
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 260/94

TO: PRESS OFFICERS
FROM: IS PRESS OFFICE
DATE: 14 NOVEMBER 1994

AI INDEX: NWS 11/260/94
DISTR: SC/PO
NO OF WORDS:407

INTERNAL

NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - **GREECE** (This item is being sent to media in Greece by the research team. Key countries suggested by the research team for this item are France, UK, Sweden, Germany, Netherlands, USA and Canada).

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Pakistan - 24/25/28 November - SEE NEWS SERVICE 254/94

** Iraq - ** - POSTPONED, See News Service 258/94

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

Syria - 16 November - SEE NEWS SERVICE 257/94

India - 27 November - SEE NEWS SERVICES 256 & 257

News Service 260/94

AI INDEX: EUR 25/WU 04/94
15 NOVEMBER 1994

GREECE: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CALLS ON GOVERNMENT NOT TO REIMPRISON
CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS

Amnesty International is today calling on the Greek authorities not to reimprison 76 conscientious objectors who have received a second call up for military service due to begin in April or May 1995.

"To reimprison these men would be a serious step backwards; for the last 17 years, conscientious objectors who have served prison sentences for refusal to perform military service have been exempted from carrying out military service or training," Amnesty International said.

These men served terms of imprisonment of up to two years and three months before being released prior to the end of their sentences following recent legislation aimed at reducing prison overcrowding.

Amnesty International is urging the Greek Government to ensure that conscientious objectors due to be called up again are not imprisoned and that no further conscientious objector is called up for a second time.

The human rights organization is also urging the Greek Government to introduce, in a new draft bill on military service due to be examined by the Parliament before the end of the year, a completely civilian alternative service of non-punitive length for conscientious objectors to military service, in line with international standards and recommendations.

"Everyone should have the right to refuse to perform armed service for reasons of conscience or profound conviction arising from religious, ethical, moral, humanitarian, philosophical, political or similar motives," Amnesty International said.

The right to refuse military service for reasons of conscience is inherent in the notion of freedom of thought, conscience and religion as laid down in a number of international human rights instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Amnesty International is reiterating its call for the immediate release of about 400 conscientious objectors to military service on religious grounds who are currently serving prison sentences.

ENDS\