed conflict and the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
26. During the reporting period, work continued on improving education on human rights and children's rights at all levels, from primary school to postdoctoral studies. Professionals working with and for children receive systematic continuous training.
27. Teachers of social studies and "People and the world" and of special classes on human rights regularly improve their qualifications at national and regional levels.
28. Information and teaching manuals on the development of international law in this area and on the human rights situation in the Republic of Belarus have been published to help teachers in general schools. A set of books and brochures on the rights of children for professionals includes "Children's rights: theory and approach" (1999), "Basic theory and methodology for teaching children's rights in sociocultural institutes" (2002), "Forty classes on the rights of the child, for children between 6 and 10 years of age" (2005), "The rights of minors: a book for adults" (2006) and other publications.
29. Classes on issues related to protecting children's rights and interests are planned for teaching staff, social workers and psychologists as part of retraining and in-service training courses at local institutes of further training and the National Academy of Postgraduate Education.
30. The State University has an institute for the retraining and in-service training of judges and procuratorial, court and judicial staff. As part of lectures and classes, it is planned to consider amendments to legislation on issues related to children's rights and interests.

31. The educational institutions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs have organized in-service training on children's rights for the staff of juvenile affairs inspectorates.
32. In 2006, to help the Ministry of Education disseminate information about children's rights, the Belarusian Association of UNESCO Clubs organized a "University of the rights of the child" project to ensure that children were better informed about their rights and to set up a system to train schoolchildren as trainers for educational activities. Since that project ended, 62 UNESCO clubs and general schools have been working to familiarize children with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols.
33. Pursuant to article 30 of the Military Duty and Military Service Act of 5 November 1992, male citizens between 18 and 27 years of age who are registered with the military authorities or are required to be registered with the military authorities and are not registered with the reserves are subject to military service and service in the reserves; male citizens up to the age of 27 who have completed reserve officer training programmes in military departments or faculties of civilian universities and specialized secondary schools, have passed the State graduation examinations and are assigned to the reserves with an officer's rank, are subject to military service as officers.
34. Citizens who, in accordance with the above Act, are exempt from military service and service in the reserves or who are entitled to a deferment are not subject to military service or service in the reserves.
35. No cases have been registered of persons under 18 years of age being conscripted by the armed forces.
36. There are no conflicts of a military, inter-ethnic or religious nature in Belarus. Accordingly, children are not recruited by armed groups and are not involved in hostilities.
37. Bearing in mind the 1996 recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the National Commission on the Rights of the Child is making every effort to ensure the practical implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Pursuant to Presidential Order No. 675 of 16 November 2006 on the National Commission on the Rights of the Child, the Commission's composition, powers and functions have been considerably enlarged.
38. It is composed of deputies from the National Assembly, representatives of national and local government bodies, the judicial authorities, educational institutions and non-governmental organizations.
39. The Commission actually performs the function of ombudsman for children's rights and has representatives in every administrative centre and in Minsk. It is authorized to take decisions in the area of protecting children's rights and legal interests and to intervene in the activities of national and regional government bodies, executive authorities and other organizations concerning the implementation of legislation and government programmes to assist children and protect their rights and legal interests.
40. The Commission is preparing proposals to improve social policy and mechanisms for assisting children and is monitoring the implementation of government programmes to support children and families. Children can turn to the Commission to resolve a wide range of issues.
41. The Commission monitors the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols, deals with children's complaints benevolently and takes measures to restore children's rights where they have been violated.

II. Prevention

Articles 1 and 2, article 4, paragraph 2, and article 6, paragraph 2

42. Under article 57 of the Constitution of Belarus, it is a citizen's obligation and sacred duty to defend the country.

43. The Military Duty and Military Service Act No. 1914-XII of 5 November 1992 (with amendments and additions) sets out the rules for the performance of military service and the grounds and conditions for exemption.

44. Military service is a particular form of national service and includes military service or service in the reserves and military or special training while in the reserves of the armed forces or of other troops or military units.

