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£ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

@SELECTIVE OBJECTORS TO MILITARY SERVICE

PRIVATE BARAK BEN-GAL, SERGEANT-MAJOR RONEN KATZ

AND CORPORAL YURI PINES

Private Barak Ben-Gal, Sergeant-Major Ronen Katz and Corporal Yuri Pines are currently in prison for refusing to carry out military service in the Israel Defence Force (IDF), Israel's armed forces. They have reportedly given as their reason for refusing to serve, their opposition to current IDF practices in the Occupied Territories.

Sergeant-Major Ronen Katz was born in 1963 and comes from Ashkelon. He was sentenced on 6 August 1991 to 28 days' imprisonment for refusing to carry out his reserve duty in the IDF in Bethlehem on the West Bank. This is the first time he has refused to carry out reserve duty in the Occupied Territories. He is currently held in Military Prison no. 6 in Atlit.

Corporal Yuri Pines comes from Jerusalem and is also a reservist in the IDF. He was first sentenced for refusing to serve in the Occupied Territories in 1988. On 4 August 1991 he was sentenced again to 14 days' imprisonment for refusing to carry out reserve duty in the Occupied Territories. He is currently held in a detention facility within Hazor military camp.

Private Barak Ben-Gal is 18 years old and comes from Moshav Gibton and is doing his compulsory military service. He was first sentenced on
14 July 1991 to 14 days' imprisonment. On 4 August 1991 he was sentenced to a further 14 days' imprisonment. Barak Ben-Gal fears that if he again refuses to serve in the Occupied Territories, he is likely to be sentenced again. He is currently held in an army detention facility in Megiddo military camp.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S CONCERN

Amnesty International is concerned that Barak Ben-Gal, Ronen Katz and Yuri Pines 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.