



Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Committee on the Rights of the Child

Report submitted by Panama under article 8 (1) of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, due in 2007

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I. General measures of implementation

(a) Report preparation process

1. The present document contains the initial report that the Republic of Panama is required to submit to the Committee on the Rights of the Child under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, regarding the measures adopted by the State to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Optional Protocol.

2. The report drafting process was overseen by the national standing committee on the implementation of and follow-up to the human rights commitments made by Panama at the national and international levels,¹ whose functions include coordinating the preparation of the reports that the State is required to submit to the United Nations human rights treaty bodies.

3. In order to gather information on the progress made in effectively implementing the Optional Protocol in Panama and the obstacles encountered in that regard, consultations were held with the institutions involved in its implementation. Once the information had been collected, the national standing committee held a meeting to approve the report; its members participated in the meeting by making the necessary contributions and some members of civil society were also present.

4. This report was drafted with due regard for the revised guidelines regarding initial reports to be submitted by States parties under article 8 (1) of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (CRC/C/OPAC/2), which were adopted in September 2007.

(b) Background

5. In 1990, following the events that occurred during the invasion of Panama on 20 December 1989, the period of military rule that had lasted since 1964 came to an end.

6. Consequently, as of 1990, the armed forces were abolished throughout national territory and the public security forces were reorganized under Cabinet Decree No. 38 of 1990.

7. In the years that followed, the regulatory and organizational framework governing the security services under this new system was developed and progress was made in harmonizing local legislation with the State's obligations under international legal instruments in the fields of international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

8. In 2000, Panama ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, through Act No. 47 of 2000.

9. At the time of writing, Panama is not in a state of war, hostilities or internal conflict.

10. The present report describes the country's progress in implementing the Optional Protocol and other related legal instruments.

(c) Legal status of the Optional Protocol in national legislation

11. The Constitution of Panama establishes that the State must abide by the rules of international law (art. 4). International instruments are incorporated into domestic legislation through the adoption of a law approving their ratification (art. 159 (3)).

¹ Executive Decree No. 7 of 17 January 2012 establishing the national standing committee on the implementation of and follow-up to the human rights commitments made by Panama at the national and international levels (Official Gazette No. 26953-A).

12. The Constitution also states that the rights and guarantees recognized therein should be regarded as minimum standards that do not exclude other rights and guarantees relating to the fundamental rights and dignity of nationals and foreigners (art. 17) (see annex 1).

13. The Optional Protocol, which was ratified in accordance with Act No. 47 of 13 December 2000 and which consolidates and extends the rights already recognized in the Constitution, can therefore be applied by the courts when they hand down rulings.

14. In this regard, in the introductory argument of its ruling of 21 August 2008, the Supreme Court, for the first time, opened the way for the universalization of *amparo* to include rights recognized in international human rights instruments, pursuant to article 17 (2) of the Constitution (see annex 2).

(d) Declarations

15. In accordance with article 3 (2) of the Optional Protocol, Panama submitted the following declaration in 2001:

The Republic of Panama, in ratifying the Protocol, declares that it has no armed forces. The Republic of Panama has a civilian security force consisting of the National Police, the National Air Service, the National Maritime Service and the Institutional Protection Service. Their legal charters define the requirements for recruitment of personnel by such institutions and stipulate that recruits must have reached the age of majority, i.e. 18 years.

16. This declaration can be found in annex 3.

(e) Reservations

17. Panama did not enter any reservations to the Optional Protocol at the time of ratification.

(f) Minimum age for voluntary recruitment into the national armed forces

18. The minimum age for voluntary recruitment into the security forces is 18 years old, in accordance with the legislation regulating each of the security services, as detailed below.

Organic Act No. 18 of 3 June 1997 on the National Police

Article 52. Recruitment is subject to the following common requirements:

1. The person must hold Panamanian nationality.
2. The person must have reached the age of majority.
3. The person must be mentally and physically able to perform the functions corresponding to the level at which he or she is admitted, and must not be older than the maximum age established by the relevant regulations.
4. The person must not have been convicted of an intentional offence or an offence against the Government.
5. The person must hold a certificate of primary education.
6. The person must meet any other requirements established by the implementing regulations of this Act.

Organic Act No. 93 of 9 November 2013 on the National Aero-naval Service

Article 25. Recruitment is subject to the following common requirements:

1. The person must be Panamanian.
2. The person must have reached the age of majority.

3. The person must hold a certificate of upper secondary education.
4. The person must not have been convicted of an intentional offence or an offence against the Government.
5. The person must be mentally and physically able to perform the functions corresponding to the level at which he or she is entering, and must not be older than the maximum age established by the regulations.
6. The person must meet any other requirements established by the implementing regulations of this Act.

Decree-Law No. 8 of 2008, establishing the National Border Service

Article 27. Recruitment into the National Border Service is subject to the following common requirements:

1. The person must be Panamanian.
2. The person must have reached the age of majority.
3. The person must be mentally and physically able to perform the functions corresponding to the post for which he or she is recruited, and must not be older than the maximum age established by the regulations.
4. The person must hold a certificate of general basic education.
5. The person must not have been convicted of an intentional offence or an offence against the Government.
6. The person must meet any other requirements established by the implementing regulations of this Decree-Law.

Decree-Law No. 3 of 22 February 2008, establishing the National Migration Service and regulating migration-related careers

Article 100. Public servants shall be appointed to migration-related posts through selection procedures that take into account the following aspects: ability, professional competence, merit, public morals, equality of opportunity, and mental and physical condition. All these aspects shall be assessed using valid, suitable and relevant instruments of measurement, as established in advance by the implementing regulations of the present Decree-Law.

(g) Government departments and entities responsible for the implementation of the Optional Protocol

19. The Constitution establishes that Panama should have no armed forces. In order to preserve public order, protect the life, honour and property of those under State jurisdiction and prevent the commission of offences, the law should provide for the necessary police services, with separate commands and grade structures. The President of the Republic is the head of all police services, which are subordinate to the civil power and must obey orders issued by the national, provincial or municipal authorities (Constitution, art. 310).
20. Given the scope of the Optional Protocol, the government bodies responsible for its implementation include the Ministry of Public Security, which oversees the various State security services; the Ministry of Social Development, which is the lead agency for policies relating to children and adolescents; the National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and Family, which is the specialized autonomous body responsible for coordinating the implementation of such policies; and the National Office of Refugee Affairs, which is responsible for handling applications for refugee status and providing assistance to refugees.
21. The Public Prosecution Service and the judiciary are also involved, as the bodies responsible for the prosecution of offences and the administration of justice, respectively.
22. Further information on the role of each of these entities is given below.

