

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2021

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION BULLETIN - II

-Human Right Violations of
People Subject to
Compulsory Military Service

-Cases Followed By VR-DER

-Conscientious Objection
Declarations



Vicdani Ret Dernegi
Conscientious Objection Association

WHAT'S IN THE BULLETIN THIS MONTH

In the second issue of the Conscientious Objection Bulletin, you will find two statements released by our association in January and February; information about the applications for information we received from our followers regarding military service; up-to-date information on the rights violations experienced by conscientious objectors during January and February; information about the cases followed by VR-DER in January and February. You will also find a number of recent declarations of conscientious objection.

If you want to get information about the monitoring work carried out by VR-DER, you can contact us on our [website](#) and [social media accounts](#).

SHORT UPDATES:

20 January 2021:

VR-DER stands in solidarity with Ukrainian conscientious objector Ruslan Kotsaba

VR-DER has issued a statement of solidarity for Ukrainian conscientious objector, pacifist and journalist Ruslan Kotsaba. Calling for support for Kotsaba, who was on trial on January 22 and will have a second hearing on 18th March, the association called on everyone to join War Resisters' International's campaign for Ruslan Kotsaba.



Ruslan Kotsaba is being accused of treason and obstructing military operations for a video he published in 2015 in which he was calling to boycott military mobilisation for the conflict in Eastern Ukraine. Find more information at War Resisters' International [website](#).

16 February 2021:

EBCO Annual Report on Conscientious Objection to Military Service in Europe 2020 released

European Bureau for Conscientious Objection (EBCO), of which VR-DER is a member of, has released its [Annual Report: Conscientious Objection to Military Service in Europe 2020](#).

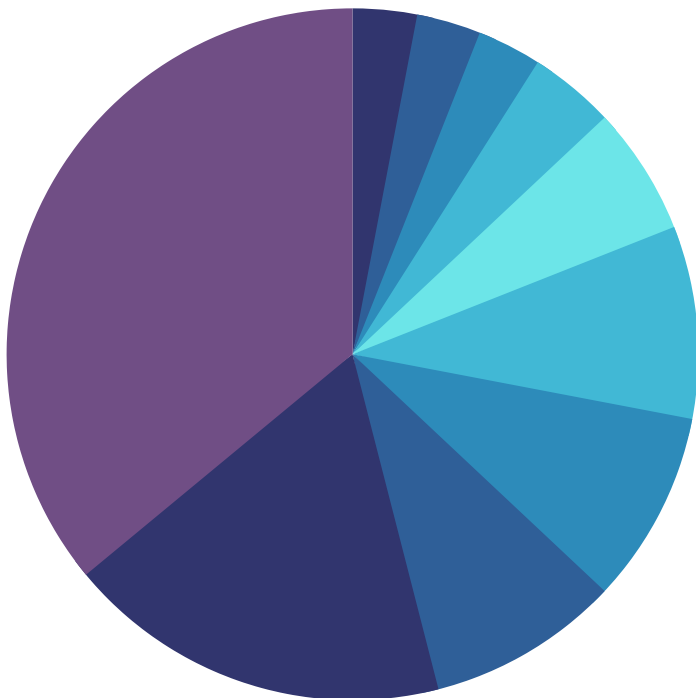
The report covers updates on conscientious objection to military service across the region of Council of Europe (CoE) during 2020. Among various issues, the report also draws attention to the disturbing number of states across Europe recruiting under-18s to their military. You can access to full report on [EBCO's website](#).

APPLICATIONS FOR INFORMATION TO VR-DER

In January and February, we received multiple applications requesting information regarding conscientious objection and conscription. In a period of 2 months, there were 44 people in total who approached to our association via e-mail and requested information on various topics. Among those, there were many people who asked for information about the right to conscientious objection; who consulted on issues related to obstruction of their right to education and freedom of travel due to compulsory military service; and who said they would like to make a declaration of conscientious objection. 9% of the 44 applications came from people who have been subjected to various rights violations due to their deserter status, and 18% of the applications were made by draft evaders

** The expressions "draft evader", "evader" and "deserter" are used in the newsletter because these people are legally defined as such.*

