



Situation facing present-day conscientious objectors in different countries in Asia

Country	Mandatory military service	Can apply for recognition as a conscientious objector to military service	Challenges for conscientious objectors	References
<u>Eastern Asia</u>				
China	Yes	No	<p>In China, every male who has reached 18 must enlist for active service. Those who do not enlist remain eligible until they are 22. In addition, underaged males can join the army on a voluntary basis. One of the biggest problems is that, even if someone is employed, they have to give priority to the military and the employer has to obey so that the requirements of defence and the armed forces are met. Once they finish their service, or the age for service, people are enlisted as reserves. Those who refuse to be in the army are compelled by the people's government at the grassroots level to fulfil their duty. In wartime, if a reservist refuses, they are sentenced to imprisonment of not more than three years or criminal detention. It is vital that the right to conscientious objection is recognised and legal mechanisms created to guarantee it.</p>	<p>http://www.asianlii.org/cn/legis/cen/laws/mslotpr oc463/ http://www.asianlii.org/cn/legis/cen/laws/iroposw cccttd926/</p>

<p>Japan</p>	<p>Voluntary</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Japan bans war in Article 9 of its Constitution. This means it is illegal to have an army. Despite this, Japan has a small force of volunteers if needed to defend the country. In addition, Japan has an agreement with the US for protection and, in exchange, the US army is able to establish permanent bases on Japanese soil. In Japanese society, most people do not want the process of militarisation and most youth do not want to be part of an army. Nonetheless, some politicians want to change this article and there have been some violations in recent years with Japanese soldiers outside Japan.</p>	<p>https://metropolisjapan.com/culture-japanese-self-defense-forces/</p> <p>https://www.indexmundi.com/japan/military_service_age_and_obligation.html</p> <p>https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2019/01/30/how-will-japan-defend-against-china-if-it-cant-get-its-youth-to-serve/</p> <p>https://www.cfr.org/backgrounders/japan-and-its-military</p>
<p>South Korea</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>South Korea's army is very strict. Every male who turns 18 must do military service, but it can be delayed until the age of 28. There have been many cases of people who have had to sacrifice their careers and studies because of military service.</p> <p>There are a few exemptions, but, in general, these are for those with debilitating diseases or with extraordinary merits. Those without debilitating diseases must still do 4 weeks of basic military training. People with dual citizenship must choose one citizenship by their 18th birthday.</p> <p>Conscientious objection is not allowed and leads to jail-time. In fact, South Korea has imprisoned more conscientious objectors than any other country. They have to do alternative service as janitors, cooks and / or clinic assistants behind prison walls for three years. It is important to note that all of them are enlisted in the reserves.</p>	<p>https://www.90daykorean.com/military-service-in-korea/</p> <p>https://www.mma.go.kr/eng/contents.do?mc=mma0000838</p> <p>https://elaw.klri.re.kr/eng_service/lawView.do?lang=ENG&hseq=25744</p> <p>https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CCPR/Shared%20Documents/KOR/INT_CCPR_ICO_KOR_19189_E.pdf</p> <p>https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/24/world/asia/south-korea-draft-conscientious-objectors.html</p> <p>https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-50943442</p> <p>https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/12/south-korea-alternative-to-military-service-is-new-punishment-for-conscientious-objectors/</p>
<p>North Korea</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>In North Korea, every male has to serve an average of 10 years in the military and women have to do military service too. In addition, boys can enlist voluntarily at the age of 17, usually to demonstrate loyalty to the state. However, the government does not always keep the military adequately supplied. It can therefore be a financial burden for the soldier's family. As a result, youth are looking for alternatives and solutions to military service. They do not</p>	<p>https://www.rfa.org/english/news/korea/conscription-03112021161527.html</p> <p>https://www.cfr.org/backgrounders/north-koreas-military-capabilities</p> <p>https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/31/north-korea-mandatory-military-service-women</p>

