

PUBLIC

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Further Information on UA 30/03 (MDE 15/015/2003, 29 January 2003) and follow-up (MDE 15/021/2003, 10 February 2003) - Prisoners of conscience / Conscientious objectors

ISRAEL

Hillel Goral (m), aged 18

Noam Bahat (m), aged 20

Conscientious objectors, Hillel Goral and Noam Bahat, have been released from prison. Originally imprisoned for their refusal to serve in the Israeli army, the two young men were released from Military Prison near Tel Aviv on 14 and 21 February respectively. Both had been on hunger strikes in protest at their detention.

Hillel has now served a total of 63 prison days (28+28+7) and Noam has served a total of 70 days (28+28+14). Though now released, as with other objectors, both young men remain at risk of renewed imprisonment for the refusing to serve in the Israeli army. Amnesty International will continue to monitor their situation.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Israel has no alternative civilian service to compulsory military service. In Israel, conscripts who make it known that they are unwilling to serve on grounds of conscience and because they believe that the army is committing human rights violations are imprisoned. Amnesty International is concerned about the number of Israeli soldiers and reservists detained because of their refusal to perform military service or to serve in the Occupied Territories. Recently, the Israeli army has hardened its position towards these conscript conscientious objectors, who are being sentenced to repeated terms of imprisonment of between 14 and 42 days each.

NO FURTHER ACTION IS REQUESTED FROM THE UA NETWORK AT PRESENT.