23. The Ministry of Public Security is responsible for setting national security policy and for planning, coordinating, monitoring and supporting the efforts of the security and intelligence services that are under its authority.

24. Its functions include preserving and defending national sovereignty, maintaining security, peace and public order in Panama and protecting the life, honour and property of Panamanians and the foreign nationals that are under its jurisdiction (articles 1 and 2 of Act No. 15 of 2010, establishing the Ministry of Public Security).

25. Public security is currently ensured by the following entities: the National Police (Act No. 18 of 1997); the National Border Service (Decree-Law No. 8 of 2008); the National Aero-naval Service (Act No. 93 of 2013); and the National Migration Service (Decree-Law No. 3 of 2008).

26. Information on the organization of the public security sector in Panama can be found in annex 4.

27. As the lead agency for policies relating to children and adolescents, the Ministry of Social Development is responsible for establishing general guidelines to ensure that issues concerning children and adolescents are taken into account in the various social policies promoted by the State, in collaboration with the National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and Family.

28. The National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and Family is the entity tasked with coordinating the implementation of policies relating to children and adolescents. In that capacity, it works together with other entities to ensure the application of an approach focusing on protection and recovery and provides protection and recovery services to vulnerable children and adolescents.

29. The National Office of Refugee Affairs deals with applications for refugee status, which may be submitted by any person who has a well-founded fear of persecution, and decides on the admissibility of each application.

30. In cases involving unaccompanied children or adolescents applying for refugee status, the Office considers the child or adolescent to be an individual applicant. If the child or adolescent is accompanied by his or her parents or a relative and the child is the victim, the Office considers the child or adolescent to be the main applicant and his or her relatives to be dependants.

31. A comprehensive approach is taken to the provision of assistance, in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and a streamlined procedure is in place to ensure that applicants receive the necessary documents as quickly as possible.

Investigation and prosecution of offences

32. Under the Constitution, the Public Prosecution Service is responsible for initiating criminal proceedings; its functions include the investigation and prosecution of offences that constitute a violation of the Optional Protocol (Constitution, art. 220 (4)).

33. The judiciary is one of the three branches of government and is responsible for administering justice in an independent, prompt and reliable manner, enforcing the Constitution and the laws of the Republic, protecting civil liberties and guarantees, ensuring peaceful coexistence and defending the fundamental values of democracy (Constitution, arts. 198–215).

(h) Dissemination and training

34. Each entity is responsible for promoting the dissemination of the Optional Protocol and providing training for the professionals who are involved in its implementation, such as judicial personnel, health professionals, social workers and law enforcement officers.

35. In collaboration with the Ombudsman's Office, the Ministry of Public Security provides training in international humanitarian law through the Dr. Indalecio Rodríguez Sánchez Human Rights Academy, in order to give police units a better understanding of

their responsibilities with regard to the use of force and respect for human rights and international humanitarian law, including the need to prevent the involvement of children and adolescents in internal armed conflict.

36. Academic programmes for trainee police officers, such as technical degrees in public security and in criminal investigation and security, are aligned with international humanitarian law and the principle of respect for constitutional guarantees. In addition, those who study for a bachelor's degree in police administration attend seminars on humanitarian law and the protection of persons in the event of armed conflict, and international protection of asylum seekers, refugees and persons facing extradition, which cover aspects of international humanitarian law.

37. The National Aero-naval Service and the National Border Service have established in their internal regulations that new recruits must complete a module on human rights and international humanitarian law as part of their training for a diploma in aero-naval public security.

38. The curricula of the bachelor's degrees in international relations and in law and political science at the University of Panama now include classes on international humanitarian law and international humanitarian protection, respectively.

39. As regards continuing education on the protection of migrants, a course for migration inspectors, which covers the principles of humanitarian law, was introduced in 2013 in order to build the capacities of National Migration Service personnel in that area.

40. Although the Government has made progress with respect to the teaching of international humanitarian law, it recognizes that it needs to step up its efforts to incorporate the Optional Protocol into its training programmes and to ensure the dissemination of that instrument.

41. Information on relevant training courses can be found in annex 5.

(i) Data

42. The Ministry of Public Security is responsible for collecting data on persons recruited into the security forces.

(j) Voluntary recruitment into the national armed forces

43. There are no minors in the national armed forces because the minimum age for voluntary recruitment into those forces is 18 years.

(k) Number of children recruited or used in hostilities by armed groups

44. Within the meaning of the Optional Protocol, there is no record of children having been recruited by armed groups or used in hostilities in Panama.

(l) Number of children charged

45. To date, there is no record of children having been charged for war crimes committed while recruited or used in hostilities.

(m) Number of child victims of prohibited practices among refugee and asylum-seeking children

46. Before 2014, no records were kept on asylum-seeking children and adolescents because they were treated as the children of asylum seekers by the National Office of Refugee Affairs of the Ministry of the Interior. Since 2015, the National Office of Refugee Affairs has been registering people individually, taking into account their age.

47. Applications from children and adolescents are dealt with promptly so that they can be duly registered and supplied with identity papers. Children and adolescents are referred to the National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and Family for psychosocial assistance.

48. Disaggregated data on asylum-seeking children and adolescents for 2015, 2016 and up to August 2017 can be found in annex 6.

49. Since 2017, the asylum application evaluation form has included a section that allows the authorities to record whether child or adolescent applicants were victims of recruitment in their country of origin (see annex 7).

(n) Role of the Ombudsman's Office

50. As the country's independent national human rights institution, the Ombudsman's Office is responsible for ensuring the protection of the fundamental rights and guarantees that are recognized in the Constitution and in international human rights conventions (Constitution, art. 129, and Act No. 7 of 5 February 1997, establishing the Ombudsman's Office).

51. Its functions include investigating acts and omissions on the part of authorities and public officials that entail violations of the rights enshrined in the international treaties to which Panama is a party, and designing and adopting policies to promote and raise awareness of human rights.²

52. This entity handles individual complaints regarding acts or omissions on the part of public officials that violate the rights protected by the Optional Protocol; the rights of children and adolescents are promoted by a dedicated child and adolescent unit, which also provides guidance and addresses suspected violations of those rights on its own initiative.

