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COMMITTEE OF LEGAL ADVISERS
ON PUBLIC INTERNATIONAL LAW
(CAHDI)

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EUROPEAN OBSERVATORY OF RESERVATIONS TO INTERNATIONAL TREATIES:
LIST OF OUTSTANDING RESERVATIONS AND DECLARATIONS
TO INTERNATIONAL TREATIES

Secretariat memorandum
Prepared by the Directorate General of Legal Affairs

Foreword

1. At its second meeting (Paris, 14-16 September 1998) the Group of Specialists on Reservations to International Treaties (DI-S-RIT) agreed to propose to the CAHDI to operate as an European observatory of reservations to international treaties (see meeting report, document DI-S-RIT (98) 10).
2. In this context, the CAHDI regularly considers a list of outstanding reservations.
3. The following list includes two parts. Part I concerns reservations and declarations to treaties concluded outside the Council of Europe. The information contained therein can be consulted at the United Nations Treaty Collection site <http://untreaty.un.org/>.
4. Part II concerns reservations and declarations to Council of Europe treaties. Information was provided by the Treaty Office of the Directorate General of Legal Affairs of the Council of Europe and can be accessed via internet at the new URL <http://conventions.coe.int/>.
5. The format of the information is CONVENTION: State reserving, date of notification to the depository, date of notification by the depository (where those dates coincide they are indicated only once), deadline for objections. In as far as possible, the text of the reservation and declaration is included.

Action required

Members of the CAHDI are called upon to consider the following outstanding reservations and declarations in the context of its operation as an European observatory of reservations to international treaties.

List of outstanding reservations and declarations

PART I: RESERVATIONS AND DECLARATIONS TO NON-COUNCIL OF EUROPE TREATIES

1. OPTIONAL PROTOCOL TO THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD ON THE INVOLVEMENT OF CHILDREN IN ARMED CONFLICT, NEW YORK, 25 MAY 2000¹

United States of America, 2 January 2003, 1st January 2004

Declaration:

(A) the minimum age at which the United States permits voluntary recruitment into the Armed Forces of the United States is 17 years of age;

(B) The United States has established safeguards to ensure that such recruitment is not forced or coerced, including a requirement in section 505 (a) of title 10, United States Code, that no person under 18 years of age may be originally enlisted in the Armed Forces of the United States without the written consent of the person's parent or guardian, if the parent or guardian is entitled to the person's custody and control;

(C) each person recruited into the Armed Forces of the United States perceives a comprehensive briefing and must sign an enlistment contract that, taking together, specify the duties involved in military service; and

(D) all persons recruited into the Armed Forces of the United States must provide reliable proof of age before their entry into military service.

Understandings:

(1) NO ASSUMPTION OF OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD – The United States understands that the United States assumes no obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child by becoming a party to the Protocol.

(2) IMPLEMENTATION OF OBLIGATION NOT TO PERMIT CHILDREN TO TAKE DIRECT PART IN HOSTILITIES. The United States understands that, with respect to Article 1 of the Protocol-

(A) the term «feasible measures» means those measures that are practical or practically possible, taking into account all the circumstances ruling at the time, including humanitarian and military considerations;

(B) the phrase «direct part in hostilities» –

i) means immediate and actual action on the battlefield likely to cause harm to the enemy because there is a direct causal relationship between the activity engaged in and the harm done to the enemy; and

ii) does not mean indirect participation in hostilities, such as gathering and transmitting military information, transporting weapons, munitions, or other supplies, or forward deployment; and

(C) any decision by any military commander, military personnel, or other person responsible for planning, authorizing, or executing military action, including the

¹ *Relevant provisions:*

Article 3.2

Each State Party shall deposit a binding declaration upon ratification of or accession to this Protocol that sets forth the minimum age at which it will permit voluntary recruitment into its national armed forces and a description of the safeguards that it has adopted to ensure that such recruitment is not forced or coerced.

assignment of military personnel, shall only be judged on the basis of all relevant circumstances and on the basis of that person's assessment of the information reasonably available to the person at the time the person planned, authorized, or executed the action under review, and shall not be judged on the basis of information that comes to light after the action under review was taken.

3. **MINIMUM AGE FOR VOLUNTARY RECRUITMENT.** The United States understands that article 3 of the Protocol obliges States Parties to the Protocol to raise the minimum age for voluntary recruitment into their national armed forces from the current international standard of 15 years of age.

4. **ARMED GROUPS.** The United States understands that the term «armed groups» in Article 4 of the Protocol means nongovernmental armed groups such as rebel groups, dissident armed forces, and other insurgent groups.

5. **NO BASIS FOR JURISDICTION BY ANY INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL.** The United States understands that nothing in the Protocol establishes a basis for jurisdiction by any international tribunal, including the International Criminal Court.

2. INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF THE FINANCING OF TERRORISM, NEW YORK, 9 DECEMBER 1999²

² *Relevant provisions:*

Article 2.1

1. Any person commits an offence within the meaning of this Convention if that person by any means, directly or indirectly, unlawfully and willfully, provides or collects funds with the intention that they should be used or in the knowledge that they are to be used, in full or in part, in order to carry out:

(a) An act which constitutes an offence within the scope of and as defined in one of the treaties listed in the annex; or

(b) Any other act intended to cause death or serious bodily injury to a civilian, or to any other person not taking an active part in the hostilities in a situation of armed conflict, when the purpose of such act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act.

Article 2.2

(a) On depositing its instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, a State Party which is not a party to a treaty listed in the annex may declare that, in the application of this Convention to the State Party, the treaty shall be deemed not to be included in the annex referred to in paragraph 1, subparagraph (a). The declaration shall cease to have effect as soon as the treaty enters into force for the State Party, which shall notify the depository of this fact.

Article 7.3

Upon ratifying, accepting, approving or acceding to this Convention, each State Party shall notify the Secretary-General of the United Nations of the jurisdiction it has established in accordance with paragraph 2. Should any change take place, the State Party concerned shall immediately notify the Secretary-General.

Article 14

None of the offences set forth in article 2 shall be regarded for the purposes of extradition or mutual legal assistance as a political offence or as an offence connected with a political offence or as an offence inspired by political motives. Accordingly, a request for extradition or for mutual legal assistance based on such an offence may not be refused on the sole ground that it concerns a political offence or an offence connected with a political offence or an offence inspired by political motives.

Article 15

Nothing in this convention shall be interpreted as imposing an obligation to extradite or afford mutual legal assistance, if the requested State Party has substantial grounds for believing that the request for extradition for offences set forth in article 2 or for mutual legal assistance with respect to such offences has been made for the purpose of prosecuting or punishing a person on account of that person's race, religion, nationality, ethnic origin or political opinion or that compliance with the request would cause prejudice to that person's position for any of these reasons.

Article 21

Nothing in this Convention shall affect other rights, obligations and responsibilities of States and individuals under international law, in particular the purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, international humanitarian law and other relevant Conventions.

Article 24

Russian Federation, 10 December 2002, 9 December 2003

Declarations:

1. The Russian Federation, pursuant to article 7, paragraph 3, of the Convention, declares that it establishes its jurisdiction over the acts recognized as offences under article 2 of the Convention in the cases provided for in article 7, paragraphs 1 and 2, of the Convention;
2. It is the position of the Russian Federation that the provisions of article 15 of the Convention must be applied in such a way as to ensure the inevitability of responsibility for perpetrating crimes falling within the purview of the Convention, without prejudice to the effectiveness of international cooperation with regard to the questions of extradition and legal assistance.

Israel, 21 February 2003, 20 February 2004

Declarations:

Pursuant to Article 2, paragraph 2 (a) of the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, the Government of the State of Israel declares that in the application of the Convention the treaties to which the state of Israel is not a party shall be deemed not to be included in the Annex of the Convention.

Pursuant to Article 24, paragraph 2 of the Convention, the State of Israel does not consider itself bound by the provisions of Article 24, paragraph 1 of the Convention.

The Government of the State of Israel understands that the term "international humanitarian law" referred to in Article 21 of the Convention has the same substantial meaning as the term "the law of war". This body of laws does not include the provisions of the Protocols Additional to the Geneva Convention of 1977 to which the State of Israel is not a party.

Singapore, 8 January 2003, 7 January 2004

Declaration:

(1) The Republic of Singapore understands that Article 21 of the Convention clarifies that nothing in the Convention precludes the application of the law of armed conflict with regard to legitimate military objectives.

Reservations:

(1) With respect to Article 2, paragraph 2 (a) of the Convention, the Republic of Singapore declares that the treaty shall be deemed not to include the treaties listed in the annex of this Convention which the Republic of Singapore is not a party to.

1. Any dispute between two or more States Parties concerning the interpretation or application of this Convention which cannot be settled through negotiation within a reasonable time shall, at the request of one of them, be submitted to arbitration. If, within six months from the date of the request for arbitration, the parties are unable to agree on the organization of the arbitration, any one of those parties may refer the dispute to the International Court of Justice, by application, in conformity with the Statute of the Court.

2. Each State may at the time of signature, ratification, acceptance or approval of this Convention or accession thereto declare that it does not consider itself bound by paragraph 1. The other States Parties shall not be bound by paragraph 1 with respect to any State Party which has made such a reservation.

