



ngo group for the crc

STATE PARTY EXAMINATION OF ICELAND'S INITIAL REPORT ON THE OPTIONAL PROTOCOL ON THE INVOLVEMENT OF CHILDREN IN ARMED CONFLICT

42ND SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

15 May – 2 June 2006

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Iceland ratified the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (OPAC) on 1 October 2001. On 26 May 2006, the Committee on the Rights of the Child (the Committee) examined Iceland's Initial Report for the OPAC.

Opening Comments

The head of delegation was Mrs. Ragna Arnadottir, Director of Legal Affairs, Ministry of Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs. In her opening statement she noted Iceland's increased contribution and involvement in programmes, such as UNIFEM in the Balkans. She reaffirmed its commitment to programmes promoting gender equality and human's rights. Mrs. Arnadottir highlighted that Iceland had no armed forces and as such did not face any particular issues with the OPAC.

International Instruments

The country rapporteur, Mr. Kotrane, noted with satisfaction that various passages in the report made reference to the Statute of the International Criminal Court (2000). This made it possible to bring war criminals to justice. The country rapporteur also welcomed the ratification of the ILO 182 Convention for the Use of Children for Child Labour and Armed Forces. He also wanted to know to what extent human rights treaties had a binding character. The delegation answered that apart from the UN Convention on Human Rights, other conventions or protocols were not given primacy. However, human rights provisions were revised in 1995 and were modernised using international conventions as models. In the past decade, there was also an increased protection of human rights throughout the country and in many cases judges referred to international human rights provisions. Even in cases of conflicts with the conventions, international human rights provisions prevailed.

Extraterritorial Jurisdiction

The Chair recalled that an article in the legal code created an extraterritorial jurisdiction and asked if they considered expanding this jurisdiction to include the recruitment and involvement of children

under the age of 15 in armed conflict. The delegation replied that it would consider doing so if it was necessary and obligatory.

Unaccompanied Children

The Committee asked about experiences with unaccompanied children and if any of them were involved in armed conflicts. The delegation replied that there were working rules for unaccompanied children or asylum seekers. However, there were very few cases. Since 2003, there was only one asylum seeking unaccompanied child (17 years old) case in 2004. He had no passport and it was uncertain whether he was 17 years old. He was supposed to be sent back to Ireland, where his case would be examined, but he disappeared and Icelandic authorities longer had any information on him. In 2005, there were no cases of unaccompanied children. However, they were prepared to deal with such cases if they arose.

Police Training Schools

The Committee enquired about the minimum age for students attending police training schools. The answer was 20 years old.

International Peacekeeping Missions

Icelandic citizens could participate in peacekeeping missions abroad as part of a civil mission .The Committee enquired if children could be excluded as from these missions. The delegation responded that people had to have a university degree for the Icelandic Forces. All participants in peacekeeping forces were civilian but children were not employed.

Concluding Comments

The Committee congratulated the delegation on its record and expressed its appreciation for possibly considering the expansion of extraterritorial jurisdiction.