

**Human Rights Council, 46<sup>th</sup> Session  
Geneva, 9<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

**Item 3: Promotion and protection of all human rights,  
civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights**

**Oral statement delivered by the International Fellowship of Reconciliation.**

Madam President,

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 2030)<sup>1</sup> are a universal call to action to protect the planet and improve the lives and prospects of everyone, everywhere. There are interconnections between all those goals and there is no way we can achieve them unless member States are willing to address injustice, social injustice, climate injustice and to stop wars.

We would like to highlight the concerning links between climate change, hunger, economic sanctions and exploitation, and armed conflicts.<sup>2</sup>

We hear of wars in too many places such as Syria, for instance, as well of violence against protesters such as in Myanmar, Hong Kong and Belarus.

Civil disobedience is a nonviolent tool to resist to violence and injustice; many groups around the world are engaging in nonviolent actions to ask their governments or regimes to respect and restore their human rights. Protesters cannot be shot.

We would also like to draw the attention of this Council to the protection of the right of those who refuse to kill which is still seriously lacking.

The European Bureau for Conscientious Objection (EBCO)<sup>3</sup>, highlighted in its annual report<sup>4</sup>, that in 2020 conscientious objectors to military service continue to be persecuted and imprisoned in various countries.

In Turkey, Eritrea and Singapore, for instance, the right is not recognized. Turkish objectors are facing a situation of “civil death”<sup>5</sup> which excludes them from social, cultural and economic life.

[In other countries, like Turkmenistan, there is no alternative to compulsory military service<sup>6</sup>.

In some countries where the right is formally recognized, like in Finland, Israel and Greece, the alternative service provided is often punitive in nature and the decision-making procedures are in contrast with the international standards.]

IFOR calls on all member States to protect the right to conscientious objection to military service in all countries.

Thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ifor.org/news/2020/5/19/ifor-open-letter-to-the-un-secretary-general>.

<sup>3</sup> <https://ebco-beoc.org/>.

<sup>4</sup> EBCO's annual report, covering the region of Council of Europe (CoE), is available at <https://ebco-beoc.org/node/491>.

<sup>5</sup> The situation of conscientious objectors is defined as “civil death” by European Court of Human Rights. (Ulke v. Turkey, application [no. 39437/98](#)).

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.ecoi.net/en/document/2025552.html>.