

**PUBLIC**

**AI Index: AMR 51/083/2006**

**23 May 2006**

**Further Information on UA 208/05 (AMR 51/123/2005, 09 August 2005) and follow-up (AMR 51/137/2005, 05 September 2005) – Prisoner of conscience**

**USA Kevin Benderman (m)**

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Kevin Benderman, imprisoned solely for his conscientious objection to the war in Iraq, is now known to have had his request for parole denied on 30 March. Amnesty International considers him a prisoner of conscience.

The parole board denied his request on the grounds that he had not been sufficiently rehabilitated, he had not served enough of his punitive sentence and he had not adjusted to prison life. Kevin Benderman has now served 11 months of a 15-month sentence. He is held in Fort Lewis, Washington State, 3,000 miles from his family. He has appealed against the parole board's decision.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Kevin Benderman had served as an army mechanic for 10 years when he developed moral and religious objections to the war in Iraq, after serving there in 2003, and refused to deploy again. After seeing scenes of devastation in Iraq, and through his readings of both the Bible and the Qu'ran, he filed an application for conscientious objector status in December 2004. His application was turned down in April 2005 and he was court-martialled and sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment. Amnesty International considers his objection to the war to be genuine and credible, and also that he took reasonable steps to secure release from his military obligations, and therefore considers him a prisoner of conscience.

#### **RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:**

- expressing disappointment at the parole board's decision to deny parole to Kevin Benderman;
- reiterating that Amnesty International considers Kevin Benderman to be a prisoner of conscience, imprisoned solely for his conscientious objection to the war in Iraq;
- calling for him to be released immediately and unconditionally.

#### **APPEALS TO:**

Secretary of the Army Dr Francis J. Harvey  
101 Army Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301-0101, USA

**Fax: +1 703 693 5735**

**Salutation: Dear Secretary**

Brigadier General Hillman  
Fort Lewis Garrison Commander  
525 Replacement  
Ft. Lewis, Washington, 98433-9500, USA

**Fax: +1 253 967 0061**

**Salutation: Dear Brigadier General**

**COPIES TO:**

Mr. James Vick  
Director, Army Clemency and Review Board  
1941 Jefferson Davis Highway, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Arlington, VA 22202-4508  
USA

and to diplomatic representatives of the USA accredited to your country.

Letters of support can also be sent directly to Kevin Benderman at

Kevin Mitchell Benderman  
PO Box 339536  
Fort Lewis Washington  
98433 9536  
USA

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 5 July 2006.