			want to serve in the military, but they do not have guarantees as to alternatives. The right to conscientious objection is not recognised. Everybody is a member of the reserves.	https://elaw.klri.re.kr/eng_service/lawView.do?lang=ENG&hseq=25744
Mongolia	Yes	No	In Mongolia, every male has to do military service. Avoiding military service is a cause for imprisonment, as is desertion. There are no exemptions for conscientious objectors, nor alternative service.	https://www.legislationline.org/download/id/4179/file/Mongolia_CC_2002_en.pdf https://www.indexmundi.com/mongolia/military_service_age_and_obligation.html http://factsanddetails.com/central-asia/Mongolia/sub8_2e/entry-4603.html https://www.montsame.mn/en/read/198069
<u>Western Asia</u>				
Iraq	Voluntary	No	Iraq's army is made up of volunteers, but, in the last few years there have been reports that the idea of compulsory military service is being revived. The government's strategy is to call for a "feeling of togetherness" in a divided country. It has been proposed that the period of service would be determined by education. This would be a discriminatory policy. One of the main obstacles facing Iraq's society is the economic crisis. Yet huge financial expenditure would be required if compulsory military service was re-instated. It is crucial that, if the Government achieves its goal, youth are protected with laws that defend their right to refuse to join the military.	https://www.indexmundi.com/iraq/military_service_age_and_obligation.html https://thearabweekly.com/baghdad-considers-compulsory-military-service https://shafaq.com/en/Iraq-News/The-Iraqi-government-responds-to-the-Compulsory-Military-Service-news https://shafaq.com/en/Iraq-News/Iraqi-Parliament-approving-the-compulsory-military-service-law-is-not-possible-at-present
Saudi Arabia	Voluntary	No	In Saudi Arabia both men and women can do military service on a voluntary basis. Saudi Arabia has one of the most well-equipped armies in the world and the best in the Gulf.	https://www.refworld.org/docid/498805d224.htm#:~:text=Conscription%20has%20never%20existed%20in,the%20ranks%20of%20the%20services.&text=Anyone%20seeking%20a%20commission%20by,for%20at%20least%20five%20years. https://www.indexmundi.com/saudi_arabia/military_service_age_and_obligation.htmls

				https://www.arabnews.com/node/1812906/saudi-arabia
Yemen	Voluntary	No	In Yemen joining the army is voluntary but there are a few problems with this. There are several pressures on men to join the army and sometimes they are forced to join. Moreover, Yemen is divided, and the voluntary aspect varies according to the region. For example, in 2020, Yemen's Houthis ordered young men in areas under their control to do compulsory military service. Since 2013 there has been an increase in the number of child soldiers inside the armed forces. In previous years the government has reportedly announced its plan to reinstate compulsory military service. So it is important to create legal mechanisms for young people who do not want to do military service. Cowardice, desertion, or voluntary surrender in the field, currently carries the death penalty.	https://www.refworld.org/docid/54913a7f4.html https://www.justice.gov/eoir/page/file/1213461/download https://irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/country-information/rir/Pages/index.aspx?doc=457612 https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20200506-yemens-houthis-order-compulsory-conscription-of-civilians/ https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CRC-OP-AC/Shared%20Documents/YEM/INT_CRC-OP-AC_NGO_YEM_15824_E.pdf
Syria	Yes	No	In Syria every male has to do military service from the age of 18. Syrians can pay fees from \$7,000 to \$10,000 when they live in another country. Since 2020 Syrians with a medical condition have been able to pay \$3,000 to be exempted. The army recruits in specific areas where the government regime has control. There have been reports of underaged boys doing military service on a "voluntary basis" and without parental consent. Due to the conflict, exemptions are restricted at the moment. As a result, conscription is very arbitrary. As an alternative to military service, youth can join government militias such as National Defence Forces. The main motivation for young people is that they can stay where they live during their service. Conscientious objectors are usually subject to political persecution. They are imprisoned and forced to do military service.	https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/syrian-president-bashar-al-assad-makes-big-change-in-military-service-law-120110900183_1.html#:~:text=Syrian%20males%20have%20to%20serve,two%2Dyear%20mandatory%20military%20service. https://www.refworld.org/docid/5629d2584.html https://easo.europa.eu/country-guidance-syria/22-persons-who-evaded-or-deserted-military-service https://www.justice.gov/eoir/page/file/1309026/download https://coar-global.org/2020/11/24/changes-to-military-service-reflect-damascus-unrealistic-aims-growing-socio-economic-divide/ https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/31043/german-court-dismisses-refugee-claim-by-syrian-draft-evader

