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AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE
 NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The General Assembly of the United Nations has adopted (12/20/78) a resolution recognizing the right of conscientious objection to military or police service used to enforce apartheid, a move which the American Friends Service Committee hailed as an important moral initiative by the world's deliberative body.

Staff of the Quaker United Nations Office in New York, administered by AFSC, were instrumental in the drafting of the resolution which went before the Third Committee of the U.N. The Third Committee passed the resolution early this month and sent it to the General Assembly. The Quaker U.N. staff had met and conferred last October with U.N. delegates from countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America to draft the resolution.

The text follows:

The General Assembly,

Mindful that the Charter of the United Nations sets forth the achievement of international co-operation in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion as one of the purposes of the Organization,

Recalling article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states that everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion,

Conscious that the Proclamation of Teheran, the Lagos Declaration, and other United Nations declarations, conventions, and resolutions have condemned apartheid as a crime against the conscience and dignity of mankind,

Having regard to section II, paragraph 11 of the Lagos Declaration which proclaims that the United Nations and the international community have a special responsibility towards those imprisoned, restricted or exiled for their struggle against apartheid,

Taking note of the report of the Special Committee against Apartheid contained

(more)

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in document A/33/22,

1. Recognizes the right of all persons to refuse service in military or police forces which are used to enforce apartheid;
2. Calls upon Member States of the United Nations to grant asylum or safe transit to another State in the spirit of the Declaration on Territorial Asylum to persons compelled to leave their country of nationality solely because of a conscientious objection to assisting in the enforcement of apartheid through service in military or police forces;
3. Urges Member States to consider favourably the granting to such persons of all the rights and benefits accorded to refugees under existing legal instruments;
4. Calls upon appropriate United Nations bodies, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations to provide all necessary assistance to such persons.

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