



European Bureau for Conscientious Objection

35 Van Elewyck street, 1050 Brussels, Belgium
www.ebco-beoc.org / ebco@ebco-beoc.org / @ebcobeoc



OPEN LETTER – URGENT

To: President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy, letter@apu.gov.ua; press@apu.gov.ua
Minister of Internal Affairs of Ukraine Ihor Volodymyrovych Klymenko, zmi@mvs.gov.ua;
pressa@mvs.gov.ua

Cc: President of the European Parliament Roberta Metsola, president@ep.europa.eu
President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe Tiny Kox,
tiny.kox@coe.int
United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk, ohchr-civilsociety@un.org

Subject: Protest about the harassment of Yurii Sheliazhenko and request for a meeting

Brussels, 3 August 2023

Dear President and Minister of Internal Affairs of Ukraine,

On behalf of the [European Bureau for Conscientious Objection \(EBCO\)](http://www.ebco-beoc.org), I am writing to you to strongly protest about the harassment of Yurii Sheliazhenko today, Thursday August 3rd, and to request an urgent meeting with you on Monday August 7th in the framework of my mission in Kyiv.

We are shocked by the fact that the Security Service of Ukraine broke into the apartment of Yurii Sheliazhenko today, and conducted an illegal search and seizure operation. Yurii Sheliazhenko is a Member of EBCO Board, and he is the Executive Secretary of the [Ukrainian Pacifist Movement](http://www.ukrainianpacifistmovement.org), our member organisation in Ukraine. He is a well-known conscientious objector, a pacifist and a human rights defender. We strongly condemn all actions of harassment and all attempts of intimidation against Yurii Sheliazhenko and the Ukrainian Pacifist Movement, as well as all forced recruitments and all prosecutions of conscientious objectors in Ukraine (as in all countries). These are all grave human rights violations that have no place in democratic countries.

We would like to remind you that the right to conscientious objection to military service is inherent in the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, which is guaranteed, amongst others, under Article 9 of the European Convention, as well as under Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which is non-derogable even in a time of public emergency, as stated in Article 4(2) of ICCPR.

We request an urgent meeting with you on Monday August 7th to discuss our concerns and recommendations, in the framework of my mission in Kyiv.

Please also check the relevant section about Ukraine in [EBCO's Annual Report "Conscientious Objection to Military Service in Europe 2022/23"](#).

We thank you for your attention and we are looking forward to your prompt response.

Yours sincerely,

Alexia Tsouni
EBCO President



The [European Bureau for Conscientious Objection \(EBCO\)](#) was founded in Brussels in 1979 as an umbrella structure for national associations of conscientious objectors in the European countries to promote the right to conscientious objection to preparations for, and participation in, war and any other type of military activity as a fundamental human right. EBCO enjoys participatory status with the Council of Europe since 1998 and is a member of its Conference of International Non-Governmental Organisations since 2005. EBCO is entitled to lodge collective complaints concerning the European Social Charter of the Council of Europe since 2021. EBCO provides expertise and legal opinions on behalf of the Directorate General of Human Rights and Legal Affairs of the Council of Europe. EBCO is involved in drawing up the annual report of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs of the European Parliament on the application by the Member States of its resolutions on conscientious objection and civilian service, as determined in the "Bandrés Molet & Bindi Resolution" of 1994. EBCO is a full member of the European Youth Forum since 1995.
