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movimento internazionale della riconciliazione

Sezione italiana dell'I.F.O.R. International Fellowship Of Reconciliation

To the Lithuanian Migration Department info@migracija.gov.lt
and, in copy, to
International Center for Civil Initiatives "Our House" info@nash-dom.info

MIR Italy calls for protection for Ivan Strashkevich

The *Movimento Internazionale della Riconciliazione* -Italian branch of the *International Fellowship of Reconciliation* (IFOR), a nonviolent peace organisation, would like to express its support and solidarity to the conscientious objector **Ivan Strashkevich**, a Belarusian born on 1 September 1993. Ivan is currently detained in a Lithuanian refugee camp, although he has a valid residence permit in Poland, which has not been withdrawn. The ban on entering the European Union denies him the opportunity to apply for political asylum in Poland under the Dublin Agreement, as he could have done if he hadn't applied for a humanitarian visa in Lithuania.

Indeed, we call thus for protection for him and urge the concerned authority to provide adequate assistance and free him.

We reiterate that conscientious objection to military service is a formally recognised human right, and therefore it is against international law to return a person to their own country where this human right is not fully recognized and he is at risk of persecution and human rights violations. As the UNHCR has already pointed out, a conscientious objector who risks persecution in his own country for exercising his human right, and whose life may be in danger, qualifies for international protection and refugee status. Additionally, we would like to point out that since the beginning of the year the death penalty has been introduced in Belarus, creating a serious danger also for those who refuse to serve in the army, oppose the war and exercise the human rights to conscientious objection to military service.

We trust in a positive response to our appeal to protect human rights of Ivan Strashkevich and we hope that the right to conscientious objection is fully implemented everywhere and that no one is imprisoned for exercising it.

Regards.

Ermete Ferraro, President, *Movimento Internazionale della Riconciliazione* (MIR Italy)

Naples (Italy), 3 July 2023