



# Conscience and Peace Tax International

**Internacional de Conciencia e Impuestos para la Paz**

NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the UN

International non-profit organization (Belgium 15.075/96)

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## **Submission to the 90th Session of the Human Rights Committee: July 2007 Conscientious Objection to Military Service: Issues for the Country Report Task Forces BOTSWANA**

Botswana maintains an army some 8,500 strong and an air force with about 500 personnel.<sup>1</sup> Recruitment into these forces has however always been on a voluntary basis. Under the Botswana Defence Force Act of 1977 a recruit must “have the apparent age of 18” - the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers has pointed out that, even linked with penalties for providing false information, such a rule does not provide an absolute safeguard against juvenile recruitment<sup>2</sup>.

No case has been recorded where a serving member of the armed forces has developed a conscientious objection to such service. Such an eventuality cannot however be precluded; it might for instance occur as a result of a change of religion.

**CPTI recommends that, as with other countries whose armed forces rely upon voluntary recruitment, the State Party be encouraged to make a clear statement in law of the right to have or to develop a conscientious objection to military service, so as to afford protection of that right to all, including those who have already enlisted in the armed forces.**

8<sup>th</sup> June, 2007.

<sup>1</sup> International Institute for Strategic Studies, The Military Balance, 2004/5, Routledge, London, p367.

<sup>2</sup> Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, Child Soldiers Global Report 2004, p39