

Finland UPR Pre-Session

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❖ **The right to conscientious objection to military service**

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Implementation of recommendations since the last UPR

- Noted recommendation by Uruguay: “Release prisoners detained as conscientious objectors to military service and ensure that civilian alternatives to military service are not punitive or discriminatory and remain under civilian control.”
- The release of prisoners detained as conscientious objectors to military service has not been implemented.
- Civilian alternatives to military service are still punitive and discriminatory.
- Civilian alternatives to military service have not fully remained under civilian control.

New developments since the last UPR cycle

- The removal of Jehovah's Witnesses' exemption from military service in 2019
- The report of The Parliamentary Committee on Development of conscription and fulfilling national defense obligation in 2021
- Legal respect towards the *ne bis in idem* principle in 2022
- Ongoing discussions on linking the non-military service to comprehensive security
- Increase in the number of reserve objections in 2022
- Increase in the number of conscientious objectors in Belarus, Russia and Ukraine seeking asylum in 2022
- Finland's NATO membership application in 2022

Remaining concerning issues

- The discriminative nature of non-military service due to the discrepancy in duration when compared to military service
- Insufficient dissemination of information about the right to conscientious objection and alternatives to military service
- Militarisation in schools and militaristic exposure for children
- Delays and difficulties when applying for non-military service

Recommendations

1. Reduce the length of the alternative non-military service and ensure that alternative to military service is not punitive or discriminatory in its duration and nature and that it is accessible also to those who serve in the military.
2. Guarantee equal access to information regarding the non-military service for conscripts and ensure the same possibility also during the military service.
3. Release all conscientious objectors in prisons or in monitoring sentences and abolish punishments for conscientious objectors to military and alternative service.
4. Maintain under civilian control all committees and groups that are in charge of developing or maintaining non-military alternatives to military service and ensure their independence from the military authority.
5. Avoid exposing minors to military initiatives and in particular to the possibility of using weapons, even if replica or demo weapons.

Thank you!

Contact information

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