
JOINT PRESS RELEASE

**HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS EXPRESS CONCERN
OVER THE IMMEDIATE RISK OF DEPORTATION
OF RUSSIAN WAR RESISTER *MAKSIM KUZMIN* TO THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

March 30th 2026

The undersigned organisations express their serious concern regarding the immediate risk of deportation of Maksim Kuzmin back to Russia, as he is approaching a yet another—and probably the ultimate— hearing on April 2nd 2026 at the Regional Administrative Court in Kaunas, Lithuania.

Maksim Kuzmin is a Russian citizen from Kaliningrad and a reserve military officer who refused to support the illegal war of aggression in Ukraine and started to engage in anti-war activities and eventually was forced to flee his country and seek protection abroad. **He applied for protection in Lithuania where he has been declared a threat to national security, placing him under immediate risk.**

Background

Following the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Maksim Kuzmin publicly condemned the war and decided to leave Russia permanently.

From 1995 to 2000 he studied at the Military Engineering Academy. After graduating, he served for one year in the construction administration of the Moscow Military District, where he worked on the construction of housing for military personnel. In 2002 he left the army and subsequently spent more than twenty years working in the civilian construction sector and in business.

In November 2022 he moved to Lithuania with his family and applied for a residence permit.

Decisions of the migration authorities and court proceedings

The Lithuanian Migration Department refused to grant him a residence permit and declared him a threat to national security, citing his education at a military academy more than twenty years ago.

Maksim Kuzmin challenged this decision in court and won the case: the court annulled both the deportation order and the entry ban. The Supreme Court of Lithuania subsequently upheld this ruling.

Despite these decisions, in 2023 he was detained and had to apply for asylum in order to avoid imminent deportation to Russia.

In 2024 the Migration Department again refused to grant Maksim Kuzmin asylum and ordered his deportation to the Russian Federation, despite previous court rulings establishing that he does not pose a threat to national security.

In January 2026 he submitted complaints to the Prosecutor General's Office, the Ministry of the Interior and other Lithuanian state institutions, arguing that deportation to Russia would put his safety at risk due to his anti-war position and his status as a reserve officer.

Civic engagement in Lithuania

During his time in Lithuania, Maksim Kuzmin has been actively involved in public life. He organised a running community and helped launch the international parkrun project in Vilnius. According to the organisers, these events brought thousands of sports tourists to the city. He has also participated in anti-war demonstrations and charity sporting events supporting Russian war resisters, as well as fundraising initiatives to assist Ukraine.

Call for international protection

The undersigned organizations are alarmed that because Maksim Kuzmin is a consistent and genuine conscientious objector to war, there are substantial grounds to believe that if returned to the Russian Federation he could face mobilisation and be forcibly sent to fight in the war against Ukraine, where he could be compelled to participate in war crimes under threat of violence or severe punishment.

During his time in Lithuania, he has given no reason whatsoever to suggest that he supports Russia's criminal war against Ukraine.

We call thus for immediate international protection for Maxim Kuzmin.

Appeal to the Lithuanian Court

In light of the above, we respectfully call on the Court to:

- **carefully examine all circumstances of the case;**
- **take into account previous court rulings confirming that Maksim Kuzmin does not constitute a threat to national security;**
- **consider the real risk of mobilisation and persecution should he be deported to Russia;**
- **ensure compliance with international obligations concerning the protection of refugees and human rights;**
- **provide Maksim Kuzmin with the opportunity to obtain international protection.**

We recall that protecting individuals who refuse to participate in a war of aggression -that violates international law and involves crimes against humanity- and those who exercise the human right to conscientious objection to military service is prescribed by international human rights law and standards.

We, finally, call on the Lithuanian authority to fully align with international standards and duly implement the UNHCR Guidelines on International Protection n. 10¹.

Signing organizations (in alphabetical order)

1. Aktionsgemeinschaft Dienst für den Frieden (AGDF) – Germany
2. Association of the Greek Conscientious Objectors – Greece
3. Associazione Good Samaritan – Italy
4. Center for Encounter and active Non-violence – Austria
5. Center on Conscience & War – USA
6. Centro Gandhi di Ivrea – Italy
7. Community of Christ, British Isles Mission Center – United Kingdom
8. Connection e.V.
9. Conscientious Objection Watch – Turkey
10. Coordination des Associations et des Particuliers pour la Liberté de Conscience – France
11. European Bureau for Conscientious Objection (EBCO)
12. Fellowship of Reconciliation – USA
13. FemArtAct Social Cooperative – Greece
14. FOR India (Indian branch of IFOR) – India
15. FOR Zimbabwe (Zimbabwean branch of IFOR) – Zimbabwe
16. German Peace Society-United War Resisters (DFG-VK) – Germany

¹ <https://www.unhcr.org/media/guidelines-international-protection-no-10-claims-refugee-status-related-military-service>

17. Giuristi Democratici – Italy
18. Initiative for Conscientious Objection in Cyprus – Cyprus
19. INNATE – Ireland
20. Institute of Peace and Law – Ukraine
21. International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR)
22. International Peace Bureau (IPB)
23. Internationale der Kriegsdienstgegner*innen (IDK)
24. Internationaler Versöhnungsbund (Austrian branch of IFOR) – Austria
25. Kerk en Vrede – Netherlands
26. Mesarvot – Israel
27. MIR Italy (Italian branch of IFOR) – Italy
28. MIR-France (French branch of IFOR) – France
29. Our House – Belarus & Lithuania
30. Peace Movement of Leuven – Belgium
31. Pressenza International - Press Agency for Peace and Nonviolence
32. Stop Fuelling War, Cesser d'alimenter la guerre – France
33. Stoparmy Movement – Russia
34. Un ponte per – Italy
35. Vrede vzw – Belgium
36. Vredesactie – Belgium
37. War Resisters' International (WRI)
38. World Without War – South Korea