<p>Jordan</p>	<p>Voluntary</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Despite the fact that military service in Jordan is voluntary, the Government reintroduced compulsory military service in 2020 as a "temporary solution" to unemployment. Men between 25 and 29 years old have to do military service, but for other ages military service is still on a voluntary basis.</p>	<p>https://thearabweekly.com/reintroduced-compulsory-service-jordan-sparks-debate#:~:text=Those%20carrying%20out%20heir%20compulsory,wil%20draft%2015%2C000%20next%20year.</p> <p>https://www.arabnews.com/node/1732116/middle-east</p> <p>https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2020/09/jordan-military-service-unemployment-coronavirus-tourism.html</p> <p>https://www.indexmundi.com/jordan/military_service_age_and_obligation.</p> <p>https://www.timesofisrael.com/amid-rising-unemployment-jordan-reinstates-national-military-service/html</p> <p>https://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/national-military-service-targets-men-aged-between-25-and-29</p> <p>https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/8000/pol310012014en.pdf</p>
<p>United Arab Emirates</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The United Arab Emirates' army is able to contract foreign soldiers, as most of its population do not want to do military service. However, in 2015 compulsory military service was introduced. Then in 2018 it was extended. People with a high school diploma had to serve 16 months while those who do not have a diploma had to serve two years. The government reintroduced conscription to "create a shared Emirati identity" and because "Emirati men were becoming lazy and soft".</p>	<p>https://carnegie-mec.org/2020/02/05/foreign-contract-soldiers-in-gulf-pub-80979</p> <p>https://www.reuters.com/article/us-emirates-military-idUSKBN1JY093</p> <p>https://www.csis.org/analysis/citizens-training-conscription-and-nation-building-united-arab-emirates</p> <p>https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2014/6/8/uae-introduces-compulsory-military-service</p>
<p>Israel</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Israel's army recruits men and women who have reached 18 years of age. There is a big problem in this country with regard to refusing to do military service. First of all, those</p>	<p>https://www.loc.gov/law/help/military-draft/israel.php#_ftnref1</p>

			<p>who avoid the draft can be convicted to two-to-five years imprisonment. Conscientious objectors are usually imprisoned for a few weeks, then released and imprisoned again for another few weeks, especially those against the occupation of Palestine. Despite this, it has been reported that a lower number of soldiers have been recruited because of lack of interest from youth and the exemptions for the Ultra-orthodox and Arab Israelis. As a result the State was forced to state that according to the current threat level faced, a large investment in the army was not justifiable. So, the military's goal in recent years has been to optimise and build an effective army of a few soldiers, focused on rocket defence systems and cyber capabilities.</p>	<p>https://www.ipost.com/opinion/the-myth-of-compulsory-military-service-in-israel-569779</p> <p>https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-cuts-mandatory-military-service-for-men-to-2-5-years/</p> <p>https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/israel-defense-service-law-1986</p> <p>https://www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-conscientious-objector-released-from-military-prison/</p>
Lebanon	Voluntary	No	<p>In Lebanon mandatory military service ended in 2007. However, in 2020 there were news reports that the Lebanese Defence Ministry and military command were looking for ways to reintroduce mandatory military service. They want to include "social services, administrative jobs, education, afforestation and other non-military activities". However, one of the main reasons for abolishing compulsory military service was to reduce "Treasury expenditure". The question is how is the Government going to supply an army given the economic crisis. Conscientious objection needs to be recognised.</p>	<p>https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2007/2/12/lebanon-scraps-military-service</p> <p>https://www.the961.com/lebanon-restore-mandatory-military-service/#:~:text=Before%20the%20period%20was%20adjusted,completely%20abolished%20two%20years%20later.</p> <p>https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/conditions-volunteering</p>
Oman	Voluntary	No	<p>Participation in Oman's army is voluntary. There is currently no recognition of conscientious objection. The UK has 91 troops 'on loan' to Oman's army, which is the highest number 'on loan' to any of the UK's allies around the world.</p>	<p>https://www.indexmundi.com/oman/military_service_age_and_obligation.html</p> <p>https://canvascluboman.com/oman-military/</p> <p>https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-07-20-revealed-how-the-british-military-supplies-mercenary-forces-to-a-gulf-dictatorship/</p>
State of Palestine	No	No	<p>There is no official army in Palestine, but they have security forces and many civic armed groups. The security forces are unstable as there are not many resources to strengthen them, especially in recent years when the US started cutting aid. Israel's army usually targets Palestinian efforts to build</p>	<p>https://ecfr.eu/special/mapping_palestinian_politics/introduction_security_forces/</p> <p>https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/evolution-palestinian-authority-security-forces</p>