SUMMARY



3 Deserters (firari)

3 Those who were initiated criminal case due their evader (bakaya) or draft evader status

3 Requests for information about travelling abroad

4 New declarations of CO

6 Administrative fines

9 Membership inquiry: To be members of the association

9 Right to education

9 Evaders (bakaya)

18 Draft evaders

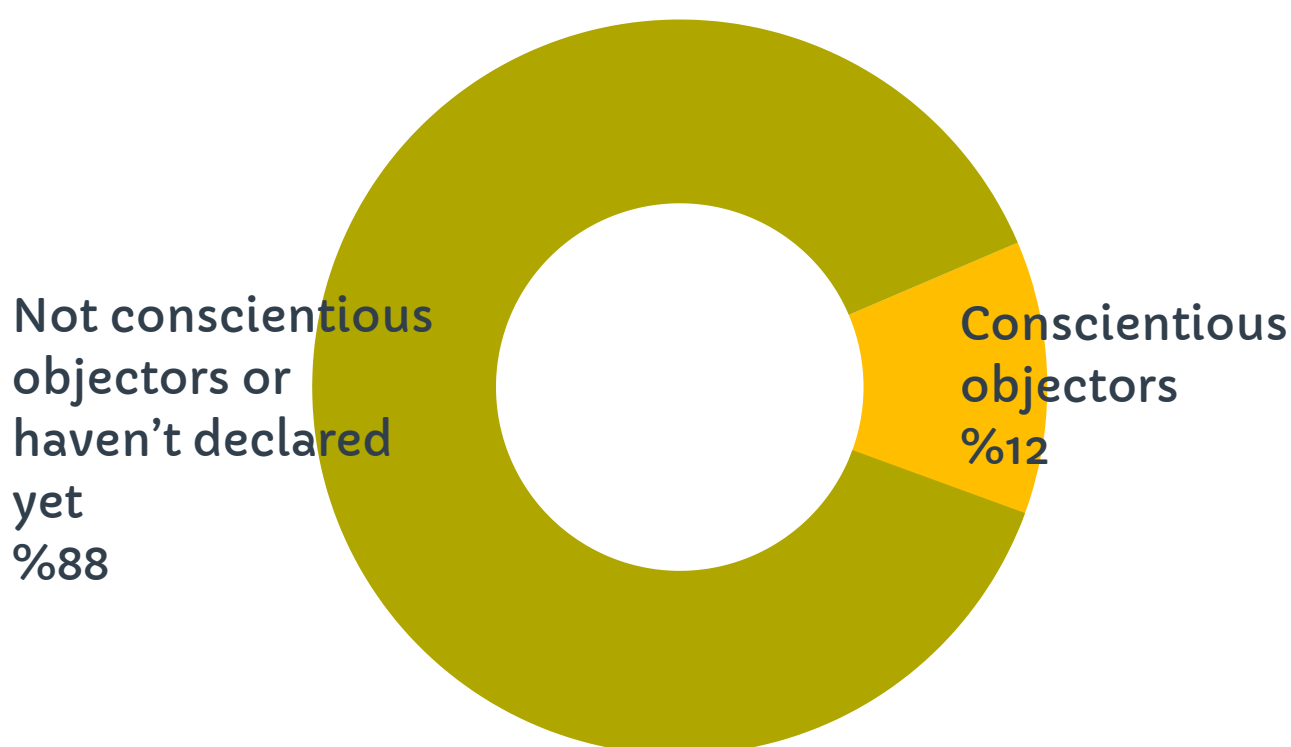
36 Those who asked further information regarding conscientious objection

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS OF PEOPLE SUBJECT TO COMPULSORY MILITARY SERVICE

During January and February, 17 people has responded to our form that we released to document the rights violations of people subject to conscription..

The majority of 17 who responded to our form aren't conscientious objectors or haven't declared yet, however their answers demonstrated a diversity of rights violations experienced by them

