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First UA: 91/25 Index: MDE 15/0354/2025 Israel & the Occupied Palestinian Territory of September 30, 2025

ISRAEL & OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY RELEASE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR

Eighteen-year-old Yuval Peleg is serving a 30-day sentence at Neve Tzedek military prison. Peleg refused to enlist in the Israeli military because of its role in the genocide in Gaza and the unlawful occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Israeli authorities must immediately and unconditionally release Yuval Peleg and all other conscientious objectors, who are prisoners of conscience.

Write to the IDF Chief of General Staff urging him to:

- Ensure Yuval Peleg's immediate and unconditional release.
- Refrain from prosecuting him again if he refuses future calls for conscription.
- Support legislation that recognises the right to conscientious objection to compulsory military service, in line with the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Israel is a party.

Write to:

IDF Chief of General Staff
Lieutenant General Eyal Zamir
Yitzhak Rabin Military Base
HaKiryat, 27 Kaplan Street
Tel Aviv 6473424, Israel
Emails: ContactUs@mail.idf.il ; mapazahal@gmail.com
Salutation: Dear Lieutenant General Zamir,

And copy:

His Excellency Iddo Moed
Ambassador
Embassy of the State of Israel
50 O'Connor Street, Suite 1005
Ottawa, ON K1P 6L2
Tel: (613) 750-7500 Fax: (613) 750-7555
Email: info@ottawa.mfa.gov.il

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Eighteen-year-old Yuval Peleg has been imprisoned since August 10, 2025, for refusing Israeli military service. He cited moral opposition to Israel's actions in Gaza. Peleg joins other objectors, including Itamar Greenberg, Yuval Moav, Oryan Mueller, Ella Greenberg, Yona Roseman, Ayana Gerstman, Tal Mitnick, and Sofia Orr, who have all faced prison since October 7, 2023 for refusing conscription.

These conscientious objectors are supported by Mesarvot, a growing network that assists those opposing compulsory military service, especially on the grounds of objecting to Israeli policies and practices against Palestinians. According to Mesarvot, more than 100 Israelis have refused military service on grounds of conscience since October 2023, though only about 15 have publicly shared their cases. Other known objectors include Ben Arad, Iddo Elam, Soul Behar Tsalik, and Neta Lannes Arbel. Many others remain private due to fear of reprisals and other serious consequences.

Amnesty International defines a conscientious objector as anyone who, for reasons of conscience or deep conviction, refuses to serve in the armed forces or take part in wars or armed conflicts, whether directly or indirectly. This includes refusal to participate in a particular war because of its aims or the way it is waged, even if the individual does not oppose all wars.

A conscientious objector is considered a prisoner of conscience if they are detained or imprisoned solely because they were denied the right to register their objection, or because they were not allowed to perform a genuinely civilian alternative service. The same applies to those who leave the armed forces for reasons of conscience after taking reasonable steps to secure release from their obligations.

Amnesty International's prisoner of conscience determination is based only on the facts available regarding the person's detention. Naming someone as a prisoner of conscience means they must be released immediately and unconditionally. It does not imply endorsement of their past or present views or actions.

Israeli citizens are legally required to enlist at age 18 and serve for 24 to 32 months. Most Palestinians with Israeli citizenship, who make up nearly 21% of the population, are exempt. For decades, the army's Conscience Committee could grant exemptions, but usually only to those objecting on religious grounds, such as ultra-Orthodox Jews. On June 25, 2024, Israel's Supreme Court ruled that ultra-Orthodox seminary students must be drafted, ending their long-standing exemption.

While Israeli law allows for exemption based on pacifism, the Conscience Committee often rejects such cases. Authorities regularly deny objectors the option of performing alternative civilian service. Many objectors are convicted and imprisoned repeatedly for the same "offence." In 2003, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention declared this practice a violation of international human rights standards, which prohibit double jeopardy.

In 1995, the UN Commission on Human Rights confirmed that the right to conscientious objection is protected under Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which guarantees freedom of religion, conscience, and belief. The resolution, reaffirmed many times by the Human Rights Council, most recently in 2019, stresses that states must: *"refrain from subjecting conscientious objectors to imprisonment and to repeated punishment for failure to perform military service," and recalls "that no one shall be liable or punished again for an offence for which he has already been finally convicted or acquitted in accordance with the law and penal procedure of each country."*

In his refusal statement, Yuval Peleg wrote: *"As I witness the crimes committed by the Israeli army against the Palestinian people in Gaza and the West Bank, enlisting is incompatible with the basic principles of life and equality for all human beings, but rather joining a system whose essence is oppression, occupation and destruction."*

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Please take action as soon as possible until March 29, 2026. The UA will be duly updated should there be the need for further action.