



**European
Bureau for
Conscientious
Objection**



J O I N T P R E S S R E L E A S E

Ukraine: Release peace activist Yurii Sheliazhenko and drop all charges against him

17 August 2023

The **European Bureau for Conscientious Objection (EBCO)**, **War Resisters' International (WRI)**, the **International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR)** and **Connection e.V.** (Germany) strongly condemn the fact that **Yurii Sheliazhenko**, a well-known conscientious objector, pacifist, human rights defender and lawyer, Executive Secretary of the [Ukrainian Pacifist Movement](#), has been placed under **partial house arrest** by the Solomyanskyi District Court of Kyiv on 15 August 2023.

Yurii Sheliazhenko is a **prisoner of conscience** detained simply for peacefully expressing his genuine pacifist views, and should be **immediately and unconditionally released** and **all the charges against him dropped**. The Ukrainian authorities should respect the **right to freedom of expression** and **stop the crackdown** on Yurii Sheliazhenko and the Ukrainian Pacifist Movement, which reveals their **growing intolerance for dissent**.

We remind the Ukrainian government that pacifism is not a crime in democratic states. We demand that human rights are fully protected, including the **right to conscientious objection to military service**, which is inherent in the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, guaranteed, amongst others, under Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights, 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 strongly condemn all actions of **harassment** and all attempts of **intimidation** against Yurii Sheliazhenko and the Ukrainian Pacifist Movement, as well as **all cases of forced recruitment and even abduction of conscripts to the involved armies in the war in Ukraine, and all persecutions of conscientious objectors, deserters and non-violent anti-war protestors in Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and elsewhere.**

We support the **IPB** intention to nominate three remarkable organizations with a focus on the right to conscientious objection for the **2024 Nobel Peace Prize**; the Russian Movement of Conscientious Objectors, the Ukrainian Pacifist Movement, and the Belarusian organization "Our House".

PRESS PACK – Chronology & Resources:

11 August 2022: Criminal proceedings open against Yurii Sheliazhenko, Executive Secretary of the Ukrainian Pacifist Movement, on the pretext of anti-Ukrainian character of his human rights defending activities, notably legal aid consultation text "human right to conscientious objection to military service".

21 September 2022, International Day of Peace: The [Ukrainian Pacifist Movement](#) meets and adopts the Statement entitled "**Peace Agenda for Ukraine and the World**".

3 August 2023: Yurii Sheliazhenko, Executive Secretary of the Ukrainian Pacifist Movement, is charged with the crime of "**justification of Russian aggression**" with sole "evidence" the Statement of 21 September 2022, which explicitly condemns Russian aggression. The **Security Service of Ukraine** breaks into the apartment of Yurii Sheliazhenko and conducts an **illegal**

search and seizure operation, finding nothing criminal and taking his phone, his computer, as well as some documents of the Ukrainian Pacifist Movement.

3 August 2023: The [World BEYOND War](#) launches a **petition** to the Ukrainian Government entitled "Tell the Ukrainian Government to Drop Prosecution of Peace Activist Yuri Sheliashenko".

4 August 2023: The [IPB](#) announces its intention to nominate three remarkable organizations with a focus on the right to conscientious objection for the **2024 Nobel Peace Prize**; the Russian Movement of Conscientious Objectors, the Ukrainian Pacifist Movement, and the Belarusian organization "Our House".

4 August 2023: [EBCO](#), [WRI](#), [IFOR](#) and [Connection e.V.](#) publish a **Joint Press Release** in the framework of the #ObjectWarCampaign, entitled "Ukraine: Pacifism is not a crime in democratic states! Drop the charge against Yuri Sheliashenko, #FreePeaceSpeech".

4 August 2023: [IPB](#) publishes a **Press Release** entitled "Justice for Yuri Sheliashenko".

5 August 2023: [EBCO](#) President meets with Yuri Sheliashenko and his advocate Svitlana Novytska during her human rights monitoring mission in Kyiv.

7-8-9 August 2023: **Yurii Sheliashenko** is summoned to **interrogation**.