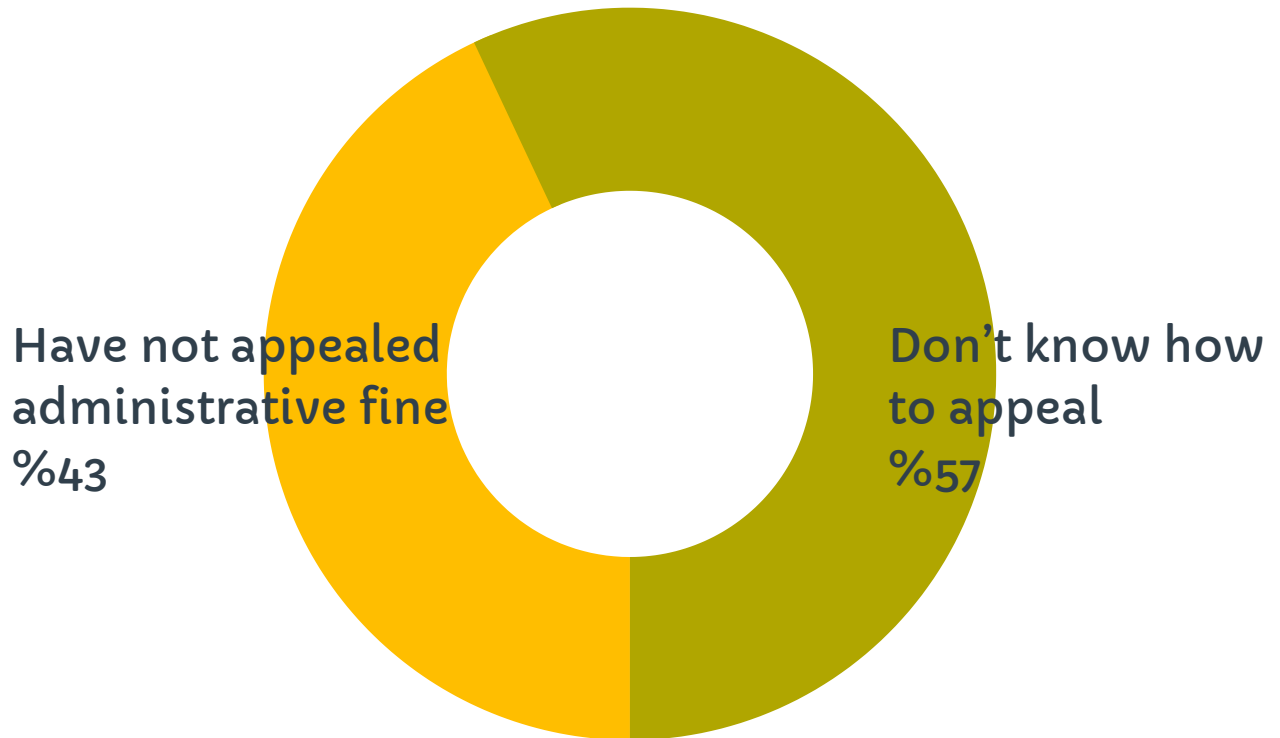
With their answers, we could therefore record the rights violations suffered by those conscientious objectors, draft evaders, evaders who avoided joining their military units, and deserters who chose to leave their units, for the last 2 months. Among those who filled out our form, there are many who could not work with insurance, were fired, could not vote, were denied education, and were subjected to other rights violations..



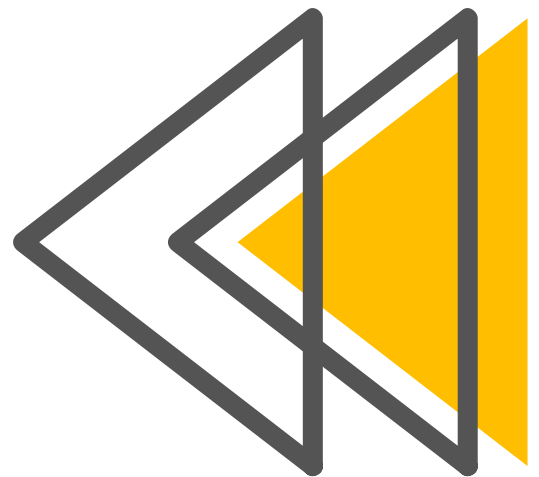
ADMINISTRATIVE FINES

55% of those who filled out our form stated that they have received an administrative fine because they are draft evaders or evaders who have not joined their military units. 32% stated that they were not issued an administrative fine, and 13% said they did not know whether an administrative fine was issued or not.