45. Military service in Belarus takes the form of either conscription or voluntary enlistment.

46. Conscription is compulsory military service performed by able-bodied male citizens in conformity with the law. It includes conscription for a specified period of time and compulsory military service for officers.

47. Voluntary enlistment is military service freely undertaken under existing law in the exercise of the citizen's constitutional duty to defend Belarus, on the basis of an enlistment contract.

48. Service in the reserves is a form of military service by citizens subject to conscription which consists of the compulsory performance of military duty through classes and field training in military units or other bodies of the armed forces or transport services for the purpose of obtaining a military specialism without having to suspend a professional activity.

49. The purpose of military duty and military service is to prepare the population to defend the country and ensure that the armed forces and other military formations are at full strength.

50. Pursuant to the Military Duty and Military Service Act, in the course of the year in which they reach the age of 16, male citizens undergo an initial registration at an enlistment office to determine their category of eligibility and for assignment for a specific period of military service or service in the reserves, depending on their health, physical development, level of education, acquired specialism, profession and moral and psychological characteristics.

51. Citizens registered with the military authorities receive a draft card and are informed of their rights and obligations as conscripts, the rules of military registration and the regulations with regard to compulsory training for military service.

52. The registration of conscripts takes place at their place of residence in the manner prescribed in the military registration documents.

53. Pursuant to the Military Duty and Military Service Act, citizens are called up for military service on reaching the age of 18.

54. The passport issued when a person reaches the age of 16 or, in its absence, a birth certificate is regarded as a reliable document for verifying the age of potential conscripts prior to their enrolment for compulsory military service.

55. The rules on identity documents (approved under Presidential Decree No. 294 of 3 June 2008 on the documentation of the population of the Republic of Belarus) specify that

the passport of a Belarusian citizen is a document that certifies the identity and citizenship of the bearer.

56. The competent authorities register acts of civil status, including births, in the relevant records and issue documents to citizens on the basis of such registration (article 43 of the Civil Code). The registration of births and the issuance of birth certificates are also regulated by the Marriage and Family Code (Chapter 19).

57. In accordance with article 43 of the Military Duty and Military Service Act of 5 November 1992 (in its version of 22 July 2003), citizens between 17 and 21 years of age may apply for admission to military schools and other educational establishments that train personnel for the armed forces and may be admitted on the basis of a competitive examination; this includes persons who have reached the age of 17 or the age of 21 in the year in which the application is submitted (citizens who have not reached the age of 18 may be admitted with the written consent of their parents or other legal representatives).

58. On their enrolment in military schools or other educational establishments, female citizens sign a contract for military service for the period of training and for five years of military service in the officer corps thereafter (the written consent of parents or other legal representatives is required for female citizens who have not reached the age of 18).

59. Articles 28 and 29 of the Military Duty and Military Service Act govern training under junior commander programmes in military departments and faculties of civilian universities and specialized secondary schools.

60. The Government approves the list of civilian universities and specialized secondary schools at which persons may enrol for training in military departments and faculties.

61. The Ministry of Defence approves the list of specialist military subjects that can be studied under programmes to train junior commanders and reserve officers in those departments and faculties.

62. With the Ministry's assistance, the national authorities that supervise the activities of the civilian universities and specialized secondary schools concerned provide the teaching facilities and equipment, take part in the selection and training of the teaching staff, and monitor the education given in the military departments and faculties.

63. The Minsk Military School, which reports directly to the Ministry of Defence, offers a five-year training course for cadets in military subjects and sports. Its admission rules, approved by Decision No. 38/94/30 of 2 October 2006 of the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Sport and Tourism, state that young male citizens aged 12 to 13 years during the year of admission who have completed the sixth class of a general school may apply.

64. Higher education in military subjects is currently provided by the Military Academy and seven military faculties in universities in the country. They are: the State University, the State University of Information Technology and Radioelectronics, the National Technical University, the State Medical University, the Y. Kupals State University of Grodno, the State Transport University, and the Minsk State Higher College of Aviation.

