

## CASE STUDY 8

### Sahar

#### A refuser

Sahar Vardi grew up in West Jerusalem, part of the city that is mostly Jewish. Her family had always been worried about the effects of the occupation. In fact, in the 1980s her father had refused to do his military service during the First Intifada.

At 14, Sahar began going to the village of Bil'in in the West Bank. Disobeying her parents, she went up to four times a week. Palestinians from Bil'in lost much of their land when Israel built its barrier. The villagers hold weekly protests at the barrier, where the Israeli army often uses tear gas, sound bombs and rubber coated bullets to drive them away.

It wasn't until she visited Bil'in that she really began to feel uneasy about joining the army when she was older. She went back to the West Bank many times.

“The shock was not from the brutality of the occupation or a specific soldier, but from witnessing the ordinary day-to-day situation of going through checkpoint, fearing the demolition of their homes and knowing that every 18-year-old soldier has the power to control their life.”

**Compiled from conversations with Sahar and the Nobel Women's Initiative.**

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REPORTS



When imprisoned, Sahar said: “The occupation is cruel and my conscience will simply not allow me to take part in the oppression of another people.”

Instead of doing military service, Sahar offered to do civil service with a group called Physicians for Human Rights, but she was not allowed to do this. Instead, she was imprisoned.

“Even though I realise that the soldier at the checkpoint is not responsible for Israel's oppressive policies, that soldier is still responsible for his conduct.”

“The blood cycle in which I live... is a vicious circle that is sustained by the choice of both sides to engage in violence. I refuse to take part in this choice.”



**Watch Sahar and other conscientious objectors in this video: Israeli Conscientious Objectors, Shministim, send letter.**

[www.december18th.org](http://www.december18th.org)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=pNjggLhQo6w](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pNjggLhQo6w)