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UN Commission on Human Rights
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Item 11(g)

Oral Statement by Friends World Committee for Consultation (Quakers)

Delivered by Eleanor Andrews, Quaker UN Office, Geneva, on Friday 1 April 2005

Conscientious Objection to Military Service

Friends World Committee for Consultation (Quakers) welcomes resolution 2004/35 adopted at last year's UN Commission on Human Rights without a vote. In particular, the need for post-conflict amnesties for conscientious objectors highlighted in the resolution remains a matter of high priority. Many conscientious objectors to military service who fled their country because there was no, or no adequate, provision for conscientious objection are still unable to return or even to visit their own country without facing penalties.

Much progress has been made at the international level on the recognition of the right of conscientious objection to military service and the requirements for alternative service. A summary of this is provided in our written statement E/CN.4/2005/NGO/83.

However, many problems remain at the national level. Some of these arise because in some States the right of conscientious objection itself is not recognised although provision is made for alternative service. We hope that the report which the OHCHR has been requested to prepare for the next session of the Commission will, in particular, address best practice concerning the issues of:

- Recognition of the right of conscientious objection to military service where conscription exists, including for those in the armed forces and those in the reserves;
- Recognition of the right of conscientious objection in volunteer armed forces and how to implement it;
- Provision of alternative civilian service; and
- Granting of asylum for unrecognised conscientious objectors and post-conflict amnesties for them.
