



**European
Bureau for
Conscientious
Objection**



J O I N T P R E S S R E L E A S E

Another blatant human rights violation by Russia: labelling the Movement of Conscientious Objectors as "Foreign Agent"

30 June 2023

The **European Bureau for Conscientious Objection (EBCO)**, **War Resisters' International (WRI)**, the **International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR)** and **Connection e.V. (Germany)** **strongly condemn the listing of the Russian Movement of Conscientious Objectors as "Foreign Agent"** as of June 23rd 2023. This action is another blatant human rights violation, a fundamentally discriminatory application of law that contradicts universally accepted human rights and freedoms.

The Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation accuses the Movement of Conscientious Objectors of **disseminating supposedly false information about the government's actions, decisions, and policies, in addition to opposing Russia's military actions in Ukraine**. For the current government of the Russian Federation these allegations are sufficient to warrant the stigmatisation of the organisation.

The four organisations urge Russia to stop stigmatising human rights organisations and human rights defenders, and immediately and unconditionally release all those hundreds of soldiers and mobilised civilians who object to engage in the war and are illegally detained and even ill-treated.

The right to conscientious objection to military service is inherent in the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, guaranteed under Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which is **non-derogable even in a time of public emergency**, as stated in Article 4(2) of ICCPR.

Conscientious objection is a tangible contribution to peace; therefore, the protection of this human right is even more crucial in wartime.

Despite these increased threats, the Russian Movement of Conscientious Objectors remains committed to supporting those who resist war and forced conscription and informing the global community about their ongoing work and challenges. **This situation underlines the importance of continued support in these challenging times, through raising awareness, networking, outreach opportunities and fundraising** (<https://stoparmy.org/en>).

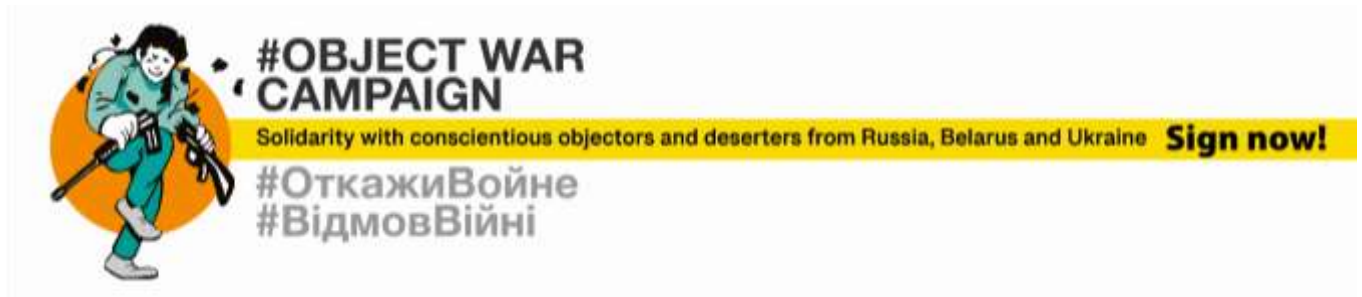
Strongly condemning the Russian invasion of Ukraine, **the four organisations call Russia and Ukraine to safeguard the right to conscientious objection to military service**, fully complying with the European and international standards, amongst others the standards set by the European Court of Human Rights.

The four organisations also denounce all the cases of forced and even violent recruitment to the armies in Russia and Ukraine and call these two countries to stop to persecute conscientious objectors, deserters and non-violent anti-war protestors.

MORE INFORMATION:

Statement by the Russian Movement of Conscientious Objectors for their labelling as a "foreign agent": <https://ebco-beoc.org/node/576>

#ObjectWarCampaign: [Russia, Belarus, Ukraine: Protection and asylum for deserters and conscientious objectors to military service](#)



EBCO's Press Release and Annual Report on Conscientious Objection to Military Service in Europe 2022/23, covering the region of **Council of Europe** (CoE) as well as **Russia** (former CoE member state) and **Belarus** (candidate CoE member state): <https://ebco-beoc.org/node/565>

Focus on the situation in Russia - independent report by the Russian Movement of Conscientious Objectors (frequently updated): <https://ebco-beoc.org/node/566>

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The [European Bureau for Conscientious Objection \(EBCO\)](http://www.ebco-beoc.org) was founded in Brussels in 1979 as an umbrella structure for national associations of conscientious objectors in the European countries to promote the right to conscientious objection to preparations for, and participation in, war and any other type of military activity as a fundamental human right. EBCO enjoys participatory status with the Council of Europe since 1998 and is a member of its Conference of International Non-Governmental Organisations since 2005. EBCO is entitled to lodge collective complaints concerning the European Social Charter of the Council of Europe since 2021. EBCO provides expertise and legal opinions on behalf of the Directorate General of Human Rights and Legal Affairs of the Council of Europe. EBCO is involved in drawing up the annual report of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs of the European Parliament on the application by the Member States of its resolutions on conscientious objection and civilian service, as determined in the "Bandrés Molet & Bindi Resolution" of 1994. EBCO is a full member of the European Youth Forum since 1995.

[War Resisters' International \(WRI\)](http://www.wri-irg.org) was founded in London in 1921 as a global network of grassroots organisations, groups and individuals working together for a world without war. WRI remains committed to its founding declaration that 'War is a crime against humanity. I am therefore determined not to support any kind of war, and to strive for the removal of all causes of war'. Today WRI is a global pacifist and antimilitarist network with over 90 affiliated groups in 40 countries. WRI facilitates mutual support, by linking people together through publications, events and actions, initiating nonviolent campaigns that actively involve local groups and individuals, supporting those who oppose war and who challenge its causes, and promoting and educating people about pacifism and nonviolence. WRI runs three programmes of work that are important to the network: The Right to Refuse to Kill Programme, the Nonviolence Programme, and Countering the Militarisation of Youth.

The [International Fellowship of Reconciliation \(IFOR\)](http://www.ifor.org) was founded in 1914 in response to the horrors of war in Europe, and has taken a consistent stance against war and its preparation throughout its history. Today IFOR has branches, groups, and affiliates in over 40 countries on all continents, while the International Secretariat is located in the Netherlands. IFOR's membership includes adherents of all the major spiritual traditions as well as those who have other spiritual sources for their commitment to nonviolence. IFOR has observer and consultative status to the United Nations ECOSOC and UNESCO organisations. IFOR maintains permanent representatives in Geneva, New York and Vienna and at the UNESCO in Paris who regularly participate in conferences and meetings of UN bodies, providing testimony and expertise from different regional perspectives, promoting non-violent alternatives in the fields of human rights, development, and disarmament.

[Connection e.V.](http://www.connection-eV.org) was founded in 1993 as an association advocating a comprehensive right to conscientious objection at an international level. The organisation is based in Offenbach, Germany, and collaborates with groups opposing war, conscription and the military in Europe and beyond, extending to Turkey, Israel, the U.S., Latin America and Africa. Connection e.V. demands that conscientious objectors from war regions should get asylum, and offers counseling and information to refugees and support for their self-organisation.
