



**European
Bureau for
Conscientious
Objection**



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

International Day of Peace: Stop the war! Mobilise for peace!

21 September 2023

On the **International Day of Peace**, September 21st 2023, the **International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR)**, **War Resisters' International (WRI)**, the **European Bureau for Conscientious Objection (EBCO)**, and **Connection e.V.** (Germany) urge the involved countries in the ongoing Russian war of aggression against Ukraine to **mobilise for peace instead of war**, and the EU and the international community to **invest in diplomacy and negotiations instead of weapons and militarism**.

IFOR, WRI, EBCO and Connection e.V. call **Russia, Ukraine and Belarus to safeguard the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, as well as the right to freedom of expression**, fully complying with the European and international standards, amongst others the standards set by the European Court of Human Rights. **The right to conscientious objection to military service is inherent in the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion**, guaranteed 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.

The four organisations support:

- the **#ObjectWarCampaign**: Protection and asylum for all deserters and conscientious objectors to military service from **Russia, Belarus, Ukraine**.
- the **appeal** to the European Commission and the European Parliament about necessary measures for the international protection of **Russian conscientious objectors, deserters and those who surrendered or were captured**.
- the **campaign to drop all charges against Yurii Sheliashenko**, Executive Secretary of the Ukrainian Pacifist Movement, who is under partial house arrest since August 15th 2023, and his next court hearing is on October 3rd 2023.
- the **#protection4olga campaign: Protection and asylum for Olga Karatch**, director of the Belarusian organisation "Our House" in Lithuania, whose application for political asylum was rejected by the Lithuanian authorities on August 18th 2023.
- 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 **Our House**, in recognition of their great work, their **tangible contribution to peace** and their considerable stigmatisation as defenders of peace, conscientious objection and human rights, especially after the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine on 24 February 2022.

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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.

[War Resisters' International \(WRI\)](#) 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 \(IFOR\)](#) 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.](#) 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.