(o) Progress and remaining gaps

Progress

53. One of the main advances was the amendment of the Criminal Code, in 2007, to criminalize any act that violates the rules of international humanitarian law or the protection of persons and property under that law; offences of that kind are defined in section XV of the Criminal Code, on crimes against humanity.

54. The forced recruitment or enlistment of persons under 18 years old has been criminalized. Acts related to the offences of enforced disappearance, torture, trafficking in persons and forced labour have also been criminalized.

55. Article 88 of the Criminal Code sets out common aggravating circumstances, which include the following, mentioned in paragraph 12:

56. "12. Using a minor or a person with disabilities in order to commit the act".

57. The use of the emblems of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is regulated.

58. A legal framework has been established to regulate the possession, carrying, import, export, marketing, storage, brokering, transport and trafficking of arms, ammunition and related materials; the carrying (transport) of firearms is prohibited for persons under 21 years old and possession is prohibited for persons under 18 years old.

59. Another advance has been the inclusion of international humanitarian law in training programmes for the security forces and in bachelor's degree courses.

60. In view of the need to increase support for migrant children and adolescents in the areas near the border between Panama and Colombia, a study on the situation in Darién, entitled "*De la niñez y la adolescencia migrante y con necesidad de protección*

² Official Gazette No. 23221 of 6 February 1997.

internacional" (Migrant children and adolescents in need of international protection), has been conducted.

61. The National Office of Refugee Affairs and the National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and Family have worked together to draft a protocol on identification, assistance and inter-agency action for the comprehensive protection of minors in need of such protection. It has been finalized for approval by means of an administrative decision. This process was carried out with the support of the International Organization for Migration, the United Nations Children's Fund and RET International.

Remaining gaps or challenges

62. Since the area near the border with Colombia is particularly vulnerable, the Ministry of Public Security is taking the necessary steps to ensure that the National Border Service maintains a permanent presence in the area and to keep the local population safe. However, its work is preventive and consists mainly of tackling the drug problem and protecting local inhabitants.

63. In the light of the above, it is necessary to step up training and awareness initiatives that focus on the implementation of the Optional Protocol and that are targeted, in particular, at the security services and the National Office of Refugee Affairs, health professionals, social workers who deal with children and adolescents, and people living in border areas, since, on account of its geographical position, Panama is becoming a country of transit for migrants and also receives a number of asylum seekers.

II. Prevention

(a) Compulsory recruitment

64. Panama does not have any armed forces and the law enforcement agencies cannot recruit anyone under the age of 18 years old, so there is no voluntary or forced recruitment into the security forces.

65. Persons wishing to join the security services must provide certain documents, including their birth certificate and personal identity card (see annex 8).

(b) Lowering of the minimum age in exceptional circumstances

66. The constitutional provisions that regulate the public security forces stipulate that all Panamanians are obliged to take up arms to defend the national independence and territorial integrity of the State (Constitution, art. 310).

67. A state of emergency may be declared by the executive branch, in all or part of the national territory, in the event of a war or an internal disturbance that threatens peace and public order (Constitution, art. 55) (see annex 9).

68. The State has not adopted any law or provision that authorizes the lowering of the minimum age for recruitment by the security services.

(c) Schools operated by or under the control of the armed forces

69. The General Tomás Herrera Military Institute, a secondary school run by the defence forces, was open from 1974 to 1989. It was closed in 1989 following the invasion of Panama.

70. Today, the training schools for the security services are operated by the National Police and they do not admit anyone who is under 18 years of age.

(d) Criminalization of recruitment by non-State armed forces

71. The main measures taken to prevent the recruitment of children by non-State armed forces in accordance with the Optional Protocol relate to the criminalization of this act under article 448 of the Criminal Code, the scope of which is described in section III of this report, on prohibition and related matters.

(e) Cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

72. ICRC has been present in Panama since 1989. In 2010, a headquarters agreement between the Government of Panama and ICRC was signed, establishing a permanent ICRC presence and providing for the expansion of its exclusively humanitarian activities in Panama.

73. ICRC provided assistance and advice to the State during the post-invasion period.

74. Currently, ICRC and the Panamanian Red Cross are working together mainly with regard to the provision of health, water and sanitation assistance in communities in Darién, which is on the border with Colombia; awareness-raising on the fundamental principles and humanitarian values of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement; and activities relating to the “Restoring Family Links” programme.

75. ICRC helps to raise awareness of international humanitarian law and international human rights law among the civil authorities and the security forces, and it keeps up a dialogue with government institutions and civil society organizations on humanitarian issues.

76. It provides technical support to the National Standing Commission on the Application of International Humanitarian Law to assist with the development, promotion, application and implementation of international humanitarian law and, in particular, the adoption of legal frameworks for the protection of victims of armed conflicts and other violent situations.

77. ICRC conducts outreach and training sessions to promote the application of the rules and principles of international human rights law in the context of the use of force, the use of firearms, arrest and detention, and the doctrine, education, training and disciplinary system of the police and security forces.

(f) Campaigns or other measures to promote public awareness

78. So far, there have been no campaigns to raise public awareness of the principles and provisions of the Optional Protocol; however, steps have been taken to raise awareness of international humanitarian law and to incorporate it into the curricula of security service training programmes, as mentioned above in section I on general measures of implementation.

III. Prohibition and related matters**(a) Compulsory recruitment and use of children in armed conflict**

79. The recruitment and use of children in armed conflict has been criminalized as an offence that constitutes a violation of the rules of international humanitarian law; it is punishable by 10 to 12 years’ imprisonment under article 448 of the Criminal Code.

80. Criminal Code:

Article 448. Whoever violates the provisions regarding shelter for women or families or regarding special protection for women and children set forth in international treaties to which the Republic of Panama is a party, and, in particular,

whoever **recruits or enlists minors under 18 years of age or uses them to take an active part in hostilities**; induces or forces a person to engage in prostitution or to suffer any other form of indecent assault or offence against sexual freedom; induces or causes a forced pregnancy or forced sterilization; violates the immunity of or unlawfully detains members of parliament or any of the persons accompanying them, personnel of the Protecting Power or its substitute, or members of the International Fact-Finding Commission; or robs a corpse, wounded person, sick person, shipwrecked person, prisoner of war or interned civilian, **shall be liable to a penalty of 10 to 12 years' imprisonment.**

(b) Prohibition of the invocation of superior orders

81. In Panama, any person who, during an armed conflict, commits or orders the commission of any offence or act that violates the provisions of the international treaties to which Panama is a party and that relate to the conduct of hostilities, including the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, is liable to a criminal penalty (Criminal Code, art. 453).

