

United Nations Association London and South-East Region Newsletter for March 2020



*At the UNA LaSER
AGM on 30 Nov 2019
Catherine Pluygers,
Chair since 2014 was
thanked and hands over
to the new Chair, Trisha
Rogers*



From the Chair – Trisha Rogers

I am honoured to be the new Chair of UNA LASER and very much look forward to working with the Executive Committee to support branches and members, to strengthen our work as critical friends of the United Nations. Please feel free to contact me on trisha_rogers@yahoo.com. We are very lucky to have working with us Autumn Thomas, who has been in touch with most branches to make sure we have your up-to-date contact details and to find out if we can support you in any way. Thank you for responding to her enquiries.

Once we have up-to-date branch information and up-to-date resolutions, we shall revise our website. At the same time, we are finalising our constitution, which has been pending for a while. Please let me know if you would like to help in either of these activities.

LaSER Resolutions

Led by our Policy Committee Chair, Peter Webster, we look forward to considering your resolutions (including updating those currently on our website) in the coming weeks. Watch for more details

Cancelled: in the light of the Coronavirus developments we are cancelling the Spring Council meeting set out below. We have left other planned events in the newsletter, but please contact the organisers of the events listed to see if they are postponing or going on-line.

Back from the Brink? Glasgow and Beyond

Originally planned Saturday 4th April

The UNA LaSER Spring Council will be held at Bermondsey Village Hall, Kirby Grove, SE1 3TD (it is

very close to London Bridge).

Tea, coffee, etc will be provided. Please bring your own packed lunches.

11:30 Regional updates and policy resolution discussions, including on UN75.

14:00 Focus on Climate Change and feeding into COP26, the main UN event of this year, which is being hosted by the UK in Glasgow. Our sessions will be led by: Dr Michaela Hegglin, a climate scientist from Reading University, Professor Nick Robbins, a political scientist from LSE's Grantham Institute and Stuart Neaverson of the Climate Coalition, to guide LaSER's contribution to the COP 26 process.

The event is free (there will be a request for donations), but please register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/back-from-the-brink-glasgow-and-beyond-tickets-95823216821>. If we need to cancel or postpone the event due to the corona virus, we shall let everyone know who has registered, so please be sure to register. People who don't have email will need to be registered by someone who does have email.

Advance notice of the UNA London & South-East Region's Summer Council:

This is to be hosted by Twickenham & Richmond UNA on Saturday 4th July from approx. 11am to 4.30pm at the Vestry Hall, 21 Paradise Road, Richmond, TW9 1SA.

Title (tbc): UN: Past. Present. Future?

All welcome. More details in the next LaSER e-newsletter!



Some Branch News

UNA Canterbury Branch

A brief report outlining key points from our AGM, held January 25th 2020

Help for victims of trafficking: John Shirley gave an update on the Soroptomists' project which his company and the branch have funded. Some continental freight vehicles now carry a multi-lingual message on the tail or side of their lorries informing trafficked or troubled individuals of a suitable UK Help Line number. This will be extended to UK lorries as the message is as relevant here.

Canterbury SDG Forum: A number of our members continue to contribute to the forum. **Carl Wright** is a key member of the newly formed Canterbury Climate Action Partnership (CCAP).

Canterbury World Peace Service 2019: The UNA website carries Nigel Gregory's report on our successful service and includes a direct link to young Pasqual Sleigh's moving climate action speech. The full service, which has presentations from David Wardrop, Carl Wright and Rick Norman is available at <https://vimeo.com/373748740>. We ask members to view this video and so justify LaSER's expense and the producer's work, Each visit gets logged and is currently a rather low number!

There is no Planet B: responding to the Climate Crisis in Canterbury Schools and Universities. Dr Stephen Scoffham gave an animated presentation on the realities of climate change. He explored how best to engage and extend young people's knowledge and awareness of the issues. He was keen to emphasise how informed and responsive young people are about these concerns. However, he impressed on the members the need to help young people recognise what they can do in their own lives to care for the environment. He observed that merely having topics in a curriculum doesn't mean

that the topic is necessarily taught well.