65. The Military Academy provides training for officers; and training, retraining and in-service training for teaching staff and commanding officers. It also organizes and carries out basic and applied military research.

66. Six of the Academy's faculties — combined services; communications and automated control systems; anti-aircraft defence; aviation; border forces; and forces of the Ministry of Internal Affairs — train personnel in 21 different specialisms, 7 focus areas and 36 specializations, almost completely meeting the needs of the armed forces and other security services in the country for officer personnel.

67. Women are admitted only to the Academy's faculty of communications and automated control systems in specialisms and numbers laid down by the Ministry of Defence.

68. The State University's military faculty offers five-year courses to train officer personnel, including reserve officers and junior commanders, for the armed forces in the following specialisms and specializations:

- International relations (specialization in international relations in the military sphere)
- Psychology (specialization in moral and psychological support in military activities)
- Law (specialization in legal counselling in the military)
- Journalism (focus area: the press; specialization: military journalism)
- Chemistry (focus area: radiation, chemical and biological protection)
- Geography (focus area: geographic information systems; specialization: military geographic information systems)

69. The military faculty of the State University of Information Technology and Radioelectronics provides five-year courses to train officers for the armed forces and other security services and departments in the country in the specialism of multichannel telecommunications systems (specialization in special telecommunications systems) for the qualification of telecommunications engineer.

70. The military technology faculty of the National Technical University trains personnel for the armed forces in the following specialisms and specializations:

- Business economics and management (specialization in financial support for the armed forces' military and economic activities) for the qualification of economic manager
- Conveying, lifting, construction and road building machinery and equipment (focus area: engineering unit administration) for the qualification of mechanical engineering manager
- Multi-purpose crawler and wheeled equipment (focus area: operation and maintenance of armoured equipment and technology) for the qualification of mechanical engineering manager
- Technical operation of vehicles (focus area: military vehicle technology) for the qualification of mechanical engineering manager

All specialized courses are five years in length.

71. The faculty of military medicine of the State Medical University provides specialized training in military disciplines for students from the faculty of medicine. Students who pass the State examinations are awarded a national diploma in general medicine with a specialization in military medicine (six-year course of study).

72. The military faculty of the Y. Kupal State University of Grodno trains: military personnel for the armed forces, the border agencies, the State Security Committee, and the forces of the Ministry of Internal Affairs; regular officers in the subjects of physical training for military personnel and military logistic support (four-year course); students on the junior commander training course, level one, in nine specialisms (one-year course); and students on the reserve officer training programmes, level two, in five specialisms (one-year course).

73. The military transport faculty of the State Transport University offers a five-year course to prepare regular officers for the armed forces in railway operations unit

management, with specializations in the rebuilding and construction of lines of communication, technical operation of machinery and equipment, information transmission and distribution systems, and transport management and control.

74. The military faculty of the Minsk State Higher College of Aviation provides training to specialized secondary and higher levels (three- to five-year courses of study) in:

- Operation and repair of oxygen and other airfield maintenance service supplies for aeroplanes and helicopters
- Use and organization of airfield engineering support units for aircraft flights

Table 1

Data on educational establishments that provide training in military subjects

<i>Educational establishment</i>	<i>Number of military teaching staff</i>	<i>Number of civilian teaching staff</i>	<i>Proportion of military training to academic education</i>
Military Academy	364	1 007	2/3
Military faculty, State University	37	1	1/3
Military faculty, State University for Information Technology and Radioelectronics	29	7	1/3
Military technology faculty, National Technical University	38	11	2/3
Military faculty, Minsk State Higher College of Aviation	23	1	1/3
Military faculty, Y. Kupal State University of Grodno	12	-	1/3
Military transport faculty, State Transport University	20	2	1/3
Faculty of military medicine, State Medical University	24	17	1/50

75. In Belarus, the right to education is enshrined in article 49 of the Constitution:

Everyone has the right to education. General secondary, vocational and technical education is available to all free of charge. Specialized secondary and higher education is available to everyone in accordance with his or her individual capacities and everyone may, on the basis of a competitive examination, receive an appropriate education free of charge in a State educational establishment.

