

PUBLIC

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Further Information on UA 211/05 (EUR 25/013/2005, 23 August 2005) Prisoner of Conscience

GREECE

Boris Sotiriadis (m), aged 37

On 20 September, the Military Court of Appeal in Athens granted the release of prisoner of conscience Boris Sotiriadis pending his appeal hearing. He had been sentenced to an unprecedented three and a half years' imprisonment on charges of disobedience, after he refused to serve in the army because it conflicts with his religious belief.

The prosecutor at the Military Court of Appeal requested that Boris Sotiriadis be released on bail of 1,000 Euros (US\$1,221), and be obliged to present himself every 15 days at the local police station. However, he was finally released only on condition that he is not allowed to leave Greece after his lawyer argued that his family could not afford to pay his bail costs. The date for the appeal hearing will be set soon.

Boris Sotiriadis, a naturalized Greek citizen who is married with two young children, was denied the right to civilian service as he had previously served in the military in the former Soviet Union. Greek law does not permit civilian service for those who have already served in the armed forces.

Boris Sotiriadis's wife, who testified for the defence, expressed her deep gratitude to all members of Amnesty International who had contributed to the release of her husband.

No further action on behalf of Boris Sotiriadis is required at present. Many thanks to all who sent appeals. To sign AI Greece's web petition against the repeated prosecution of conscientious objectors to military service in Greece, visit <http://www.amnesty.org.gr/actnow/gre20050331.htm>.