

**EXTERNAL**

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## **ADOPTION OF PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE - SWITZERLAND**

### **THE CASE OF GRÉGOIRE FIAUX**

Grégoire Fiaux, a 23-year-old laboratory assistant, entered prison on 25 November 1993 to serve a sentence of eight months' imprisonment for refusing to perform military service. Amnesty International believes his refusal of military service is the result of his conscientiously held, moral and humanitarian convictions and considers him to be a prisoner of conscience.

He reported for military recruit school training at a barracks in Bière on 15 July 1991 but within a few days concluded that further military service was incompatible with his conscientiously held beliefs. After refusing to take part in shooting exercises on 17 and 23 July he declared his refusal to perform any further military service and was sent home.

On 19 March 1992 he confirmed to a military divisional tribunal hearing his case at Aubonne the irrevocable nature of his decision to refuse both armed and unarmed military service and stated that he was prepared to suffer the consequences of his action. The tribunal concluded that he had not put forward any "fundamental ethical values" which might make military service irreconcilable with his conscience and thus make him eligible for a more lenient sentence of compulsory work in the public interest. The tribunal sentenced him to eight months' imprisonment and excluded him from further military service. It also ordered him to pay trial costs of 700 Swiss francs and a further 1,134.60 francs to cover the costs of a psychiatric examination which the defendant had agreed to undergo before the court hearing. Such examinations are common in cases of conscripts refusing military service and numerous conscientious objectors are released from military obligations on psychiatric grounds each year.

In a letter sent to Amnesty International shortly after entering prison Grégoire Fiaux gave an account of his first days of recruit school training, leading up to his decision to refuse further military service:

"The shock was severe. Insults, humiliations, moral and physical pressures resulted in two of my army mates fainting away after only a few hours training. I decided to come to the aid of the soldier who was lying helpless at my feet, but my superior officer ordered me to carry on with the exercise without bothering about him. Where was I? Here all the behaviour which is disparaged in civilian life was glorified - racism, machismo, hatred, brutality, violence and even murder were raised to the ranks of the most noble virtues ... When...I explained my refusal to continue my apprenticeship as a "killing machine" my corporal's first remark was "Another pacifist idiot, Lieutenant"<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>"Le choc fut rude. Injures, humiliations, pressions morales et physiques ont fait que deux de mes camarades s'évanouirent après quelques heures d'entraînement seulement. Je décidais de venir en aide au soldat qui gisait à mes pieds, mais mon supérieur me donna l'ordre de poursuivre l'exercice sans

Current place of detention: Maison d'arrêts de Favra  
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m'occuper de lui. Où étais-je? Ici tout les comportements dénigrés dans la vie civile étaient glorifiés, le racisme, le machisme, la haine, la brutalité, la violence et même le meurtre étaient élevés au rang des plus nobles vertus ... Lors ...j'expliquais mon refus de continuer mon apprentissage de 'machine à tuer' - 'Encore un imbécile de pacifiste mon lieutenant" - fut la première remarque de mon caporal".