



**UN Human Rights Council, 57th Session
Geneva, September 24th 2024**

Item 4: ID with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Russian federation

Oral statement delivered by War Resisters International, in collaboration with Connection e.V.

Mr President,

War Resisters International (WRI), together with its partner Connection e.V., thanks the Special Rapporteur for her report¹.

We share her concern about “a structural, State-sponsored system of human rights violations” and the criminalization of “public anti-war expression or dissent of any kind”².

It is a fact that the Russian Movement of conscientious objectors (MCO) has been labelled as “foreign agent”.

We welcome the Special Rapporteur reporting also on the right to conscientious objection to military service and support her recommendations to the Russian Federation to “ensure full respect for this constitutional right, including in the context of mobilization [– equally for those called up and for those already serving – and provide for a strictly civilian alternative service” and end their criminal prosecution and the practice of arbitrary detention].³

Criminal cases are being initiated against those who challenge the denial of alternative civilian service in court hence their right to appeal is treated as evasion of conscription.

After 2 years since the partial mobilization⁴, vulnerable groups are forcibly recruited for the war, including minorities and migrants⁵.

Conscripts are on the verge of direct involvement in the war, moreover after the invasion of the Kursk region.⁶ [A large number of conscripts in regular service have been transferred there. It has been notified that they are being used in defence lines in the region, and from a legal standpoint, nothing prevents them from being sent directly into combat lines⁷].

WRI, together with Connection e.V. reinforce the Special Rapporteur’s recommendation to the international community to “consider granting protection and asylum to conscientious objectors to military service who have fled the Russian Federation and exercise due diligence to prevent their expulsion or extradition back to the Russian Federation in violation of the principle of non-refoulement, [since there is a well-founded fear of persecution and substantial grounds to believe that, upon their return, they would

¹ A/HRC/57/59. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session57/list-reports>

² Ibidem. “At least 53 anti-war activists are currently being punished by forced psychiatric detention that can be indefinite”.

³ Ibidem, Recommendation (p).

⁴ <https://en.connection-ev.org/article-4253>

⁵ <https://www.dw.com/ru/ugrozy-obman-obesania-kak-migrantov-v-rf-verbuet-v-armiu/a-66742353>

<https://www.severreal.org/a/pytki-shokerom-i-obezvozhivaniem-kak-v-rossii-verbuyut-na-voynu-migrantov/33053227.html>

India managed to bring its citizens back because of Russia’s dependency on trade relations.

<https://www.dw.com/ru/minoborony-velikobritanii-rf-prodolzaet-verbovat-inostrancev-na-v-ojnu-v-ukraine/a-68828424>

⁶ <https://www.forbes.ru/society/521295-putin-uvelicil-cislennost-armii-na-180-000-celovek>

<https://www.dw.com/ru/zacem-vlasti-rossii-otpravljaut-srocnikov-v-kursku-oblasti/a-69956226>

⁷ <https://www.bbc.com/russian/articles/cdeyr600215o>

be prosecuted and face imprisonment and/or torture and ill-treatment in custody]”⁸.

Madame Special Rapporteur, since we already registered several denials of asylum to Russian conscientious objectors, how can we ensure that information on the situation of human rights and particularly on the risks conscientious objectors face in the Russian Federation, are duly considered in the granting asylum procedures?

Thank you.

⁸ A/HRC/57/59, Recommendation (c).