3. Any State which has made a reservation in accordance with paragraph 2 may at any time withdraw that reservation by notification to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

(2) The Republic of Singapore declares, in pursuance of Article 24, paragraph 2 of the Convention that it will not be bound by the provisions of Article 24, paragraph 1 of the Convention.

3. ROME STATUTE OF THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT ,ROME , 17 JULY 1998³

Malta, 13 December 2002, 12 December 2003

Declarations:

Article 20, paragraphs 3 (a) and (b)

With regard to article 20 paragraphs 3 (a) and (b) of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court Malta declares that according to its constitution no person who shows that has been tried by any competent court for a criminal offence and either convicted or acquitted shall again be tried for that offence or for any other criminal offence of which he could have been convicted at the trial for that offence save upon the order of a superior court made in the course of appeal or review proceedings relating to the conviction or acquittal; and no person shall be tried for a criminal offence if he shows that he has been pardoned for that offence.

It is presumed that under the general principles of law a trial as described in paragraphs 3 (a) and (b) of Article 20 of the Statute would be considered a nullity and would not be taken into account in the application of the above constitutional role. However the matter has never been the subject of any judgment before the Maltese courts.

The prerogative of mercy will only be exercised in Malta in conformity with its obligations under International law including those arising from the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Article 87, paragraph 2

Malta declares, pursuant to article 87, paragraph 2 of the Statute, that requests for cooperation and any documents supporting the request, must be in English or accompanied, where necessary, by a translation into English.

4. International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, New York, 18 December 1979⁴

³ *Relevant provisions:*

Article 120 - Reservations

No reservations may be made to this Statute.

⁴ *Relevant Provisions:*

Article 2

States Parties condemn discrimination against women in all its forms, agree to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women and, to this end, undertake:

(a) To embody the principle of the equality of men and women in their national constitutions or other appropriate legislation if not yet incorporated therein and to ensure, through law and other appropriate means, the practical realization of this principle;

(b) To adopt appropriate legislative and other measures, including sanctions where appropriate, prohibiting all discrimination against women;

(c) To establish legal protection of the rights of women on an equal basis with men and to ensure through competent national tribunals and other public institutions the effective protection of women against any act of discrimination;

Syrian arab Republic, 7 April 2003, 6 April 2004**Reservations**

... subject to reservations to article 2; article 9, paragraph 2, concerning the grant of a woman's nationality to her children; article 15, paragraph 4, concerning freedom of movement and of residence and domicile; article 16, paragraph 1 (c), (d), (f) and (g), concerning equal rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution with regard to guardianship, the right to choose a family name, maintenance and adoption; article 16, paragraph 2 concerning the legal effect of the betrothal and the marriage of a child, inasmuch as this provision is incompatible with the provisions of

(d) To refrain from engaging in any act or practice of discrimination against women and to ensure that public authorities and institutions shall act in conformity with this obligation;

(e) To take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organization or enterprise;

(f) To take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women;

(g) To repeal all national penal provisions which constitute discrimination against women.

Article 9

2. States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children.

Article 15

4. States Parties shall accord to men and women the same rights with regard to the law relating to the movement of persons and the freedom to choose their residence and domicile.

Article 16

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and in particular shall ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:

(c) The same rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution;

(d) The same rights and responsibilities as parents, irrespective of their marital status, in matters relating to their children; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount;

(f) The same rights and responsibilities with regard to guardianship, wardship, trusteeship and adoption of children, or similar institutions where these concepts exist in national legislation; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount;

(g) The same personal rights as husband and wife, including the right to choose a family name, a profession and an occupation;

2. The betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect, and all necessary action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage and to make the registration of marriages in an official registry compulsory.

Article 24

States Parties undertake to adopt all necessary measures at the national level aimed at achieving the full realization of the rights recognized in the present Convention.

Article 28

1. The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall receive and circulate to all States the text of reservations made by States at the time of ratification or accession.

2. A reservation incompatible with the object and purpose of the present Convention shall not be permitted.

3. Reservations may be withdrawn at any time by notification to this effect addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who shall then inform all States thereof. Such notification shall take effect on the date on which it is received.

Article 29

1. Any dispute between two or more States Parties concerning the interpretation or application of the present Convention which is not settled by negotiation shall, at the request of one of them, be submitted to arbitration. If within six months from the date of the request for arbitration the parties are unable to agree on the organization of the arbitration, any one of those parties may refer the dispute to the International Court of Justice by request in conformity with the Statute of the Court.

the Islamic Shariah; and, article 29, paragraph 1, concerning arbitration between States in the event of a dispute.

The accession of the Syrian Arab Republic to this Convention shall in no way signify recognition of Israel or entail entry into any dealings with Israel in the context of the provisions of the Convention.