

No Means No – to the War in Ukraine

No Belarusian Troops for the War – Call for Conscientious Objection and Desertion

On the 20th of February 2023, we - Nash Dom, Ukrainian Pacifist Movement, Connection e.V., Federation for Social Defence, European Bureau for Conscientious Objection, International Fellowship of Reconciliation, Agir pour la paix and War Resisters' International – call for demonstrations outside Belarusian embassies across Europe. These protests will draw attention to the danger of Belarus joining Russia by sending military personnel to attack Ukraine.

The war in Ukraine has raged for almost a year now, and there is little hope that it will end soon. The death toll and the destruction rise daily. Russia is unwilling to end its attack and withdraw, and is pumping more and more troops into Ukraine. The Western countries support Ukraine in its defence by continuing to send more and more heavy weapons. Calls for negotiations and cease-fires remain unheard.

On the 20th of February 2022, Russian troops were ordered to stay in Belarus after the end of a joint exercise with the Belarusian army. Four days later, the attack against Ukraine began, including Russian troops based in the territory of Belarus. Up until now no Belarusian troops have joined the war, though Belarus provides logistical aid to Russia.

The right to refuse to kill is a human right, recognized by various international human rights institutions. In Belarus, this right is not recognized. Conscientious objectors and deserters are persecuted and jailed. This has meant that more than 20,000 young men have been left with no choice but to leave their homeland and seek refuge abroad, because they feared being recruited. Most of them prefer to stay close to their former home – in the Baltic countries and Poland – which puts a heavy burden on their host countries. These countries need support from their partners in the EU!

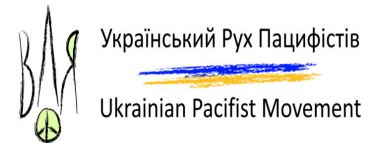
Such a mass movement of objectors also sends a strong message to Russia. Belarus under Lukashenko so far has been the stoutest ally of Putin's Russia. When its citizens refuse to join the war, this will hopefully further demoralize the nationalist and militarist narratives in Russia as well.

No means no! We call to:

- support for Nash Dom's "NO means NO" campaign. The campaign calls on men of Belarus to refuse to join the army or to leave it if they are already serving: Have the courage to say "No" when asked to join a war that violates international law and causes massive death, suffering and destruction in a neighbouring country! You are a hero if you object, not if you become a soldier in this war!
- mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers in Belarus to encourage their boys not to join the military and to help them to escape from recruitment.
- to the Belarusian authorities
 - to respect the human right of conscientious objection to military service and
 - to restrain from participation in and complicity with the war of aggression against Ukraine by the Russian authorities.
- the governments of the European countries
 - to establish a humanitarian corridor for Belarusian conscientious objectors and deserters.

- to give shelter to objectors and deserters from Belarus on humanitarian grounds, without forcing them into an asylum procedure.
- the churches to use their influence and moral weight to protect those who refuse to fight.
- civil society in all countries to express its support for objectors and deserters from all sides in the war. Support the #ObjectWarCampaign which is demanding shelter and asylum for objectors of the war in Ukraine.
- the civil servants and diplomats of Belarus in the embassies where we will hold our protests to express solidarity with those who oppose the war.

For more information in your country, support of the appeal and information about action plans in your country, please write to: info@nash-dom.info



First signatories:

Agir pour la paix, Belgium

Connection e.V., Germany

European Bureau of Conscientious Objection

Federation for Social Defence, Germany

International Fellowship of Reconciliation

Nash Dom, Belarus

Ukrainian Pacifist Movement

War Resisters' International