



**European
Bureau for
Conscientious
Objection**



IFOR INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP
OF RECONCILIATION

J O I N T P R E S S R E L E A S E

Drop all charges against Ruslan Kotsaba

18 July 2022

In Ukraine, a trial against Ukrainian journalist, pacifist and conscientious objector Ruslan Kostaba will be held on Tuesday 19 July 2022, simply because he publicly expressed his pacifist views.

The International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR), War Resisters' International (WRI), the European Bureau for Conscientious Objection (EBCO) and Connection e.V. (Germany) consider his case a clear politically motivated persecution, in violation of his rights to freedom of expression and freedom of thought, conscience and religion, guaranteed under Articles 18 and 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Articles 9 and 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

The organisations express their solidarity with Ruslan Kotsaba and urge the Ukrainian authorities to safeguard that all pacifists in Ukraine, including the activists of the Ukrainian Pacifist Movement, are able to freely express their opinions and continue their nonviolent activities. The organisations also recall their strong condemnation of the Russian invasion of the Ukraine, and call on the soldiers not to participate in hostilities and on all recruits to refuse military service.

The Ukrainian government should safeguard the right to conscientious objection to military service, according to the European and international standards, amongst others the standards set by the European Court of Human Rights. Ukraine is member of the Council of Europe and needs to continue to respect the European Convention of Human Rights. As now Ukraine becomes candidate to join the European Union, it will need to respect the Human Rights as defined in the EU Treaty, and the jurisprudence of the EU Court of Justice, which include the right of conscientious objection.

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