82. Likewise, a police chief or military commander or person effectively acting as a military commander, or a superior who exercises similar authority over subordinates, shall be criminally responsible for any such offences committed by forces under his or her effective command and control, or effective authority and control, as a result of his or her failure to exercise control properly over such forces (art. 454). The penalty in such cases ranges from 1 to 3 years' imprisonment.

83. Criminal Code:

Article 453. Anyone who, during an armed conflict, commits or orders the commission of any offence or act that violates the provisions of the international treaties to which the Republic of Panama is a party and that relate to the conduct of hostilities, the regulation of means and methods of combat, the protection of wounded, sick and shipwrecked persons, the treatment of prisoners of war or the protection of civilians and cultural property in the event of armed conflict, especially those contained in the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and the Protocols additional thereto of 1977, shall be liable to a penalty of 1 to 3 years' imprisonment.

Article 454. A police chief or military commander or person effectively acting as a military commander, or a superior who exercises similar authority over subordinates, shall be liable to the same penalty for the offences described in this chapter, if they are committed by forces under his or her effective command and control, or effective authority and control, as a result of his or her failure to exercise control properly over such forces, where: 1. He or she either knew or, owing to the circumstances at the time, should have known that the forces were committing or about to commit such offences; 2. He or she failed to take all necessary and reasonable measures within his or her power to prevent or repress their commission or to submit the matter to the competent authorities for investigation and prosecution.

84. Under article 40 of the Criminal Code, due obedience cannot be invoked to exempt the perpetrator from responsibility in the case of crimes against humanity or enforced disappearance, for individuals have a duty or obligation not to commit such offences, even if ordered to do so by a superior:

Article 40. A person shall not be held responsible if he or she acts on the basis of an order issued by a competent authority in accordance with the appropriate legal formalities that he or she is obliged to obey and that does not amount to a clearly punishable offence. This provision does not apply to members of the public security forces when they are on duty, in which case the responsibility rests solely with the superior who gives the order. **This exception does not apply in cases of crimes against humanity or enforced disappearance.**

(c) **Harmonization with the International Labour Organization (ILO) Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)**

85. Anyone who sells, offers, delivers, transfers or accepts a child or adolescent in exchange for remuneration, payment or recompense is liable to a penalty of 5 to 10 years' imprisonment. This penalty is increased by one third if the child or adolescent is used for the purposes of forced labour or servitude (Criminal Code, art. 207).

86. Criminal Code:

Article 207. Anyone who sells, offers, delivers, transfers or accepts a child or adolescent in exchange for remuneration, payment or recompense shall be liable to a penalty of 5 to 10 years' imprisonment. The same penalty shall apply to anyone who offers, possesses, acquires, consents to the sale of or induces the sale of a child or adolescent for the purpose of illegal adoption, in violation of the applicable legal instruments on adoption. If a child or adolescent is sold, offered, delivered, transferred or accepted for the purposes of sexual exploitation, organ removal, **forced labour or servitude**, the penalty shall be increased by one third to one half of the maximum penalty.

87. In the event of an armed conflict, the use of children for forced labour would be addressed and punished in accordance with article 448 of the Criminal Code.

(d) **Criminalization of enforced disappearance and trafficking in persons**

Enforced disappearance

88. In response to Order No. 19 handed down in June 2012 by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights as part of its process of monitoring compliance with judgments, the Government amended the definition of the offence of enforced disappearance to bring it into line with articles III and VII of the Inter-American Convention on Forced Disappearance of Persons, including with respect to the continuous or permanent nature of the offence and the inapplicability of the statute of limitations to the offence (Act No. 55 of 2016).

89. It has therefore been established that criminal prosecution for the forced disappearance of persons and the penalty judicially imposed on its perpetrator shall not be subject to statutes of limitations. This offence is punishable by 15 to 20 years' imprisonment.

90. Criminal Code:

Article 152. The act of depriving one or more persons of their freedom, in whatever way, perpetrated by agents of the State or by persons or groups of persons acting with the authorization, direct or indirect support, or acquiescence of the State, followed by an absence of information or a refusal to acknowledge that deprivation of freedom or to give information on the whereabouts of that person, thereby impeding his or her recourse to the applicable legal remedies and procedural guarantees, shall be punishable by 15 to 20 years' imprisonment.

This offence shall be deemed continuous or permanent as long as the fate or whereabouts of the victim has not been determined.

Criminal prosecution for the forced disappearance of persons and the penalty judicially imposed on its perpetrator shall not be subject to statutes of limitations.

Trafficking in persons

91. Trafficking in persons for the purposes of slave labour, slavery or similar practices, or forced labour or services is a criminal offence that is punishable by 15 to 20 years' imprisonment. The penalty is increased to 20 to 30 years' imprisonment if the victim is a minor.

92. Criminal Code:

Article 456-A. Anyone who promotes, oversees, organizes, finances, advertises, encourages or manages by any means of individual or mass communication, or in any other way facilitates the entry to or exit from the country or the displacement within national territory of a person of either sex, to perform one or more acts of prostitution or for the purposes of exploitation, sexual servitude or slave labour, slavery or similar practices, forced labour or services, servile marriage, begging, illegal removal of organs or irregular adoption, shall be liable to 15 to 20 years' imprisonment.

The penalty shall be 20 to 30 years' imprisonment if:

1. The **victim is a minor**, or in a situation of vulnerability or disability, or incapable of consent.
2. The victim is used in acts of exhibitionism involving photographs, films or obscene recordings.
3. The act is executed by means of deception, coercion, violence, threats, fraud, theft or withholding of passports, immigration documents or identity papers.
4. The act is committed by a close relative, guardian or whoever is responsible for the victim's care, upbringing, education or instruction.
5. The act is committed by a public servant.

Statute of limitations for each of these offences

93. An amnesty cannot be granted for crimes against humanity and the penalty for such crimes is not subject to statutes of limitations (Code of Criminal Procedure, art. 116 and Criminal Code, art. 121).

