

War Resisters' International is a global network of pacifist and antimilitarist organisations, working together for a world without war.



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Dear Honourable Iryna Venediktova, Prosecutor General of Ukraine,

I'm writing on behalf of War Resisters' International to call for the immediate and unconditional end of the criminal prosecution against Ruslan Kotsaba, journalist, pacifist and conscientious objector. Ruslan Kotsaba has simply expressed his pacifist views and the criminal prosecution against him is a clear politically motivated persecution.

Freedom of expression and freedom of thought, conscience and religion, as well as conscientious objection to military service, are fundamental human rights guaranteed under Articles 34 and 35 of Constitution of Ukraine, Articles 18 and 19 of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and Articles 9 and 10 of European Convention on Human Rights. No one should be punished for exercising their human rights and expressing their views opposing compulsory military service.

We express our solidarity with Ruslan Kotsaba and we urge the prosecution to act in Kotsaba's case on the basis of human rights and rule of law, without political prejudices. Since the international civil society is concerned with the Kotsaba's trial, we ask you personally to oversee the prosecution and trial ensuring that the prosecution drops politically motivated charges and abandon demands to sentence Ruslan Kotsaba to 13 years of imprisonment with confiscation of property, which is a clearly disproportionate punishment for expression of pacifist views.

We also urge you to guarantee that all pacifists in Ukraine, including the activists of our member organisation Ukrainian Pacifist Movement, are able to freely express their opinions and continue their non-violent activity. We also urge you to 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 and United Nations.

Sincerely yours,

Igor Seke

Convenor of the War Resisters' International Executive Committee