



Conscience and Peace Tax International

Internacional de Conciencia e Impuestos para la Paz

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Conscientious Objection to Military Service:

Issues for the Country Report Task Forces

GRENADA

Following the invasion by the USA in October 1983 and the installation of the Blaize administration in December 1984 the “People’s Revolutionary Army” was disbanded, as was the supporting “People’s Militia”, which had allegedly in some cases been responsible for the military training of children as young as eight.¹ Since then Grenada has maintained no military forces; public order is maintained by an 830-strong police force, reporting to the Minister of National Security².

Although the police force does have a limited national defence role, including coastguards and a special unit with paramilitary training³, it is extremely unlikely that the issue of conscientious objection to military service will present itself in Grenada in the near future.

It might however be noted in passing that the absence of its own armed forces does not mean that the island is immune from military recruitment. From 1998, the United Kingdom has increasingly looked to smaller Commonwealth countries, particularly in the Pacific and the Caribbean, to make up recruiting shortfalls, and a substantial minority of its armed forces are now foreign nationals recruited directly from their home countries. In fact, the one member of the UK forces in Iraq to have been awarded the Victoria Cross (the highest British award for bravery), is in fact a Grenadian, Private Johnson Gideon Beharry, but in this individual case the decision to enlist came only after he had been working in the UK.⁴

12th February 2007

¹ Horeman, B. & Stolwijk, M., Refusing to Bear Arms, War Resisters International, London, 1998. (<http://wri-irg.org/co/rtba/grenada.htm>)

² US Department of State Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2005 - Grenada

³ Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, Child Soldiers Global Report 2004, p. 123

⁴ For the official citation published on 15th March, 2005, see

<http://www.operations.mod.uk/telik/ophons05/beharry.htm>. (According to the report in The Times of 18th March 2005 a soldier who had been decorated earlier in the campaign would have qualified for the Victoria Cross had not his actions been in order to save the lives of his comrades who came under fire from two US Air Force aircraft - the Victoria Cross is explicitly reserved for “acts of outstanding courage under enemy fire”.)