94. Code of Criminal Procedure:

"Article 116. Limitation periods. Prosecution:

3. The prosecution of terrorism offences, crimes against humanity and enforced disappearance shall not be subject to statutes of limitations."

95. Criminal Code:

"Article 121. The penalty imposed for terrorism offences, crimes against humanity and enforced disappearance shall not be subject to statutes of limitations."

96. Human trafficking offences are defined as crimes against humanity in book II, section XV, chapter IV, article 456-A et seq. of the Criminal Code.

97. Therefore, pursuant to article 121 of the Criminal Code and article 116 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the prosecution of human trafficking offences and the penalty imposed for such offences are not subject to statutes of limitations.

(e) Sentences applicable for attempts to commit and complicity or participation in offences

98. The perpetrator, instigator and primary accomplice are liable to the penalty established by law for the offence. The secondary accomplice is liable to no less than half of the minimum penalty and no more than half of the maximum penalty established by law for the offence, in accordance with the general rules set forth in the Criminal Code (arts. 80 and 81).

99. The Criminal Code stipulates that attempts to commit an offence are punishable by no less than half of the minimum penalty and no more than two thirds of the maximum penalty for the offence in question (art. 82).

(f) Criminal liability of legal persons

100. Under the general rules set forth in the Criminal Code, legal persons used or created in order to commit an offence are subject to penalties. The penalties applicable to legal persons are established in article 51 of the Criminal Code.

101. It should be noted that article 51 of the Criminal Code is a general rule that does not preclude the application of article 448 of the Criminal Code on the punishment of offences against persons protected by international humanitarian law; consequently, all the penalties established in the aforementioned article remain applicable (art. 51).

102. Criminal Code:

Article 51. When a legal person is used or created in order to commit an offence, even if the offence does not benefit the legal person, any of the following penalties shall apply:

Cancellation or suspension of licence or registration for a period not exceeding five years;

Fine of no less than 5,000 balboas (B) and no more than double the loss or than the financial benefit;

Total or partial loss of tax benefits;

Disqualification from contracting with the State, directly or indirectly, for a term not exceeding five years, in conjunction with any of the above penalties;

Dissolution of the company;

Fine of no less than B 25,000 and no more than double the loss or than the financial benefit, if the legal person provides a transport service that is used to smuggle drugs into national territory.

(g) Private security companies

103. Private security companies are authorized to operate by the Ministry of the Interior, pursuant to Executive Decree No. 21 of 31 January 1992.³

104. Private security companies may be run by natural or legal persons and may provide services relating to the surveillance and protection of all types of movable and immovable property; surveillance at contests, fairs and similar activities; the manufacture, development, marketing and maintenance of security systems; the maintenance of physical, electronic and audiovisual systems for surveillance and protection, especially in connection with arms facilities (Executive Decree No. 21 of 31 January 1992, art. 1).

105. If an offence is committed, the penalties established in the Criminal Code apply, whether the private security company is run by a legal or a natural person.

106. Private security companies must provide certain documents when applying for an operating permit. They must provide a pro forma or quote for the purchase of service weapons (.38 calibre revolver with a 4-inch barrel and 12-gauge repeating shotgun), with serial numbers and descriptions; these weapons must be purchased in national territory. They must have found a Panamanian candidate for the position of chief of security and they must attach his or her curriculum vitae, an identity card-sized photograph and a copy of his or her personal identity card, authenticated by the Identity Card Directorate of the Electoral Court. They must provide a list of candidates for recruitment as private security officers, with each candidate's full name, identity card number, address, an identity card-sized photograph and an uncertified copy of their personal identity card. Companies that offer the services of private security officers must submit the relevant work contracts, approved by the Ministry of Labour and Workforce Development (Executive Decree No. 21 of 31 January 1992, arts. 1, 4, 5 and 12).

³ Executive Decree No. 21 of 31 January 1992, regulating the operation of private security companies.

107. Executive Decree No. 1 of 5 January 2016,⁴ establishing a list of hazardous forms of child labour, stipulates that persons under 18 years old cannot be hired for occupations that involve, inter alia, handling, processing, separating, mixing, compressing, packaging, marketing or detonating any type of explosive material or its manufacturing or activation components; guarding materials, equipment or other goods; or protecting persons (Executive Decree No. 1 of 2015, paras. 3 and 20).

108. In view of the above, the Ministry of Labour and Workforce Development does not issue work permits to persons under 18 years old for the occupations that are listed as hazardous forms of child labour.

(h) Jurisdiction over acts and offences

109. As a general rule, Panamanian criminal law applies to offences that are committed in national territory or other places under State jurisdiction. Likewise, it is applicable to offences covered by the Optional Protocol, even if they are committed abroad (Criminal Code, art. 18).

110. Panamanian law provides that the criminal law of Panama shall apply to those who commit offences under international treaties that have been ratified by Panama, regardless of the provisions in force in the place where the offence was committed and the nationality of the accused (Criminal Code, art. 21).

111. This includes the offences established in the Optional Protocol.

(i) Extradition

112. The extradition procedure is governed by the bilateral and multilateral treaties to which Panama is a party or, in the absence of such a treaty, by the principle of international reciprocity; it consists of handing over the person concerned to the State that intends to bring the person to trial or to enforce the person's criminal sentence (Code of Criminal Procedure, art. 516).

113. Extradition may be refused on a number of grounds: article 24 of the Constitution prohibits the extradition of Panamanian nationals, while the Code of Criminal Procedure establishes that extradition may be refused if the case can be heard by the competent Panamanian court, if the executive branch considers that the person can be tried for a different offence or by an ad hoc tribunal, or if the requesting State applies the death penalty, contrary to Panamanian legislation (art. 519).

114. Panamanian law is applicable to crimes against humanity, even if such crimes are committed abroad, including the forced recruitment of minors for use in armed conflict; trafficking; and enforced disappearance (Criminal Code, art. 19).

115. Panamanian criminal law is applicable to those who commit offences under the international treaties that are in force in Panama, provided those treaties grant territorial jurisdiction, regardless of the place of commission of the offence and the nationality of the accused (Criminal Code, art. 21).

116. To date, no extradition requests have been received for offences under the Optional Protocol.

⁴ Executive Decree No. 1 of 5 January 2016, amending and supplementing Executive Decree No. 19 of 12 June 2006, establishing a list of hazardous forms of child labour, in the context of the worst forms of child labour.