			an army. Palestine's government has been unstable in recent years and this has caused a lot of uncertainty in the building of an official army.	
Kuwait	Yes	No	Kuwait's army has foreign contract soldiers in its ranks. In 2017 conscription was reintroduced for males aged 18 to 45 years old (it had been suspended since 2001). Citizens who avoid conscription face imprisonment for two years. There is no law regarding conscientious objection. They are in the process of building reserve forces.	https://carnegie-mec.org/2020/02/05/foreign-contract-soldiers-in-gulf-pub-80979 https://gulfbusiness.com/kuwait-reintroduces-compulsory-military-service-citizens/ https://gulfnews.com/world/gulf/kuwait/covid-19-882000-people-get-vaccine-in-kuwait-1.78587417 https://en.connection-ev.org/article:kuwait-compulsory-military-service-reintroduced
Qatar	Yes	No	The army in Qatar also has foreign contract soldiers. No employee is permitted to resume or continue their work until they have submitted an authorised letter from the relevant military authority. Since 2015 there has been mandatory military service for men aged between 18 and 35. Citizens who fail to join the military are fined and jailed.	https://carnegie-mec.org/2020/02/05/foreign-contract-soldiers-in-gulf-pub-80979 https://www.qatar-tribune.com/news-details/id/119481 https://www.defenceturkey.com/en/content/the-state-of-qatar-and-qatar-armed-forces-3908 https://www.qatarliving.com/forum/news/posts/qatars-mandatory-military-service-programme-begins-next-week https://www.indexmundi.com/qatar/military_service_age_and_obligation.html https://www.dohanews.co/qatars-national-service-program-puts-new-emphasis-on-military-training/
Bahrain	Voluntary	No	In Bahrain citizens can volunteer for military service between the ages of 18 and 55.	https://www.bna.bh/en/BDFopensregistrationforcivilianstovolunteerinreserveforce.aspx?cms=q8FmFJgiscL2fwIzON1%2BDmhXNaKCVhJLUJd dMOAsK8U%3D https://www.indexmundi.com/bahrain/military_service_age_and_obligation.html

Central Asia

Uzbekistan	Yes	No	<p>In Uzbekistan military service is mandatory and is for one year. However, people can pay to serve a shorter service of one month. They remain in the reserves until they are 27. Those who have served in the armed forces have privileges relating to accessing jobs and educational institutions. And they are discharged from the reserves. In Uzbekistan's recruitment law there are some mentions of conscientious objection, but it is not officially recognised. When people are able to access alternative service, it is because of their religious motivation for conscientious objection. The military makes the decisions about alternative service.</p>	<p>https://www.indexmundi.com/uzbekistan/military_service_age_and_obligation.html</p> <p>https://www.uzdaily.uz/en/post/63605</p> <p>https://kun.uz/en/news/2020/02/27/uzbekistan-launches-conscription-for-military-service</p> <p>https://cis-legislation.com/document.fwx?rgn=3593</p> <p>https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CCPR/Shared%20Documents/UZB/INT_CCPR_CSS_UZB_41381_E.pdf</p>
Kazakhstan	Yes	No	<p>All men aged 18 in Kazakhstan have to do military service. However, people can do it under contract if they fulfil some specific requirements, established in the conscription law. There have been reports of the Government using military service as a punishment for activists. Conscientious objection is not legally recognised and there is no alternative service. Since the 1990s, there have been many reports of young people who have been imprisoned for at least a year because they have refused to do military service. The group most affected have been the Jehovah's Witnesses.</p>	<p>https://egov.kz/cms/en/articles/military_service/voinskaya_ob</p> <p>https://egov.kz/cms/en/articles/military_service/sluzhba_po_kontract</p> <p>https://www.indexmundi.com/kazakhstan/military_service_age_and_obligation.html</p> <p>https://eurasianet.org/kazakhstan-sends-activists-to-perform-military-service</p> <p>https://www.rferl.org/a/kazakh-activists-say-they-re-being-conscripted-as-punishment-for-political-activities/29949782.html</p> <p>https://www.refworld.org/docid/59c4f0ba4.html</p>
Tajikistan	Yes	No	<p>In Tajikistan, military service is mandatory. However, since 2021 young men have been able to avoid military service by paying a fee to the government, therefore only having to serve for one month. In general, exemptions are exclusively for people with physical or cognitive disabilities. Many people have decided to leave the country for up to 10 years to avoid military service. According to media reports, the army tries to recruit people by forcing them into vehicles, even people already exempted like a 62-year-old man.</p>	<p>https://eurasianet.org/tajikistan-military-service-exemption-tax-comes-into-effect#:~:text=In%20Tajikistan%2C%20military%20service%20is,bribes%20or%20through%20connections%2C%20however.</p> <p>https://www.rferl.org/a/tajikistan-cut-military-service-six-months/30422877.html</p>

