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Amnesty International
International Secretariat
1 Easton Street
London WC1X 8DJ
United Kingdom

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£ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

@SELECTIVE OBJECTORS TO MILITARY SERVICE

MAJOR MORDECHAI ZEHEVI AND CAPTAIN ROSS KOLINER

Major Mordechai Zehevi (personal number 220842) and Captain Ross Koliner (personal number 274438) were both sentenced on 23 December 1990 in a military court to 28 days imprisonment for refusing to carry out their reserve duty in the Israel Defence Force (IDF), Israel's armed forces. Both reportedly gave as their reason for refusing to serve their opposition to current IDF practice in the Occupied Territories. They are currently held in Prison No. 6 in Atlit.

Both men apparently serve in the same combat engineering unit. According to reports, both have been called up again to serve on 30 January 1991. If they refuse again, they are likely to be tried and sentenced to a further term of imprisonment.

Mordechai Zehevi, 36, is married with 2 children and is a member of Kibbutz Hanikra situated in the north of Israel. Ross Koliner, 41, comes from Jerusalem and is also married with 2 children.

In 1990 a total of 46 selective objectors to military service were imprisoned for periods of up to 35 days for refusal to serve in the Occupied Territories and Lebanon. Several were sentenced more than once during the year.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S CONCERN

Amnesty International is concerned that Mordechai Zehevi and Ross Koliner have been imprisoned for their conscientiously-held beliefs. Under its mandate, Amnesty International works for the release of prisoners of conscience, a category which includes persons "imprisoned, detained or otherwise physically restricted by reason of their political, religious or other conscientiously-held beliefs or by reason of their ethnic origin, sex, colour, or language, provided that they have not used or advocated violence."

A person imprisoned for refusing to perform military service is considered by Amnesty International to be a prisoner of conscience in accordance with the following definition:

"a person liable to conscription for military service who for reasons of conscience or profound conviction arising from religious, ethical, moral, humanitarian, philosophical, political or similar motives refuses to perform armed service or any other direct or indirect participation in wars or armed conflicts."

This definition also includes people who refuse to take part in a particular conflict or serve in a particular place (selective objectors). The 1970 World Conference on Religion and Peace in Kyoto affirmed that the right to refuse to serve should be extended to:

"those who are unwilling to serve in a particular war because they consider it unjust"

Amnesty International believes that one's reasons for objecting to military service can be other than total pacifism and that political reasons for refusal to serve are also acceptable.

Amnesty International opposes the imprisonment of objectors to military service where no alternative civilian service is available or when the length of any alternative civilian service is considered to be punitive.