IV. Protection, recovery and reintegration

(a) Training

117. In-service training for civil servants on the staff of the Public Prosecution Service includes training in how to assist victims of the offences prohibited under the Protocol. Such offences are considered severe in Panama because they violate fundamental rights and freedoms. They are punishable by at least 4 years' imprisonment.

118. The legal basis for the above is that the State of Panama considers it mandatory to approach, assist and protect victims of the offences prohibited under the Protocol, especially children, whose rights require special protection that takes due account of the best interests of persons under 18 years of age, in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of Child, which Panama has ratified.

119. The Public Prosecution Service, through Decision No. 15 of 25 March 2015, established the Secretariat for the Protection of Victims, Witnesses, Experts and Other Persons Involved in Criminal Proceedings, which is attached to the Attorney General's Office and is responsible for the technical supervision of the management of Units for the Protection of Victims, Witnesses, Experts and Other Persons Involved in Criminal Proceedings. The qualified technical personnel working for the Secretariat runs most of the training on how to approach, treat and assist victims of crime, but the medical professionals working at the Institute of Legal and Forensic Medicine also provide training.

120. Because of the situation in the border regions, the State has stepped up, since 2016, the training it provides on trafficking for professionals who work with children and adolescents. This type of training has focused on preventing human trafficking and improving inter-agency and regional coordination on border security to protect migrants under 18 years of age.

121. One such training initiative was a regional technical workshop on the comprehensive protection of children and adolescents in the context of migration (Meso-American Regional Programme, Guatemala, August 2016). The workshop was intended to provide tools that can be used to identify the specific characteristics of different groups of child and adolescent migrants from the perspectives of human rights, gender, diversity, cultural pluralism, the best interests of the child, participation and gradual autonomy; to raise awareness of the risks confronted by child and adolescent migrants in the region to make them easier to identify for key officials working in the field; and to improve existing coordination networks and mechanisms involving institutions and civil society at the national, bilateral and regional levels.

122. A seminar on human rights and migration was held in September 2016. It addressed issues relating to human rights in the context of migration, with an emphasis on human trafficking in the context of child migration and violations of the rights of child migrants and other vulnerable accompanied or unaccompanied migrants.

123. Professionals from various entities took part in a bilateral train-the-trainer workshop for Panama and Costa Rica hosted by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime on human trafficking in border regions. The topics discussed at the workshop included a manual on combating human trafficking for criminal justice professionals, a master plan on training in border regions, special investigation and victim protection techniques and the definition of the criminal offence of human trafficking in Panama.

124. In 2016, in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), two seminars on child and adolescent migrants and refugees were organized for the technical and managerial staff of the National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and Family. The purpose of the workshops was to improve the staff members' understanding of the situation of child migrants and refugees and to enhance their protection from a human rights perspective, as well as to provide the necessary tools for identifying the risks associated with migration for children and adolescents and recognizing child and adolescent migrants' specific needs in terms of protection and initial contact and to establish referral mechanisms.

125. In 2017, a special course on migrant children was organized for key entities with the support of IOM.

126. The course covered the topics: migrants in today's world; international and regional regulatory frameworks for the protection of the human rights of child and adolescent migrants, including persons in need of protection; risk factors for child and adolescent migrants; mechanisms and guidelines for assisting and protecting unaccompanied or separated child and adolescent migrants; potential sustainable solutions for the comprehensive protection of child and adolescent migrants; existing coordination mechanisms and networks for the protection of child and adolescent migrants, including those in need of international protection; and a summary of the course.

127. Staff members of the Juvenile Police, the First Juvenile Court, the Second Juvenile Court, the Children's Ombudsman, the National Border Service, the National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and Family, the National Migration Service and the non-governmental organization Probisida took the course. The total number of participants was 17.

(b) Demobilization with a view to social reintegration

128. There are no armed conflicts in Panama. As such, there are currently no demobilization programmes for child and adolescent victims of forced recruitment or programmes designed to facilitate their social reintegration.

129. The National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and Family provides services to assist children and adolescents at social risk and, through the Programme of Assistance and the Restoration of Family Dynamics, promotes the social integrity of children and adolescents, thereby ensuring the full exercise of their rights and fostering better family and community coexistence.

130. These services could be used to facilitate the physical and psychological recovery of child and adolescent victims of forced recruitment and tailored to the situation of each individual.

(c) Protecting the identity and confidentiality of victims and preventing media exposure and stigmatization

131. Article 17 of the Constitution provides for the protection of the life and honour of all persons under Panamanian jurisdiction. Article 56 provides for the protection of the physical and mental health and moral integrity of minors.

132. Article 489 of the Family Code establishes that minors have a right to protection from all forms of negligent treatment, violence and arbitrary or unlawful interference with their privacy, family, honour and reputation.

133. Articles 575 to 578 of the Family Code set out the family rights of all family members, including persons under 18 years of age, such as the right to control of their own image and to respect for and freedom from interference in their privacy and intimacy.

134. This is developed in article 585 of the Family Code relating to the comprehensive protection of minors, which provides that minors have a right to State protection. Preventive and restrictive measures and prohibitions may be put in place to protect their rights.

135. Act No. 31 of 1998 on the protection of victims of crime establishes that victims have a right to effective protection from violations of their physical integrity and the physical integrity of their families.

136. Article 17 of Act No. 16 of 31 March 2004 provides that any natural or legal person, in order to protect the rights of minors, may report offences against minors' sexual integrity and freedom in the form of the commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents. Technical assistance is provided for reporting.

137. Measures have been in place since 2004 to protect the identity of witnesses involved in criminal proceedings, pursuant to Act No. 48 of 30 August 2004. Witnesses' personal details and all other information by which they could be identified are omitted from proceedings and their identity and domicile are kept confidential.

138. Act No. 79 of 9 November 2011 on human trafficking and related activities was later adopted. Article 1 of the Act provides for measures intended to prevent the victimization and revictimization of victims and potential victims of domestic and transnational human trafficking, to protect and assist them and to ensure respect for their human rights. To that end, the Act aims to prevent and combat trafficking, particularly the trafficking of women and minors. Article 3 provides for the adoption of public policies on prevention and the establishment of a protection, assistance and reparations framework for that purpose.