7 August 2023: [EBCO President](#) meets the Senior Investigator of the Investigative Department of the Security Service of Ukraine, but she is not allowed to attend the interrogation according to the Ukrainian law.

7 August 2023: [EBCO](#) publishes a **Video Interview** with Yuri Sheliashenko in Kyiv.

8 August 2023: The Senior Investigator of the Investigative Department of the Security Service of Ukraine with the agreement of the Prosecutor of the Kyiv City Prosecutor's Office submits a request to the Court on the application of a preventive measure in the form of **24-hour house arrest for 60 days** to Yuri Sheliashenko.

15 August 2023: The investigating judge of the Solomyanskyi District Court of Kyiv in an open court session partially satisfies the request and orders to place Yuri Sheliashenko under **house arrest**, prohibiting him from leaving his place of residence in the time period **from 10 p.m. until 6 a.m. the next day until 11.10.2023 inclusive**, excluding the need to leave this home during an air raid and emergency medical assistance. He also imposes on Yuri Sheliashenko until October 11, 2023, inclusive, the following duties: to come to the investigator, prosecutor, investigating judge, court at every request; to deposit with the relevant state authorities his passport(s) for traveling abroad, other documents giving the right to leave Ukraine and enter Ukraine (if such documents are available); notify the investigator, prosecutor or court about a change of residence and/or work; refrain from communicating with persons identified by the investigator as witnesses. Employees of the National Police, in order to monitor his behavior, have the right to appear in the house where he is under arrest, to demand oral or written explanations on issues related to the fulfilment of his obligations. The decision is subject to immediate execution and can be appealed directly to the Kyiv Court of Appeals within 5 days.

#ObjectWarCampaign: [Russia, Belarus, Ukraine: Protection and asylum for deserters and conscientious objectors to military service.](#)

Appeal for donations: <https://en.connection-ev.org/StopWarUkraineDonations-form>



Spot: <https://youtu.be/cxb5Modg9fk>

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The [European Bureau for Conscientious Objection \(EBCO\)](http://www.ebco-beoc.org) 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.

[War Resisters' International \(WRI\)](http://www.wri-irg.org) was founded in London in 1921 as a global network of grassroots organisations, groups and individuals working together for a world without war. WRI remains committed to its founding declaration that 'War is a crime against humanity. I am therefore determined not to support any kind of war, and to strive for the removal of all causes of war'. Today WRI is a global pacifist and antimilitarist network with over 90 affiliated groups in 40 countries. WRI facilitates mutual support, by linking people together through publications, events and actions, initiating nonviolent campaigns that actively involve local groups and individuals, supporting those who oppose war and who challenge its causes, and promoting and educating people about pacifism and nonviolence. WRI runs three programmes of work that are important to the network: The Right to Refuse to Kill Programme, the Nonviolence Programme, and Countering the Militarisation of Youth.

The [International Fellowship of Reconciliation \(IFOR\)](http://www.ifor.org) was founded in 1914 in response to the horrors of war in Europe, and has taken a consistent stance against war and its preparation throughout its history. Today IFOR has branches, groups, and affiliates in over 40 countries on all continents, while the International Secretariat is located in the Netherlands. IFOR's membership includes adherents of all the major spiritual traditions as well as those who have other spiritual sources for their commitment to nonviolence. IFOR has observer and consultative status to the United Nations ECOSOC and UNESCO organisations. IFOR maintains permanent representatives in Geneva, New York and Vienna and at the UNESCO in Paris who regularly participate in conferences and meetings of UN bodies, providing testimony and expertise from different regional perspectives, promoting non-violent alternatives in the fields of human rights, development, and disarmament.

[Connection e.V.](http://www.connection-eV.org) was founded in 1993 as an association advocating a comprehensive right to conscientious objection at an international level. The organisation is based in Offenbach, Germany, and collaborates with groups opposing war, conscription and the military in Europe and beyond, extending to Turkey, Israel, the U.S., Latin America and Africa. Connection e.V. demands that conscientious objectors from war regions should get asylum, and offers counseling and information to refugees and support for their self-organisation.
