

URGENT ACTION

ISRAEL: RELEASE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR

18-year-old Yuval Peleg is currently serving a 30-day sentence at Neve Tzedek military prison for refusing to enlist in the Israeli military over its involvement in the genocide in Gaza and the unlawful occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) Israeli authorities must immediately and unconditionally release Peleg and other conscientious objectors, who are prisoners of conscience.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

IDF Chief of General Staff
Lieutenant General Eyal Zamir
Yitzhak Rabin Military Base
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Tel Aviv 6473424, Israel

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Lieutenant General Zamir,

I am writing to demand the immediate and unconditional release of Yuval Peleg, aged 18, who is currently serving a 30-day sentence at Neve Tzedek military prison for refusing to enlist in the Israeli military. This is Peleg's third prison term, having been previously imprisoned for 21 days, followed by 30 days, after initially refusing compulsory military service on 21 July 2025 at the recruitment centre in Ramat Gan. Peleg should have never been imprisoned in the first place, and I am concerned that he is at high risk of being re-imprisoned after he is released as expected on 27 October 2025. Our concern over potential re-arrest is based on a recurrent pattern of repeatedly arresting conscientious objectors for several separate terms. For instance, Itamar Greenberg, 19, previously spent a total of 240 days, across several sentences, in prison for his refusal to enlist.

Yuval Peleg had made his objection to military service on grounds of conscience clear before Israeli army representatives, as well as in a statement through the refusal process by the conscientious objector network, Mesarvot, prior to his summon date. However, the military classified his refusal as disobedience. Amnesty International considers Yuval Peleg and other conscientious objectors to be prisoners of conscience, detained solely for exercising their right to conscientious objection.

I urge you to ensure his immediate and unconditional release and to refrain from further prosecutions should he refuse to take part in future calls for conscription. I further call on you to support the introduction of legislation recognizing the right to conscientious objection to compulsory military service in line with the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion as laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Israel is a party.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

18-year-old Yuval Peleg has been imprisoned since 10 August 2025 for refusing Israeli military service, citing moral opposition to Israel's actions in Gaza. He joined other objectors like Itamar Greenberg, Yuval Moav, Oryan Mueller, Ella Greenberg, Yona Roseman, Ayana Gerstman, Tal Mitnick and Sofia Orr, who also faced prison for refusing conscription since 7 October 2023. The conscientious objectors are supported by Mesarvot, a growing network that supports those opposing compulsory military service, especially on grounds of opposition 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, but at least 15 have publicly disclosed their cases. Other conscientious objectors include Ben Arad, Iddo Elam, Soul Behar Tsalik, and Neta Lannes Arbel. The majority of conscientious objectors have remained private, fearing societal reprisals and other potential consequences.

Amnesty International considers a conscientious objector to be any person who, for reasons of conscience or profound conviction, refuses to perform service in the armed forces, or any other direct or indirect participation in wars or armed conflicts. This can include refusal to participate in a war because one disagrees with its aims or the manner in which it is being waged, even if one does not oppose taking part in all wars. Amnesty International considers a conscientious objector to be a prisoner of conscience when they are detained or imprisoned solely because they have been denied their right to register an objection or given the possibility of performing a genuinely civilian alternative service. They would also be prisoners of conscience if imprisoned for leaving the armed forces without authorization for reasons of conscience, if they have taken reasonable steps to secure release from military obligations. Amnesty International's Prisoner of Conscience determination is based on the information available to Amnesty International regarding the circumstances leading to the person's detention. In naming a person as a Prisoner of Conscience, Amnesty International is affirming that this person must be immediately and unconditionally released but is not endorsing past or present views or conduct by them.

Israeli citizens are legally required to enlist in the military at 18, serving for a period of 24 to 32 months. However, most Palestinians with Israeli citizenship, who make up nearly 21% of Israel population, are exempt from compulsory military service. For decades the Israeli army's Conscience Committee could decide to allow exemption from military service, but this was usually granted only to those conscientious objectors who refuse to serve on religious grounds, like ultra-Orthodox Jews. However, on 25 June 2024, Israel's Supreme Court ruled that ultra-Orthodox Jewish seminary students must be drafted into the military, ending decades of exemption.

Even though Israeli law does allow for exemption on grounds of pacifism, the army's Conscience Committee frequently rejects pacifists' cases. The authorities repeatedly deny objectors the possibility of performing alternative civilian service. Conscientious objectors in Israel can be convicted of and imprisoned for the same "offence" repeatedly. In 2003, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention said that this practice flouts the rights of conscientious objectors under international human rights standards which prohibit "double jeopardy".

In 1995, in its Resolution 1998/77, the UN Commission for Human Rights has stated that the right to conscientious objection to military service is protected by Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), right to freedom of religion, conscience and belief. In the resolution, which has been re-endorsed by the Human Rights Council repeatedly, most recently in 2019, the Commission emphasized that states must "refrain from subjecting conscientious objectors to imprisonment and to repeated punishment for failure to perform military service," recalling "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."

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: [English/Hebrew]

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: [29 March 2026]

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Yuval Peleg (he/him)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: First UA

ADDITIONAL TARGETS

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