139. Regarding prevention, Act No. 79 of 2011 provides for the establishment of a commission tasked with offering technical assistance to public and private bodies that run programmes designed to prevent human trafficking and to assist and protect victims. Article 36 provides that victims of trafficking shall receive clear information on their situation and migration status, free legal aid, housing, support to cover their basic needs and medical, psychological and migration assistance. The cost of any medical or psychological treatment is covered.

(d) Protection of victims

140. Concerning the protection of the victim's identity, article 287 of the Code of Criminal Procedure establishes that investigations are confidential and that information pertaining to them may be accessed only by the parties to the case. When minors give testimony they may be supported by family members and the prosecutor or court may hear them in private in rooms designed for that purpose.

141. Articles 331 to 332 of the Code of Criminal Procedure provides for victim protection measures, including preventing the minor from leaving the country without authorization; temporarily sheltering the victim in a safe space; suspending the alleged aggressor's right to custody and to bring up his or her minor children; providing a temporary maintenance allowance; omitting from proceedings any mention of the personal details of the protected person or any other information that might identify him or her; taking witnesses' testimonies using technology designed to facilitate questioning, such as video conferencing and closed-circuit television or other similar technologies; ensuring that the accused, members of his or her family and members of the public are not present during questioning; allowing minors to be accompanied by a family member when testifying; preventing the protected person from being photographed or having his or her image captured by any other means; and keeping his or her identity, domicile, profession, position and place of work confidential.

142. The image of the protected person may not be captured by any means. He or she shall be transferred to another school upon request. The victim and his or family may obtain authorization to be placed in another family home, whose address shall remain confidential. The alleged aggressor shall be prohibited from approaching the victim's home and police protection shall be ordered. The victim shall receive individual psychological treatment. The cost of food and housing incurred by the victim's family shall be covered.

143. According to article 362 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, in cases where the victim's privacy or physical integrity may be undermined or where he or she is a minor, his or her identity is protected and the trial does not take place in public.

144. The Unit for the Protection of Victims, Witnesses, Experts and other Participants in Criminal Proceedings of the Attorney General's Office provide victims with assistance, legal advice and support and continuously monitors victim protection measures.

145. Act No. 31 of 28 May 1998 on the protection of victims of crime is one of the country's fundamental legal frameworks, under which the institutions of the justice system are obliged to protect the rights of victims of crime.

146. In 2012, the Charter of Rights of All Persons Involved in Judicial Proceedings was adopted through Decision No. 3 of 6 January 2012, establishing the right of minors to age-appropriate treatment and to respect for their privacy during the proceedings of the Public Prosecution Service.⁵

147. In cases brought before the prosecution service, children and adolescent victims of ill-treatment undergo a psychological evaluation to determine whether they are fit to give a statement.

148. They are provided with psychological assistance, through which it is determined whether they are fit to be questioned, which is necessary so that they can be heard, and the proceedings and their rights are explained to them. They are given the opportunity to decide who will interview them and whether they want their parents or a psychologist to be present at the interview.

149. The importance of the forensic medical evaluation to the proceedings is explained to the minor before the evaluation is conducted and his or her informed consent is obtained before continuing.

150. When children and adolescents are questioned at the oral hearing, they must be accompanied by a psychologist or other trained official from the Unit for the Protection of Victims, Witnesses, Experts and other Participants in Criminal Proceedings.

151. Hearings are held in camera to maintain privacy and the child or adolescent's personal information is kept confidential.

152. Progress has been made in the installation of observation rooms equipped with one-way mirrors in circuit courts, complete with approved user's manuals.

153. This makes it possible for child or adolescent victims to be interviewed only once, thereby avoiding revictimization. All questions are asked by a psychologist, who is present in the room with the child.

(e) Treatment of unaccompanied and separated children outside their country of origin

154. The National Migration Service has established a humanitarian affairs section within its migration services department to ensure the protection of child migrants. The section is responsible for handling migration procedures that involve children and adolescents.

155. It also assesses foreign nationals applying for humanitarian assistance. Persons under 18 years of age may not be housed in migration centres and are exempt from paying fines.

156. Cases involving foreign children are referred to the National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and Family. If, in a given case, the minor is required to return to his or her country of origin, the National Secretariat informs the National Migration Service of such a requirement. The minor is then transferred, accompanied by one official from each entity.

157. In the border regions, when the National Border Service identifies an unaccompanied minor, it informs the National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and Family, which conducts an administrative investigation. The minor is placed in a shelter for children and adolescents.

158. The purpose of the investigation is to identify alternatives for placement in a family setting, or to prepare for the minor's return to his or her country of origin in accordance with the guarantees upheld and conventions ratified by Panama. The process is conducted in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

⁵ <http://www.ministeriopublico.gob.pa/minpub/NuestraOrganizacioacuten/Publicaciones/CartadeDerechos.aspx>.

159. The National Office of Refugee Affairs of the Ministry of the Interior ensures that applicants for refugee status and their families have access to the procedure for determining refugee status and is respectful of due process.

160. Annex 10 contains statistics relating to unaccompanied child migrants.

(f) Non-refoulement of child and adolescent applicants for refugee status and unaccompanied migrants

161. Under Panamanian law, the principal rights of refugees and persons seeking refuge in Panama include the right not to be returned to the country where the events that compelled them to seek international protection occurred, the right not to be turned away at the border or points of entry into the country, and the right not to be punished for entering the country irregularly (article 25 of Executive Decree No. 23 of 1998, which regulates Act No. 5 of 26 October 1977 adopting the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees).

V. International assistance and cooperation

(a) Cooperation with other countries

162. Panama is a member of the Regional Conference on Migration (Puebla Process), a multilateral, regional forum on international migration in which participating countries share their experiences and perspectives on the origin, transit and destination of migration flows. Belize, Canada, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and the United States of America are members. Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, Jamaica and Peru have observer status. Panama holds the rotating presidency of the Conference for 2018, which will focus on activities that apply the principle of shared responsibility across all migration flows and in all local and regional activities.

163. Within the Conference, a network of liaison officers against trafficking and smuggling and a network of liaison officers for consular protection have been established to facilitate information exchange and organize joint activities on matters within their jurisdiction.