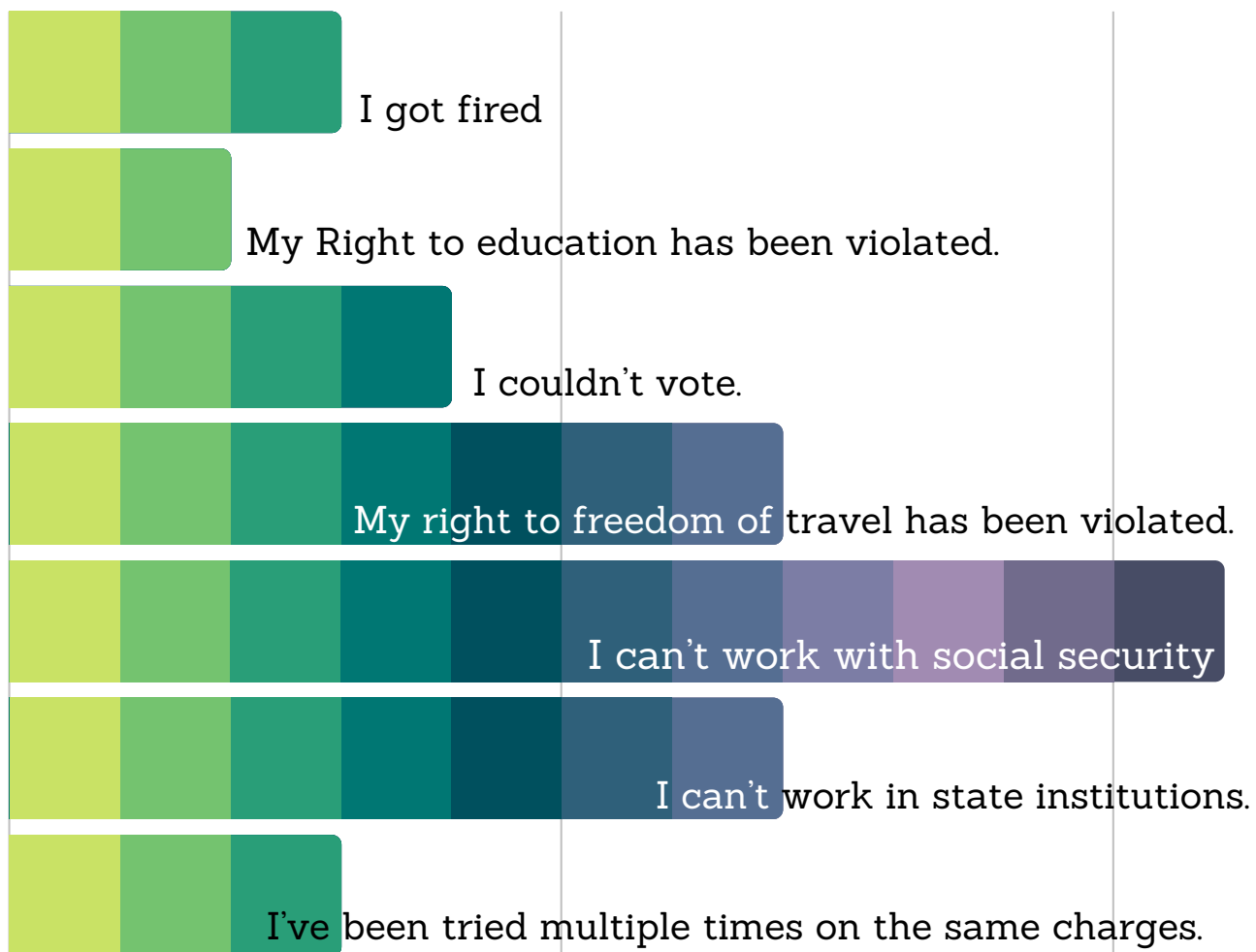
In addition, 43% stated that they have not appealed the administrative fines, while 57% said they did not know how to appeal the administrative fines.



In January and February, 9 people who filled out the form were issued approximately 45,000 Turkish Liras (approx. €4,950) in total for their status of draft evader or evader who haven't joined their military unit.



WHAT KIND OF RIGHTS VIOLATIONS?



***Rights violations reported by 13 respondents to your form*

***Respondents reported multiple rights violations they are subjected to.*

The answers given to the question of "Which rights violations have you suffered due to your compulsory military service?" is showing the variety of the violations experienced by respondents.

Most of the respondents stated that they have been subjected to more than one violation.

"Unable to work with social security" was the most common response as we received 11 responses to this question. 7 people stated that freedom of travel was restricted and 7 people stated that they can not work in state institutions.

CIVIL DEATH

The responses to the form we issued have not only provided a possibility to document human rights violations, that the people liable to military service have been subjected to but have also exhibited the state of "civil death" for those who object to exercise the compulsory military service.