			<p>There is military ID for those who successfully do their military service. This allows men to obtain employment with the government. As an indicator of how rigorous Tajikistan's army is, there is a report saying that the Lakhsh District authorities were reportedly so furious with a village that failed to send recruits that they ordered their electricity to be cut off for 10 days. Conscientious objection is not recognised in Tajikistan and there is no alternative service. However, the government has said that they are preparing laws on alternative service. Conscientious objectors are usually imprisoned, sent to labour camps, and in some cases tortured by the military in order to make them serve in the military.</p>	<p>https://cabar.asia/en/tajikistan-military-identity-card-for-a-price</p> <p>https://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-news-from-elsewhere-46315835</p> <p>https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2533</p> <p>https://www.ecoi.net/en/document/2027901.html</p>
Kyrgyzstan	Yes	Yes	<p>In Kyrgyzstan military service is mandatory. People who are exempted from military service still have to do alternative service. Alternative service is twice as long as military service. Conscientious objection is allowed but only for people registered in official religious groups that reject military service. Individuals have to pay a fee in order to avoid conscription and see their right guaranteed. However, there are substantial violations of freedom of religion or belief.</p>	<p>https://www.refworld.org/docid/55ee969ac.html</p> <p>https://www.auca.kg/en/military_service/</p> <p>https://www.wri-irg.org/sites/default/files/public_files/Kyrgyzstan%20-%20IFOR-CPTI%20UPR%20Submission%20-%20Kyrgyzstan%20-%20Jan-Feb%202015.pdf</p> <p>https://www.justice.gov/eoir/page/file/963501/download</p>
Turmekistan	Yes	No	<p>In Turmekistan military service is mandatory for young people aged 18. Avoiding military service is a crime punishable by two years' imprisonment. Conscientious objectors can be criminally charged and imprisoned for refusing to do military service. There is no alternative service. In general, people who refuse to do military service end up imprisoned and are likely to suffer physical abuse.</p>	<p>https://www.loc.gov/law/foreign-news/article/turkmenistan-pardoning-of-conscientious-objectors-and-military-service-law-amendments/#:~:text=At%20present%20military%20service%20in,the%20Law%20of%20Turkmenistan%20No.&text=The%20Law%20obligates%20each%20male,have%20justifiable%20reasons%20for%20exemptions.</p> <p>https://www.iirf.eu/news/other-news/two-years-in-prison-for-two-jehovahs-witnesses-objecting-to-military-service/</p>

				https://www.rferl.org/a/jehovah-s-witness-jailed-in-turkmenistan-for-conscientious-objection-to-military-service/30827496.html https://www.refworld.org/docid/5acf56ae4.html https://eurasianet.org/turkmenistan-youre-in-the-army-now
<u>Southern Asia</u>				
India	Voluntary	No	In India the constitution does not refer to compulsory military service as, in a democracy, anything compulsory is seen as being against the democratic values of freedom to choose. However, since 2018 there have been debates about bringing in compulsory military service. India's army is small and military service is seen as necessary to "install discipline and a high sense of patriotic fervour in our youth". Another justification is that it can reduce unemployment.	http://www.businessworld.in/article/Idea-Of-Compulsory-Military-Service-For-Our-Youth/27-01-2021-370432/ https://youthincmag.com/will-india-make-military-service-compulsory-for-the-youth
Pakistan	Voluntary	No	In Pakistan people can do military service once they reach 16. However, they cannot be deployed for combat until they are 18. There have been reports of increasing participation of the military in civilian institutions.	https://www.indexmundi.com/pakistan/military_service_age_and_obligation.html https://www.dw.com/en/pakistan-why-is-the-military-taking-over-civilian-posts/a-56473442
Bangladesh	Voluntary	No	The army in Bangladesh can recruit young people once they are 17. Young people require 10th grade education to do military service. In recent years there have been plans to expand military activities at home and abroad. Defence spending has risen by more than 123%. The Bangladeshi government has started to use their armed forces in infrastructure projects.	https://www.indexmundi.com/bangladesh/military_service_age_and_obligation.html https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2021/04/21/the-bangladesh-armys-increasing-role-in-civilian-affairs/ http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/act-248.html
Iran	Yes	No	In Iran military service is mandatory for people aged 18 to 49. People can join the army once they are aged 15 on a voluntary basis. In one form of exemption, people can 'buy out' of military service. However, people have to meet certain requirements and have to be able to afford it. Well-	https://www.justice.gov/eoir/page/file/1274581/download#:~:text=1%20Military%20service%2C%20where%20active,conscientious%20objection%20is%20not%20recognised.