The Branch Executive group were all re-elected, except for Nigel Gregory who has stepped down for the present. Nigel's contribution in maintaining and extending the annual services was recognised and much appreciated.

UNA Canterbury Programme 2020 will focus on UN75 and Together1st:

It was agreed to i) Continue to work with the Canterbury SDG Forum; ii) Work towards raising the UN Flag on civic buildings and iii) initiate discussions with the future Lord Mayor on whether Canterbury might possibly become a Mayor for Peace City.

7th March: A new **UNA75 Anniversary Display** was shown at the **Fair Trade Fair**.

18th April: SDG Partnerships (SDG17). 10.00-13.00 at The Friends Meeting House (FMH CT1 2AS). We aim to identify a local link organisation to support this venture. Potential links might be with the Canterbury Society, Churches together or a lead councillor. There will be a "skype" meeting with our contact in Entebbe, Uganda.

11th July: Summer meeting (FMH CT1 2AS) **The Role of the UN in 2045** plus strawberry tea;

5th Sept.: Nuclear Conflict Resolution, (FMH CT1 2AS). Potentially with CND/CAAT.

11th Oct. (tbc) eve: The UN 75th Anniversary Service at Canterbury Cathedral will focus on **Abolishing Slavery**.

5th Dec.: AGM with a speaker on **Genocide - the Crime** (FMH CT1 2AS)

Further details available from Michael J Vince, Branch Secretary, UNA Canterbury
Mob. 07511583446 email UNA-CB@myphone.coop

Dartford: [Here is a link to the Dartford & District Newsletter](#)
Eastbourne Branch



2019 was an active year for our branch with our projects in Uganda taking up a lot of our energy. We donated a further large quantity of high-quality lifejackets for fishermen on Lake Victoria – which over 10 years of donations have amounted to some £7000 of life- saving equipment. We also expanded our tree planting programme through our unique **Mvule Project for Carbon Capture**. Yes, 'unique' because Mvule otherwise known as Iroko, has been identified by scientists as the most exceptional tree in the world to capture CO2 from the atmosphere as a rock – calcium carbonate. Our branch is now in partnership with the Welsh Government's Size of Wales 25 million tree planting programme. In 2019 we planted 16,543 of

these magnificent trees. At only 50p a tree - Why not support us? See our website: www.unaeastbourne.org

We were delighted that **LASER's annual Stevens Trophy for 2019 was awarded to Eastbourne**, perhaps for our work in Uganda or maybe for our commitment to public talks which in 2019 numbered 7, with themes on the environment, diversity, poverty and human rights, with our most successful expert led public talk in June on Modern Day Slavery and Human Trafficking attracting a large audience. This year on Sunday Feb 23rd at the Salvation Army Hall, Old Town, Eastbourne we held an event to mark International Mothers Language Day – with the theme: 'Languages without Borders' – celebrating linguistic diversity and multilingualism as forces for peace and social inclusion. Contact: ianelgie@hotmail.com

Twickenham & Richmond UNA: Saturday 25 April 2020

The Role of Small Humanitarian Groups in International Development

Venue: The Adelaide, 57 Park Rd, Teddington TW11 OAU (near Teddington Station)

This event is a pub lunch. The pub opens at 12:00. Please order your food at the bar by 12:15. The presentation will start at 12:30, and lunch will be served at 13.20.

Our speaker, Dr Alick Munro, is a trustee of Quaker Congo Partnership which raises money to help the Quaker Church in the Congo with its humanitarian efforts. In February he is visiting the area at the west side of Lake Tanganyika where the Quaker Church organises a hospital, a microcredit scheme, occupational training and peacebuilding education and funds schools. His talk will cover how best to direct our efforts to relieve poverty and famine and support commerce.

This photo shows two members of the Quaker Congo Partnership bidding farewell to Congolese friends at the end of the most recent visit.