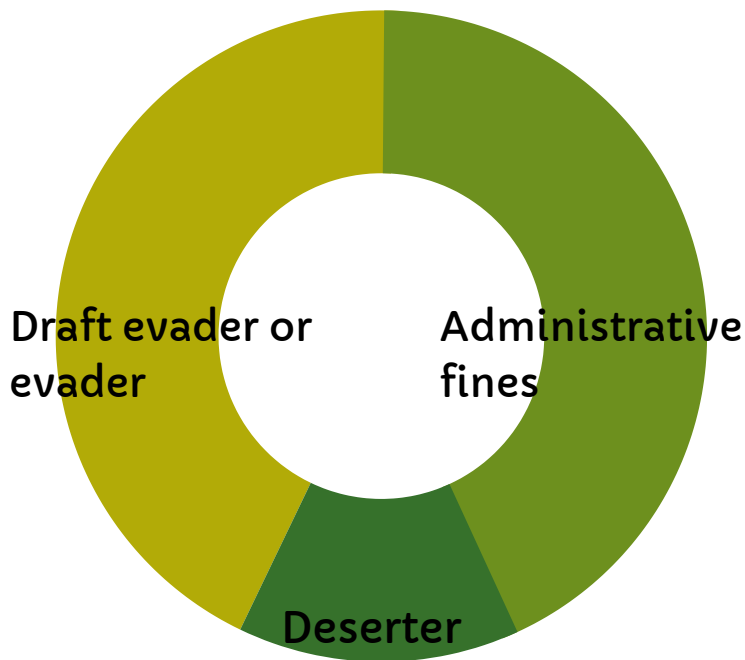
The responses of the applicants to the form shows that the violations, for those who object to exercise the compulsory military service, have been increasing incrementally and have created a chain of violations. Individuals who have been subjected live under the situation of civil death, state that they face many difficulties under different categories in their daily lives and have to abstain from exercising some of the rights.



CASES FOLLOWED BY VR-DER

Since November 2021, VR-DER has been conducting the Campaign to Support the Right to Conscientious Objection in Turkey, which has received many requests for legal support.

The association has started to follow the cases of seven different conscientious objectors within the scope of the campaign and provided legal consultancy to these objectors.



One of the seven cases followed by the association concerns an allegation of desertion; two of them are accusations of draft evasion or evasion according to the Military Penal Code.

Another allegation is based on the last paragraph of Article 63/2 of the Military Penal Code, which was repealed in 2012 and no longer exists.

In the other three files, administrative fines issued to conscientious objectors for evasion or draft evasion, for which we submitted appeals. For one of these cases, the Conscription Office canceled the fine, stating that there was a legal error. The results of appeals for two cases are awaited.

In addition, again within the scope of the legal support project, an individual complaint was lodged to the Constitutional Court for another objector's case. The number of individual complaints to the Constitutional Court, followed by the means of our association, reached to 24, including this latest case.

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION DECLARATIONS



January 3, 2021

Mahsum Duman announced his conscientious objection with a declaration he sent to the VR-DER:

"... Instead of being a part of your chauvinistic, racist, militarist policies, I declare my conscientious objection by taking sides with conscientious objectors who are against war, violence and militarism in this region! No to war, no to racism, no to oppression! If we remain silent, the lives of others will end tomorrow."



January 18, 2021

Ömer Tüzün announced his conscientious objection with a declaration he sent to the VR-DER:

"... I am against compulsory military service. I don't want to be trained to hold guns or to kill people. My best friend was shot and killed in a clash while he was doing his military service. I can't forget that. My friend lost his life for what, for which "just" war, for which "homeland"? Based on my belief and my political identity, I declare that I will not do military service and I am a conscientious objector."



February 19, 2021

Mehmet Şaban Değirmenci announced his conscientious objection with a declaration he sent to the VR-DER:

"I declare my conscientious objection with my free will. I do not want to and will not join any regular army. I fundamentally reject the militarist thought as in today's world we witness the destruction caused by militarist thought every second, or as we are directly in the middle of its destruction. ..."



February 24, 2021

Muhtesim Çelik announced his conscientious objection with a declaration he sent to the VR-DER:

"... I will not do military service due to my moral and political consistency. I will not wear that uniform, I am a conscientious objector."



February 25, 2021

Beşir Tapu announced his conscientious objection:

"... Governments are committing crimes against peoples, nature and humanity in order to protect their existence. I exercise my 'conscientious objection' right to stop the war policies of the sovereign powers that feed militarism, and to protect human and nature ..."





Vicdani Ret Derneđi

Conscientious Objection Association



+0216 345 01 00



dernek@vicdaniret.org

www.vicdaniret.org