			<p>educated conscripts may do non-military activities. However, there is no alternative service and conscientious objection is not recognised. People who avoid military service face imprisonment. There have been reports of members of the community coming together to abolish compulsory military service. They believe that young people can do more for society if they are not conscripted.</p>	<p>https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/more-than-50000-in-iran-demand-end-to-military-conscription-663844</p> <p>https://en.radiofarda.com/a/iran-armed-forces-suspend-conscription-of-soldiers-due-to-coronavirus/30464054.html</p> <p>https://www.latimes.com/world/middleeast/la-fg-iran-military-20170928-story.html</p> <p>https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/iran/conscription.htm</p>
Afghanistan	Voluntary	No	<p>Military service is voluntary in Afghanistan. However, the implementation of mandatory military service is being explored again.</p>	<p>https://www.cna.org/CNA_files/PDF/D0024840.A2.pdf</p>
Nepal	Voluntary	No	<p>Nepal's army is active in several countries, especially in UN Peacekeeping Operations. One of their main roles is the provision of emergency assistance.</p>	<p>https://military-medicine.com/almanac/91-nepal-federal-democratic-republic-of.html</p> <p>https://www.lawcommission.gov.np/en/archives/category/documents/prevailing-law/statutes-acts/army-act-2063-2006</p>
Sri Lanka	Voluntary	No	<p>In Sri Lanka, despite the fact that the minimum age for joining the army is 18 years old, on some occasions it is open to people aged 16.</p>	<p>http://www.defence.lk/Publication/army_act</p> <p>https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/eoir/legacy/2014/03/06/LKA102566.E.pdf</p>
Bhutan	Voluntary	No	<p>In Bhutan military service is voluntary once people are 18 years old. There is also compulsory militia training for males aged 20-25.</p>	<p>https://www.indexmundi.com/bhutan/military_service_age_and_obligation.html</p> <p>https://theodora.com/wfbccurrent/bhutan/bhutan_military.html</p> <p>https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/bhutan/</p>
Maldives	Voluntary	No	<p>In the Maldives military service is voluntary for people aged 18. However, 10th grade education is required to join. The Maldives has a small army and is trying to increase the number of recruits.</p>	<p>https://www.indexmundi.com/maldives/military_service_age_and_obligation.html</p>

				https://www.armytimes.com/news/your-army/2021/04/02/army-advisers-make-first-mission-to-the-maldives-a-strategic-area-of-the-indian-ocean/
<u>South-Eastern Asia</u>				
Indonesia	Voluntary	No	On some occasions the army in Indonesia is authorised to carry out selective conscription. The government is also trying to recruit young people to the reserves. These recruits will only join the army if needed.	https://www.indexmundi.com/indonesia/military_service https://jakartaglobe.id/news/indonesian-military-to-recruit-25000-young-people-for-reserve-force/_age_and_obligation.html https://jakartaglobe.id/news/indonesian-military-to-recruit-25000-young-people-for-reserve-force/
Philippines	Voluntary	No	Despite the fact that military service is voluntary in the Philippines, people must register and do military training. As a result, they are registered in the reserves. The Philippine's Defence Act is old (1935), so many social sectors are arguing that it is necessary to update the law and adapt it to the current context of the country.	https://www.indexmundi.com/philippines/military_service_age_and_oblig https://lawphil.net/statutes/comacts/ca_1_1935 https://thediplomat.com/2020/09/why-the-philippines-needs-to-revise-its-national-defense-act/ht https://pcw.gov.ph/republic-act-7077-citizen-armed-forces-or-armed-forces-of-the-philippines-reservist-act/mlation.html
Vietnam	Yes	No	In Vietnam young males have to do military service once they are 18. People who avoid military service calls receive fines. They can also face criminal charges. Conscientious objection is not recognised in Vietnam. Many families try to pay bribes in order to get their children out of military service.	https://www.indexmundi.com/vietnam/military_service_age_and_obligation.html https://e.vnexpress.net/news/news/2-vietnamese-men-face-criminal-charges-for-dodging-military-service-twice-3541643.html https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/field/military-service-age-and-obligation/

