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EASO publishes a Country of Origin Information (COI) report on national service and illegal exit in Eritrea.



Today, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) published a Country of Origin Information (COI) Report entitled 'Eritrea – National service and illegal exit'. The report is an update of the 2015 EASO COI Report Eritrea Country Focus ([1])It provides an overview on aspects related to national service and illegal exit in Eritrea relevant to international protection status determination of Eritrean applicants. In the first ten months of 2016, Eritrea ranked 7th in the top countries of origin in EU+ countries ([2]) with a total of 31 416 applicants.

The EASO COI report at hand updates and further expands the sections of the 2015 EASO COI Report *Eritrea Country Focus* that related to national service and illegal exit. It is therefore not to be considered as a general overview of the human rights situation in Eritrea, nor as a comprehensive presentation of national service in Eritrea. The main aim of the report is to present the latest findings on the aforementioned topics based on a variety of sources. As the availability of reliable and up to date information on Eritrea is known to be problematic, information from the various categories of sources from within and outside Eritrea (Eritrean government, international observers, reports by third parties) is set out in separate sub-chapters in relation to each topic, in order to ensure full transparency.

Draft evasion, desertion and illegal exit represent major asylum motives for Eritrean applicants for international protection. The report provides a description of the legal context and practices of national service (covering both the military and civilian branch), including the treatment by the Eritrean authorities of draft evaders and deserters. The report also looks into the legal position and treatment in practice of Eritreans who return to their country after having left it illegally, without an exit visa. New information is available regarding the duration of compulsory service and the salary paid while performing national service. In recent years, the Eritrean government has announced comprehensive reforms in these two areas and some changes can be noted, as presented in the last chapter of the report.

As regards the information in those chapters of the 2015 *Eritrea Country Focus* not updated in the current report, no new information is available indicating changes in the situation described in these chapters. The 2015 information on those chapters therefore remains valid.

The EASO COI report was drafted by the COI unit of the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration (SEM). The report was written in accordance with the EASO COI Report Methodology and presents information until 10 August 2016, stemming from publicly available sources and interviews conducted with experts. The report was reviewed by peers from EU Member States.

Any further information may be obtained from the European Asylum Support Office by contacting Mr Jean-Pierre Schembri on the following e-mail address: jean-pierre.schembri@easo.europa.eu

Download Report [EN]

[1] **EASO, *Eritrea Country Focus,* May 2015 (https://coi.easo.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/EASO-Eritrea-CountryFocus_EN_May2015.pdf).**
[2] **EU Member States plus Norway and Switzerland**

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