

Start date: 10/08/06

## Imprisoned for refusing to attack

Following the hostilities between Israel and Hizbullah, in which hundreds of civilians have been killed, tens of Israeli soldiers and reservists have spoken of refusing to participate on the basis of their objection to the conflict: these men and women face imprisonment for the peaceful expression of their legitimate beliefs.

Conscientious objectors generally include pacifists and those opposed to implementing Israeli policies in the Occupied Territories. They now also include those opposed to participating in conflict with Lebanon. Those who refuse to perform military service can be imprisoned for weeks and sometimes months, after trials by military officers. They often have to serve multiple prison sentences.

Amnesty International opposes the imprisonment of those refusing to perform military service where there is no alternative civilian service offered or it is of punitive length.

The number of imprisoned conscientious objectors at the time of writing is four. According to Yesh Gvul, an Israeli group supporting Israeli soldiers who refuse to serve in the Occupied Territories, five others soldiers face sentencing before the Military Court for objecting to participate in the attacks on Lebanon.

### Amir Pasteur

On 31 July 2006 reservist, Captain Amir Pasteur, 32 years old, was sentenced by the Military Court to 28 days imprisonment for his refusal to participate in military attacks on Lebanon. Amir Pasteur is a student from Tel Aviv who decided to refuse to participate in attacks against Lebanon after attending a peace demonstration in Tel Aviv. At his trial, he said that he was unwilling to participate in the hostilities with Lebanon since it " runs contrary to the values upon which [he] was brought up".

### Itamar Shapira

Sergeant Itamar Shapira, 26 years old, was sentenced to 14 days imprisonment on 8 August for refusing to serve. Itamar Shapira was a signatory to the [Combatants' Letter](#) first published in 2002 which was signed by reservists and soldiers who objected to fighting beyond the 1967 borders "in order to dominate, expel, starve and humiliate an entire people [Palestinian population living in the Occupied Territories]". He is also a member of [Combatants for Peace](#), a group of Israeli and Palestinian individuals who formerly "used weapons against one another ... [and] today ... cooperate and commit ... to ... use only non-violent means to achieve our goals and call for both societies to end violence." In his trial Itamar Shapira stated that he refused to fight in Lebanon for the security of Israeli civilians.

## Take Action

Please write to the Israeli authorities describing the cases above, and explaining Amnesty International's position on conscientious objectors. Please call for all conscientious objectors who have been imprisoned to be immediately and unconditionally released.

### Sample letter

Dear [Minister or Chief Military Attorney]

I would like to express my concern at the Israeli government's continuing policy to imprison conscientious objectors.

Israeli conscientious objectors include pacifists and those opposed to implementing Israeli policies in the Occupied Territories and now also include those opposed to participating in the conflict with Lebanon. They are subject to imprisonment despite not being allowed the opportunity to perform an alternative civilian service instead. These individuals face imprisonment for weeks and sometimes months, after trials by military officers. I consider both total and selective objectors to military service to be prisoners of conscience held only for the peaceful expression of their legitimate beliefs.

[At this point you should raise the cases of the two men featured in this action.

- Name each one with a brief summary of their cases as in the Action;
- Explain that they are selective objectors who are refusing to participate in the attacks on Lebanon.]

I am calling on you to ensure the unconditional and immediate release of Amir Pasteur, Itamar Shapira and all other conscientious objectors who have not been charged with any recognizable criminal offence. I am also urging you to use your influence to bring about the implementation of an alternative form of service for those people who are unwilling to carry out military service in Israel, the Occupied Territories or Lebanon for reasons of conscience.

Yours sincerely

### Amir Peretz

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence  
Ministry of Defence  
37 Kaplan Street  
Hakirya  
Tel Aviv 61909  
Israel

Fax: +972 3 691 6940

+972 3 696 2757

+972 3 691 7915

email: sar@mod.gov.il

pniot@mod.gov.il

Chief Military Attorney  
Military postal code 9605  
IDF  
Israel

Please also send letters/e-mails of support to the conscientious objectors through:  
Yesh Gvul, an Israeli group supporting Israeli soldiers who refuse to serve in the  
Occupied Territories: [peretz@yesh-gvul.org](mailto:peretz@yesh-gvul.org)  
New Profile, Movement for the Civil-ization of Israeli Society, an Israeli peace  
organisation supporting conscientious objectors: [sergeiy@netvision.net.il](mailto:sergeiy@netvision.net.il)

Please also send letters of support to the imprisoned objectors:

Amir Pasteur  
Military Prison No 6  
Military Postal Code 01860  
Israel

Itamar Shapira  
Military Prison No 6  
Military Postal Code 01860  
Israel