

The Pilots Have Courage To Refuse 25/09/2003

A group of Air Force reserve pilots shocked the country on the eve of Rosh Hashanah with their declaration that they would refuse to participate in "targeted killings". The Pilots' Letter, which was sent to the commander of the Air Force, raised a huge storm, and like the officers' letter that led to the founding of *Courage to Refuse*, generated a great deal of media awareness in Israel and the world.

The Pilots' Letter is very similar in spirit to the [Combatants' Letter](#) and conveys an identical message: the red line has been crossed, and there are things that Israeli soldiers mustn't do. The activities of the Israel Defense Forces in the occupied territories do not contribute to the security of Israel, and constitute an existential threat to peace and to our future.

Courage to Refuse welcomes the pilots as they join us in our struggle. We all come from the same place: from the very heart of Zionism. All of us have volunteered to fight within the framework of the IDF to in order to protect the State of Israel. Yet our adherence to the principles of Democracy, of Zionism and of Jewish Morality obligate us to refuse to take part in a national policy that is not only cruel and immoral, but is also self destructive.

The pilots are, as we were, ready to sacrifice their social status today, so to be able to look proudly in the eyes of their children tomorrow, and say to them: **We have done all we can to make Israel a better place.**

We bring you an English translation of the Pilots' Letter:

"We, Air Force pilots who were raised on the values of Zionism, sacrifice, and contributing to the state of Israel, have always served on the front lines, and were always willing to carry out any mission to defend and strengthen the state of Israel.

"We, veteran and active pilots alike, who have served and still serve the state of Israel for long weeks every year, are opposed to carrying out attack orders that are illegal and immoral of the type the state of Israel has been conducting in the territories.

"We, who were raised to love the state of Israel and contribute to the Zionist enterprise, refuse to take part in Air Force attacks on civilian population centers. We, for whom the Israel Defense Forces and the Air Force are an inalienable part of ourselves, refuse to continue to harm innocent civilians.

"These actions are illegal and immoral, and are a direct result of the ongoing occupation which is corrupting the Israeli society. Perpetuation of the occupation is fatally harming the security of the state of Israel and its moral strength.

"We who serve as active pilots - fighters, leaders, and instructors of the next generation of pilots -- hereby declare that we shall continue to serve in the Israel Defense Forces and the Air Force on every mission in defense of the State of Israel."

(The letter was signed by 27 Israeli Air Force Pilots)