<p>Thailand</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>In Thailand men aged 21 have to do military service. If they do not volunteer they have to participate in a draft lottery. Most of the recruits came from poor and low-income families, while those from wealthy and middle-class families can legally avoid conscription by undergoing training as "territorial defence students" in high school. Nonetheless, many young men see the military as a way out, as in the military they receive a monthly wage. Last year the opposition party tried to lobby for military service to be changed from mandatory to voluntary. However, the government was totally against this and they declared that they opposed abolishing conscription. Despite the fact that conscientious objection is not recognised, there are some cases of conscientious objectors. Conscientious objection is under consideration. There is a necessity to change the military law. It is important to include conscientious objection in these discussions and the possibility of alternative service.</p>	<p>https://www.thaipbsworld.com/prayut-shoots-down-bid-to-scrap-military-draft/#:~:text=Every%20Thai%20man%20from%20the,income%20families%20in%20rural%20areas.</p> <p>https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/4/23/red-or-black-experiencing-thailands-military-draft</p> <p>https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/1928952/conscription-delayed-until-august</p> <p>https://adambemma.ca/2019/07/06/the-conscientious-objectors-of-thailand/</p> <p>https://adambemma.ca/2019/07/06/the-conscientious-objectors-of-thailand/</p>
<p>Myanmar</p>	<p>Voluntary</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>In Myanmar both men and women can do military service. In 2010 a law reintroduced conscription but it has not entered into force. Myanmar has been called 'a modern state which was born as a military occupation'. The influence of the military in political scenarios is huge and they possess a lot of power. Historically there have been many protests where several people have died because of the military.</p>	<p>https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2021/2/2/an-alysis-why-is-myanmar-military-so-powerful</p> <p>https://www.indexmundi.com/burma/military_service_age_and_obligation.html</p>
<p>Malaysia</p>	<p>Voluntary</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>There is no conscription in Malaysia, but males can do military service once they are 17 (with parental consent). Women can do military service but only in non-combat roles.</p>	<p>http://factsanddetails.com/southeast-asia/Malaysia/sub5_4d/entry-3679.html</p>
<p>Cambodia</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Although according to the law military service is mandatory, Cambodia's army mainly consists of volunteers. Reports say that people do not have to do their 18 months' military service.</p>	<p>https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/93508/109344/F811412622/KHM93508%20Eng.pdf</p> <p>https://www.indexmundi.com/cambodia/military_service_age_and_obligation.html</p>

				https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/cambodia/#military-and-security
Laos	Yes	No	In Laos people must be 18 in order to be conscripted or to do military service as a volunteer.	https://www.indexmundi.com/laos/military_service_age_and_obligation.html
Singapore	Yes	No	In Singapore people aged 18 have to do military service. Those aged 16 can do military service as a volunteer with parental consent. People are in the reserves until their 40th birthday. Singapore does not recognise conscientious objection. Those who avoid their duty are imprisoned.	https://www.mfa.gov.sg/Overseas-Mission/Chennai/Consular-Services/National-Service-Obligation https://www.indexmundi.com/singapore/military_service_age_and_obligation.html https://www.theonlinecitizen.com/2018/11/03/conscientious-objection-now-considered-among-justifiable-grounds-for-military-enlistment-exemption-under-landmark-south-korean-court-ruling/
East Timor	Voluntary	No	In East Timor every male aged 18 has to register on the army database and attend a recruitment day.	http://mj.gov.tl/jornal/lawsTL/RDTL-Law/RDTL-Laws/Law%203-2007.pdf https://www.indexmundi.com/timor-leste/military_service_age_and_obligation.html https://theodora.com/wfbcurrent/timorleste/timorleste_military.html
Brunei	Voluntary	No	In Brunei people can do military service once they are 17.	https://www.indexmundi.com/brunei/military_service_age_and_obligation.html http://www.agc.gov.bn/AGC%20Images/LAWS/ACT_PDF/Cap149%20complete.pdf

Note

The information in this table relates to official armies in nation states.

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