



Quaker United Nations Office

13 Avenue du Mervelet
CH-1209 Geneva, Switzerland

Tel +41 (22) 748-4804
Fax +41 (22) 748-4819
Email rbrent@quano.ch

UN Human Rights Council
Ninth session
Agenda item 3

Oral statement by Friends World Committee for Consultation (Quakers), an international NGO in General Consultative Status with ECOSOC

Delivered by Rachel Brett, Quaker UN Office, Geneva, on Tuesday 16 September 2008

Conscientious Objection to Military Service

FWCC (Quakers) welcomes the positive trends reflected in the Report of the OHCHR on conscientious objection to military service (A/HRC/9/24), at the international, regional and national levels.

In particular, the decision¹ by the Human Rights Committee is a welcome clarification of their consistent position reflected in their General Comment No. 22 on Article 18 (right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion) and Concluding Observations that conscientious objection to military service is protected under Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Around the world, hundreds of young men and women continue to be sent to prison, some repeatedly, are ill-treated, harassed and suffer discrimination, including in education, employment, and freedom of movement, for their refusal to serve or to continue to serve in armed forces, based on religious, ethical, moral, humanitarian or similar motives.²

The Human Rights Committee has made clear that States' failure to accommodate such conscientious refusal is a violation of the Covenant. We, therefore, call on all States, not only the Republic of Korea, to implement their obligations in this respect, to stop imprisoning, repeatedly punishing, and discriminating against conscientious objectors to military service, and equally (in particular, Canada) not to return them to other countries where they will be punished.

Thank you, Mr President.

¹ *Mr Myung-Jin Choi and Mr Yeo-Bum Yoon*, Communications Nos. 1321/2004 and 1322/2004

² UN Commission on Human Rights Resolution 1998/77