164. Panama also holds the presidency of the Regional Coalition against Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants, which is composed of various Central American countries, including the Dominican Republic and Mexico. The Coalition has set clear objectives through the preparation of a 10-year strategic plan, the establishment of a repatriation protocol for victims of trafficking and follow-up on the regional strategy for the delivery of comprehensive assistance and support to victims of human trafficking.

165. Since 2015, the Panamanian State has intensified its efforts to combat organized crime through awareness-raising, sensitization, cooperation, intelligence sharing, science, technology and information.

(b) Prohibition of the trade and export of small and light weapons in domestic law

166. Only the Government may possess weapons and tools of war (Constitution, art. 312). The Constitution prohibits the possession of weapons and tools of war by members of the general public, including children and adolescents.

167. Act No. 57 of 27 May 2011 regulates the possession, carrying, import, export and trade of firearms, ammunition and related materials, as well as other related activities.

168. Article 7 of the Act provides that the national security forces may use all forms of firearms and ammunition for the internal and external defence of Panama, except those

prohibited under the international agreements and treaties that Panama has ratified (see annex 11).

169. Article 63 contains provisions on the import and export of light arms and the authorization to bring them into the country on a temporary basis. The article prohibits the import of banned weapons and establishes that authorized shipments may only be traded within Panama.

170. The export of imported shipments is prohibited (see annex 11).

171. The State has no army and therefore neither requests nor offers military assistance.

(c) Cooperation with the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict

172. The Panamanian State is committed to working with the various human rights experts and offices of special representatives of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. In 2012, the State extended an open, permanent invitation to the independent experts of the Human Rights Council (see annex 12).

(d) Mention of Panama in the reports of the Secretary-General to the Security Council submitted in accordance with Security Council resolution 1612 (2005)

173. In the third report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on children and armed conflict in Colombia, submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1612 (2005), covering the period between September 2011 and June 2016 and describing the serious abuses committed against children and adolescents affected by armed conflict and the progress made in protecting their rights, the following is written with respect to Panama:⁶

“19. In March 2014, indigenous authorities in Panama also reported cross-border recruitment of children by FARC-EP.”

VI. Other legal provisions

(a) Ratification of the main international instruments of humanitarian law

174. The Geneva Conventions relating to the protection of victims of international armed conflicts:

- Act No. 37 of 1967 providing for the accession of Panama to the Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field
- Act No. 28 of 1967 providing for the accession of Panama to the Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked Members of Armed Forces at Sea
- Act No. 39 of 1967 providing for the accession of Panama to the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War
- Act No. 59 of 1967 on the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War

175. Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions:

- Act No. 21 of 1995 adopting Protocols I and II additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, adopted by the Diplomatic Conference on the Reaffirmation

⁶ Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflicts in Colombia (September 2011 to June 2016) (S/2016/837), 4 October 2016.

and Development of International Humanitarian Law Applicable in Armed Conflicts (Protocol I additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, and relating to the protection of victims of international armed conflicts and Protocol II additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, and relating to the protection of victims of non-international armed conflicts)

- Act No. 4 of 2012 on Protocol III additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, and relating to the Adoption of an Additional Distinctive Emblem (2005)

176. Customary international humanitarian law:

- Act No. 23 of 2015, which, among other provisions, provides for the adoption of measures to prevent money-laundering, the financing of terrorism and the financing of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction
- Act No. 95 of 2013 adopting the Arms Trade Treaty, done at New York on 2 April 2013
- Act No. 50 of 2010 adopting the Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, adopted in Geneva on 28 November 2003
- Act No. 49 of 2010 adopting the Convention on Cluster Munitions, adopted in Dublin on 30 May 2008
- Act No. 38 of 2004 adopting the amendment to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, adopted in Geneva on 21 December 2001
- Act No. 23 of 2004 adopting the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime
- Act No. 14 of 2002 adopting the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, done at Rome on 17 July 1998
- Act No. 6 of 2001 adopting the Protocol to the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, done at The Hague on 14 May 1954, and the Second Protocol to the Hague Convention of 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, signed in The Hague on 26 March 1999
- Act No. 13 of 2000 adopting the amendments to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco), resolution 267 (E-V) of 3 July 1990, resolution 268 of 10 May 1991 and resolution 26 of August 1992
- Act No. 11 of 1999 adopting the Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-traps and Other Devices as Amended on 3 May 1996 (Protocol II as amended on 3 May 1996)
- Act No. 16 of 1999 adopting the Inter-American Convention against the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, ammunition, explosives and other related materials, signed in Washington, D.C. on 14 November 1997
- Act No. 48 of 1998 adopting the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, opened for signature in Paris, France, on 13 January 1993
- Act No. 50 of 1998 adopting the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (Ottawa Convention), adopted in Oslo, Norway, on 18 September 1998

- Act No. 66 of 1966 adopting the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, adopted in Geneva on 10 October 1980, and its Protocols I, II and VI
- Act No. 5 of 1976 adopting the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, signed on 1 July 1968 in Washington, D.C., Moscow and London
- Act No. 9 of 1974 adopting the Convention on the privileges and immunities of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America
- Act No. 7 of 1973 adopting the Treaty on the Prohibition of the Emplacement of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction on the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor and in the Subsoil Thereof
- Act No. 36 of 1962 adopting the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (Hague Convention)

177. Other international legal instruments

- Act No. 29 of 2011 adopting the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness (30 August 1961)
- Act No. 28 of 2011 adopting the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons (28 September 1954)
- Act No. 27 of 2011 adopting the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance adopted by the General Assembly on 20 December 2006
- Act No. 26 of 2011 on the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- Act No. 5 of 1977 adopting the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees; Inter-American Convention P.T.

List of annexes

- Annex 1 Constitutional provisions relating to the implementation of international instruments
 - Annex 2 Extract of the decision of the plenary session of the Supreme Court of Justice on 21 August 2008
 - Annex 3 Declaration of Panama in accordance with article 3 (2) of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict
 - Annex 4 Organization of the public security forces in Panama
 - Annex 5 Academic programmes
 - Annex 6 Refugees and persons seeking refuge under the age of 18
 - Annex 7 Forms used by the National Office of Refugee Affairs
 - Annex 8 Requirements for joining the security forces
 - Annex 9 Article 55 of the Constitution of Panama
 - Annex 10 Statistics relating to unaccompanied child migrants
 - Annex 11 Act No. 57 of 27 May 2011
 - Annex 12 Open invitation to the special procedures
-