

## **Human Rights Council, 51<sup>st</sup> Session**

**21<sup>st</sup> September 2022**

### **GD 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 Vice President,

IFOR welcomes the report of the OHCHR on the right to conscientious objection to military service which has been presented to this Council during the last session<sup>1</sup>. This is of benefit to the entire international community and all concerned individuals around the world.

The report highlighted some positive progress as the introduction of legal provisions for alternative service in the Republic of Korea [and consequent reduction of imprisoned local objectors]<sup>2</sup>. It also reported the pivotal UN Human Rights Committee Views concerning the Petromelidis v. Greece case which made outstanding jurisprudence on this right<sup>3</sup>.

There are still concerning issues such as the punitive alternative service which continues to affect many conscientious objectors in several countries.

Unfortunately, there are still some States which do not recognize this human right. Too many objectors continue to be imprisoned or forced to flee their country looking for protection.

As highlighted by the previous SR in His report presented in the 50<sup>th</sup> session, we are deeply alarmed by the violation of this right in situations of armed conflicts and kindly invite the new Special Rapporteur to continue to monitor such violation.

In some countries there are special provisions concerning this right at time of armed conflict [which differs from the regular provisions and] do not comply with international standards; other countries deny this right in case of mobilization.

Freedom of thought, conscience and religion is a non-derogable right and it continues to apply regardless of a situation of armed conflict.

The work of this Council is essential to ensure the full enjoyment of the human right of conscientious objection to military service which is inherent to the right to freedom of thought conscience ad religion.

IFOR calls upon the Member States to strongly commit to the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and collaborate to ensure the full implementation of the right to conscientious objection to military service in all countries, [in compliance with the international standards].

Thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/50/43>

IFOR contribution to OHCHR report is available at <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/IFOR-HRC50.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <sup>2</sup> <https://thediplomat.com/2020/07/south-koreas-conscientious-objectors-are-getting-an-alternative-to-military-service/>

<sup>3</sup> Human Rights Committee, Views adopted by the Committee under the Optional Protocol, concerning communication No. 3065/2017, Advance unedited version, [CCPR/C/132/D/3065/2017](https://www.ohchr.org/en/docd/ccpr/c/132/d/3065/2017), 6 December 2021, para. 10.