76. The basic principles of State policy on education are laid down in the Education Act (No. 1202-XII of 29 October 1991), the Vocational and Technical Education Act (No. 216-Z of 29 June 2003), the General Secondary Education Act (No. 141-Z of 5 July 2006) and the Higher Education Act (No. 252-Z of 11 July 2007).

77. Under article 15 of the Education Act (No. 1202-XII of 29 October 1991) (with amendments and additions), only State educational establishments may provide training in military specialisms for the agencies of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the State Security Service.

Table 2
Cadets in educational establishments (by gender)

<i>Military establishment</i>	<i>Male students</i>	<i>Female students</i>
Minsk Military School	437	-
Military Academy	2 466	19
Military faculty, State University	206	5
Military faculty, State University for Information Technology and Radioelectronics	239	-
Military technology faculty, National Technical University	342	3
Military faculty, Minsk State Higher College of Aviation	63	-
Military faculty, Y. Kupal State University of Grodno	100	-
Military transport faculty, State Transport University	106	-
Faculty of military medicine, State Medical University	89	-

78. Article 45 of the Education Act prohibits corporal punishment in educational establishments in Belarus, including those that come under the Ministry of Defence. Educational establishments are liable under the law for any violation of students' rights and freedoms, or any action that results in violations of health and safety standards for students.

79. The Children's Rights Act (No. 2570-XII of 19 November 1993) (with amendments and additions) guarantees the right to the inviolability of the person and the protection of children from exploitation and violence. In article 9, the State undertakes to protect children from all forms of exploitation, including sexual exploitation, and from physical and/or psychological violence, cruel, abusive or degrading treatment, and sexual harassment, including by the child's parents (tutors or guardians) or relatives.

80. Under article 154, paragraph 2, of the Criminal Code, cruel treatment of a person known by the perpetrator to be a minor is punishable by restriction of liberty for a term of one to three years or deprivation of liberty for a term of one to five years.

81. Article 35 of the Code of Criminal Procedure states that a teacher or psychologist must be present during legal proceedings. This makes it possible to establish an atmosphere of understanding and trust between the participants during the investigations and to defend the rights and legal interests of the child.

82. Pursuant to article 43 of the Military Duty and Military Service Act, male military personnel who are expelled from military or other educational establishments and who have attained the age of 18 by the day they are expelled, or who have previously carried out compulsory military service or service in the reserves and have not completed the requisite period of compulsory military service, shall report for further compulsory military service.

83. Male military personnel who are expelled from military or other educational establishments and who have not attained the age of 18 by the day they are expelled shall resign from military service, report to an enlistment office for registration with the military authorities and subsequently be called up for compulsory military service in accordance with the usual procedure. Their period of military service during their studies in a military or other educational establishment is counted against their compulsory military service, on the basis of two months of military service in a military or other educational establishment for one month of compulsory military service.

84. Male military personnel who are expelled from military or other educational establishments shall resign from reserve military service and report to an enlistment office to be registered as liable for military service if they have:

- Been expelled from a military or other educational establishment for reason of illness
- Carried out compulsory military service or reserve service
- Not carried out compulsory military service or reserve service after completing their third year of study

85. Female military personnel who are expelled from military or other educational establishments and who do not have a military specialism may be released from military service without being registered with the military authorities; those who have a military specialism shall report to the enlistment office at their place of residence to be registered as liable for military service.

86. In the case of general mobilization (armed conflict), those cadets who have not attained the age of 18 are subject to dismissal from the ranks of the armed forces.

87. Under the law, cadets in military educational establishments have the right to request State agencies or other organizations (the appropriate officials) and/or the courts for legal or other assistance. There are no limitations on such requests.