Future events:

4 July: Hosting LaSER Summer Council, Vestry Hall, Richmond, app. 11:00-16:30
Title (tbc): UN: Past. Present. Future?

5 September: UN 75 Garden Party, Twickenham United Reformed Church

21 November: Working behind the Iron Curtain for the BBC, by Rodney Mantle and TRUNA AGM

Contact: rodneymantle@hotmail.com

**Report on 26 September 2019
HOUSE MEETING/BOOK GROUP**

The group discussed Noam Chomsky, **How the World Works**, (Hamish Hamilton 2012). The work covers so many different aspects of world domination by US commercial interests that it would clearly be impossible to treat all of them in the time. The lively discussion focused on three topics:

- 1) the subversion of democracy and national interests in many parts of the world by corporate US interests;
 - 2) the extent to which it is possible, in the world of the Internet and social media, for groups and individuals to exercise any influence; and
 - 3) the future of world governance, with the real, but still remote, prospect of a world governing body: the UN could fulfil this role if all the members of the Security Council could consistently work together.
- Such House Meetings have long been a TRUNA tradition. They are publicised solely to TRUNA members, as the venues cannot hold larger numbers.

**Westminster UNA
UN Peacekeepers Day 21 May**

Westminster UNA announces the 17th conference and wreath-laying ceremony to mark the International Day of UN Peacekeepers to be held on Thursday 21 May. As usual, the conference will be hosted by the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) in Whitehall, a short distance from the Cenotaph. More than one hundred embassies are expected to participate in the ceremony, now the largest worldwide to mark this important UN anniversary. It will start at 1.30 pm, lasting about 35 minutes. Contingents from the army, recently returned from UN peacekeeping duties, will join members of the UN Veterans Association who will provide the colour guard. Registration for the conference is open to all UNA members and the public and details will be posted on the UNA Events page and also on the Westminster UNA [Future Events](#) page



Nelson Mandela's Birthday event 18 July

Westminster UNA, together with other organisations, plans to book Trafalgar Square for a programme of music and talk, including a series of Speakers' Corner-type dialogues around the square, to be live-streamed to other cities participating in the Mandela Mile project pioneered by Westminster UNA in 2018. For details as they develop, see [Mandela Mile](#) here.

Success for *We The Peoples* Film Festival #TweetaPitch winner

Westminster UNA are delighted to congratulate Giulia Gandini who won the 2018 branch's *We The Peoples* Film Festival #TweetaPitch competition with her proposal to give a homeless person the opportunity to make a film using a mobile phone (image: Lily who filmed her life as a homeless person). The finished film, *Home Stream*, the first of two, was given its world premiere at the 2019 film festival and later received 3.5 million views on Real Stories. It is one of fifteen films selected by the Mobile Motion Film Festival 2020 (Switzerland) and has been shortlisted for the Best Mobile Short Film Award at this year's *Min Max* Film Festival in Germany. "We are so pleased for Giulia," said Karin Pointner, Associate Director of the festival, "and we look forward to holding the 2020 competition."



New Freedom of Religion or Belief Forum formed

Westminster UNA has now set up a Freedom of Religion or Belief Forum and welcomes all interested UNA members to participate. Initial work will comprise mapping current UN Human Rights mechanisms for protecting victims of religious discrimination and persecution, identifying NGOs and others already active in this field, some working in isolation, and gathering media case studies, all with a view to identifying gaps and determining where this new forum can best add value. The focus of the group would be on how to make the UN more effective, ensuring that member states comply with rulings of the General Assembly. Later, a Religion & Belief page will be added to the Westminster UNA website. The forum's inaugural meeting took place on 26 February. For further information please contact Paul Mrazek: paulmrazek@gmail.com

