

## NATIONAL JEWISH CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS STATEMENT.

Without coercion, influence, and of our own free will and conscience; we, individual members of the Jewish community, have adopted the following stance:

As Jews, members of a people who possess a religious tradition of social justice and who have endured a history of oppression, we have resolved not to serve in the South African Defence Force.

South African society is founded on a system of racial inequality and discrimination, rejected by the majority of its people. The SADF plays a role in maintaining the universally condemned system of apartheid. We regard the system of apartheid as working against the interests of the people of South Africa and in obstructing peaceful development in the region. The SADF's ongoing destabilisation of the Frontline states, its role in South Africa's black townships and the general militarisation of South African society are also particularly worrying to us.

Our opposition to being conscripted into the SADF is based on our Jewish identity which consists of religious, historical, and cultural elements. Jewish sensitivity and consciousness, born out of oppression in the form of ghettos, pogroms, inquisitions, expulsions and the unique suffering of the holocaust; when combined with our religious and traditional longing for a just society, demand the active pursuit of peace and the elimination of all forms of injustice and racism.

"One who has the opportunity to protest against evil and remains indifferent is deemed culpable by G-d"  
(Shmot Rabba 1:2)

We see our objection to serving in the SADF as an expression of our Jewish faith and heritage, and as loyal to the majority of South Africans. We wish to make a constructive and peaceful contribution to South Africa's future in the interests of all its people.

There are very limited options open to those opposed to conscription. We therefore call for alternatives to be made available. We believe that non-punitive, constructive community service provides such a concrete alternative to military service. In this way, national service will become beneficial to the entire South African community.

We stand in solidarity with Jewish objectors Dave Bruce and Saul Batzofin and other imprisoned conscientious objectors and call for their immediate release.

Signed by 33 Jewish conscientious objectors, in Johannesburg and in Cape Town. 21 September 1989.