88. Legally, a child aged 14 or over has the right to apply independently to the courts and to receive legal assistance to ensure the respect of his or her rights and freedoms.

89. A minor who has been the victim of violence or abusive treatment may also submit a petition for the protection of his or her rights and interests to the guardianship and trusteeship bodies, the Procurator's Office or the National Commission on the Rights of the Child, and ensure such protection through legal representatives.

90. State policy aims to promote the development of cultural identity among representatives of all ethnic groups living in Belarus, support religious tolerance, prevent ethnic and interfaith discord, and encourage inter-ethnic and inter-confessional dialogue in the country.

91. One component in shaping a culture of peace among children and young people lies in the education process and extracurricular educational work.

92. Each year on 1 September, the academic year in general schools begins with the traditional lessons of peace, devoted to remembering dates of historical importance to Belarus and milestones in the formation of the State.

93. Classes on history, philosophy, ethnography, world literature, law and psychology also help to teach the younger generation the principles of humanism and peace. Higher education establishments have developed a course on the ideological basis of the Belarusian State, aimed at encouraging patriotic self-awareness among young people.

94. In the framework of the national plan of action for 2004–2010 to improve the status of children and protect their rights, approved by Council of Ministers Order No. 1661 of 18 December 2003, measures are being taken to protect children from violence, trafficking and all forms of exploitation. These include: efforts to familiarize both children and professionals working with and for children with the content of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, and the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child adopted at its days of general discussion on violence against children within the family and in schools, and State violence against children; the development and introduction of systems for reporting and recording cases of physical, psychological and other forms of violence against children;

the publication of information about offences and crimes committed against minors and the punishments imposed; the detection of socially dangerous and harmful acts against children and the prosecution of those responsible; analysis and consolidation of the way legislation is used to protect the life and health of minors in extreme situations or who are victims of crime, cruelty or violence; and restrictions on showing in television or video films or publishing in the press material that advocates violence and cruelty.

III. Prohibition and related matters

Articles 1 and 2, and article 4, paragraphs 1 and 2

95. Belarus has adopted the legislation described below in implementation of articles 1 and 2, and article 4, paragraphs 1 and 2, of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

96. Act No. 365-Z of 8 July 2008 introduced amendments and additions to the Children's Rights Act. In particular, article 33 was amended to prohibit the recruitment of children for involvement in hostilities or for any other use in armed conflicts.

97. Act No. 233-Z of 10 May 2007 amended article 136 of the Criminal Code on criminal violations of international humanitarian law in time of armed conflict, which contains a list of acts whose commission entails criminal responsibility. Paragraph 5¹ of the Act makes it a criminal offence to recruit persons under 18 years of age into armed groups other than the national armed forces, or to involve them in hostilities as part of such armed groups. Such acts are punishable by deprivation of liberty for a term of 5 to 20 years.

98. Under the rules of admission to higher education establishments approved by Presidential Order No. 80 of 7 February 2006, written consent is required from a parent or legal representative and from applicants under 18 years of age who enrol in a specialized vocational school that trains personnel for the armed forces, other troops and military formations, agencies of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the divisions and subdivisions of the Ministry of Emergency Situations.

99. No cases have been brought to court for the crimes mentioned in article 136, paragraph 5,¹ of the Criminal Code.

IV. International assistance and cooperation

Article 7, paragraph 1

100. Presidential Order No. 383-Z of 15 July 2002 (with amendments and additions) on meeting the international obligations arising from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) document on small arms and light weapons obliges legal persons who have a special licence to conduct foreign trade in specific products (labour, services) to adhere to the provisions of the OSCE document when supplying small arms and light weapons outside of the borders of Belarus. These measures are an integral part of national and international efforts in the fields of early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation.

101. Belarus was not mentioned in the reports of the United Nations Secretary-General in connection with Security Council resolution 1612 (2005) of 26 July 2005.