

**Human Rights Council  
Geneva, 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021**

**Interactive dialogue on the oral presentation by the High Commissioner for Human Rights  
on the findings of the latest OHCHR periodic report on the situation of human rights in Ukraine  
(HRC res. 41/25)**

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

Madam President,

International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR) thanks the High Commissioner and her office for the oral presentation on Ukraine.

IFOR is concerned about violations of the right to conscientious objection reported on the ground.

The local media recently reported the case of the young Vladyslav Korol who expressed his conscientious objection for religious reasons and was eventually transferred to military service as a military recruit.<sup>1</sup>

Another case concerns two players of the Ukrainian national handball team Ruslan Diyakon and Dmitry Kovalenko detained by representatives of the police and District Territorial Center for Recruitment and Social Support.<sup>2</sup>

The Human Rights Committee, in its concluding observation on the 8<sup>th</sup> periodic report of Ukraine, stated that "The State party should ensure that abductions and arbitrary detention of conscripts are promptly, thoroughly, and independently investigated, [that perpetrators are prosecuted and punished and that victims are provided with effective remedies, including adequate compensation.]"<sup>3</sup>

We would also like to continue to draw the attention<sup>4</sup> to the case of the Ukrainian journalist and pacifist Ruslan Kotsaba who is under trial<sup>5</sup> because of a video posted in 2015 to express opposition to the military mobilization for armed conflict in eastern Ukraine<sup>6</sup>. He has already spent over 500 days under arrest and has been victim of assaults<sup>7</sup> by haters for whom there is still impunity.

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

Thank you.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://suspiine.media/169261-pobilsalo-porusen-zi-zdorovam-na-cerkasini-prizovniki-prohodat-medoglad/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://news.obozrevatel.com/sport/sport/gubernator-odesskoj-oblasti-otomstil-ne-pokorivshimsya-emu-gandbolistam-smi.htm>

<sup>3</sup> CCPR/C/UKR/CO/8 [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CCPR/Shared%20Documents/UKR/CCPR\\_C\\_UKR\\_CO\\_8\\_47160\\_E.pdf](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CCPR/Shared%20Documents/UKR/CCPR_C_UKR_CO_8_47160_E.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Oral statement delivered by IFOR during the 45<sup>th</sup> Human Rights Council - Interactive Dialogue on the oral presentation of the report on the situation of human rights in Ukraine on December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

<sup>5</sup> In Kolomyia City District Court of Ivano-Frankivsk Region.

The High Specialized Court on Civil and Criminal Cases in 2017 quashed the acquittal and ordered a retrial. Then several judges and local courts recused from the case; the court ordered to return formal accusation for further investigation, but the order was quashed by the appellate court; and now, judges Kalyniuk, Berkeshuk, and Veselov will examine 58 witnesses of the supposed political impact of Ruslan's video blog and pass their judgment.

<sup>6</sup> Ruslan Kotsaba was arrested on 7 February 2015 in Ivano-Frankivsk, 130 km south-east of Lviv, after he posted a video describing the conflict as "the Donbas fratricidal civil war". He also expressed opposition to military conscription of Ukrainians to take part in the conflict.

He was then named as Amnesty International's first Ukrainian prisoner of conscience in five years. He has already spent 524 days under arrest and was duly acquitted in 2016. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2015/04/ukraine-suspicious-deaths-need-credible-investigations/>

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.coe.int/en/web/media-freedom/detail-alert?p\\_p\\_id=sojdashboard\\_WAR\\_coesojportlet&p\\_p\\_lifecycle=0&p\\_p\\_col\\_id=column-4&p\\_p\\_col\\_count=1&sojdashboard\\_WAR\\_coesojportlet\\_alertId=102265091](https://www.coe.int/en/web/media-freedom/detail-alert?p_p_id=sojdashboard_WAR_coesojportlet&p_p_lifecycle=0&p_p_col_id=column-4&p_p_col_count=1&sojdashboard_WAR_coesojportlet_alertId=102265091)