

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 119/92 (EUR 25/05/92, 9 April 1992) - Legal Concern

GREECE: Anastasios (Tasos) Georgiades

Jehovah's Witness minister Tasos Georgiades was jailed for a third time on 22 May 1992 for refusing to perform military service on conscientious grounds. Under Greek law, ministers of recognized religions are exempt from military service if they wish. The Military Recruitment Office, however, rejected Tasos Georgiades' application for exemption arguing that the Jehovah's Witness faith is not a recognized religion. As a Jehovah's Witness, Tasos Georgiades is opposed to performing any form of military service.

After Athens Military Court acknowledged Tasos Georgiades was a religious minister of a recognized religion and ordered his release on 16 March, the commander of Avlona Military Prison issued him with a leave permit to allow him to obtain permanent discharge papers. The Military Recruitment Office, however, refused to issue these papers and, instead, called him up to perform military service. He was jailed again on 4 April. On 8 May Athens Military Court acquitted him a second time and ordered his release, ruling at the same time that it was up to the Military Recruitment Office to decide whether or not to issue discharge papers. Once again the Military Recruitment Office refused to issue discharge papers and called him up. He was reimprisoned on 22 May and is currently held at Nafplion Military Base and will shortly be transferred to Avlona Military Prison.

Amnesty International believes that Tasos Georgiades has been imprisoned for the exercise of his right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and on the basis of discriminatory treatment by the military authorities against Jehovah's Witness ministers and calls for his immediate and unconditional release as a prisoner of conscience.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express and airmail letters

- calling for the immediate release of prisoner of conscience Tasos Georgiades;
- expressing concern about the continued religious discrimination by the military authorities against Jehovah's Witness ministers;
- expressing concern that the Military Recruitment Office has ignored two

verdicts of Athens Military Court which acquitted Tasos Georgiades of insubordination and ordered his release.

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APPEALS TO:

1) Prime Minister Constantine Mitsotakis
Office of the Prime Minister
Megaron Maximou
Herodou Atticou Avenue
106 74 Athens
Greece

Telegrams: Prime Minister Mitsotakis, Athens, Greece

Faxes: + 30 1 322 4466

+ 30 1 724 0764

Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

2) Mr Ioannis Varvitsiotis
Minister of Defence
Ministry of Defence
Holargos (Pentagono)
Athens
Greece

Telegrams: Minister of Defence Varvitsiotis, Athens, Greece

Faxes: + 30 1 646 5584

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

diplomatic representatives of Greece in your country

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 8 July 1992.