The UN struggles with Cyberspace legal challenges

Westminster UNA's 17th annual International Law lecture titled "In Search of the International Law of Cyberspace: A Travelogue" was given by Professor Michael Schmitt, a former USAF Judge Advocate and Visiting Professor of Public International Law at Exeter Law School. In a lively address, he described how the world continues to struggle to introduce and seek ratification of laws to contain the excesses of conventional warfare and its cruel humanitarian consequences. To address these important issues, the UN set up the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) and an Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) on "Developments in the field of ICTs", developed from the UN's First Committee which discusses and exchanges views on issues related to international peace and security, including those related to cyberspace. Both these UN initiatives have their challenges, not least because they seek to cover the same territory but from either a Western or Russian standpoint. Despite definite progress in 2015, all seemed to fall apart in 2017 with China, Russia and Cuba all questioning prior agreement on the right to respond to internationally wrongful acts, the right to self-defence and adherence to international law. However, divisions are not only on well-trodden East-West lines. Whereas the 2004 Budapest Convention on Cybercrime, endorsed by 64 states, can be updated with amendments to fill loopholes, some states seek to create a new Convention. But there is great distance between states, even those from whom one might expect convergence. France, the Netherlands the UK differ on key issues. This challenging environment offers the world community two options, to raise barriers or to lower them. Each option has advantages – but what about the victims of cyber-attacks? This might prove to be the best start point for future negotiation.

Other Events and Initiatives

Women's Advisory Council of UNA – UK Tuesday 24th March 2020 2.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m.

Members, Guests and supporters of WAC-UNA are cordially invited to attend a short business meeting followed by a talk:

Lynn Everson will speak on "Women to the Rescue! Effective strategies for increasing gender equality". Lynn has been the President of BPWUK, is a Company Director for two companies - the Managing Director of Lifeline Languages - and is Vice-Chair of WAC-UNA.

Venue: International Maritime Organisation (IMO),
4 Albert Embankments, Lambeth, London, SE1 7SR.

BOOKING YOUR PLACE - Please try to register before Saturday 21.3.2020 as space is limited, and send the attendance slip below, ASAP, to Mrs Rubi Bhattacharyya. (rubirani@yahoo.co.uk)

For the meeting on Tuesday 24th March 2020
at the International Maritime Organisation, 4 Albert Embankment, Lambeth, London, SE1 7SR.
Once registered you will be sent further details and travel instructions.

NAME

Organisation

Contact details (e-mail or phone number etc.)

I will / will not Attend the meeting on Tuesday 24.3.2020

Details of any friend(s) you are bringing.....

.....

Please complete this form and send it **by Saturday 21.3.2020** to:-

Mrs Rubi Bhattacharyya, Hon. Secretary,

e-mail: rubirani@yahoo.co.uk

Tel. 020 8959 2805 after 6 p.m. or post to 5 Reddings Close, London, NW7 4JL

IMO: This is between Vauxhall Bridge (its underground station is about 7 minutes' walk away) and Lambeth Bridge near Westminster and the Houses of Parliament. The IMO, a UN agency, does very interesting work and the building is worth a visit.

There is a good restaurant in the building, so you could have an early lunch there.

WAC-UNA hopes that you find our information and meetings useful. However, if you wish to opt out of receiving information from WAC-UNA, please mark the box to the right, with “yes”, a tick or cross, and e-mail your answer to:- spear.sally@gmail.com, with “UNSUBSCRIBE” in the subject line of the e-mail. Thank you.	<u>Unsubscribe?</u>
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We look forward to seeing you at the meeting and hope you will enjoy the discussion-

With thanks for your support and best wishes,

Sally Spear, Chair, WAC-UNA and Rubi Bhattacharyya, Hon. Secretary: WAC-UNA

African Women Front and Centre

Sunday 26 April 2020

Keyet Makonnen, Chair of the Voices of African Women Campaign of WILPF UK and Women's Officer for the UNA Laser, has convened a conference entitled **African Women Front and Centre** on Sunday 26 April 2020 at SOAS, University of London in the Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre (BGLT). This event is a satellite event of the SOAS Festival of Ideas. It is also sponsored by the Centre for African Studies at SOAS, University of London; the United Nations Association; WILPF UK's Voices of African Women Campaign; and the Women's Resource Centre.

2020 marks an important set of anniversaries in global feminist history. We have had over 100 years of women's right to vote as citizens in the West. We are celebrating 75 years since the founding of the global peace initiative that is the United Nations. We are celebrating 40 years of Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). We celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Beijing women's conference; where landmark goals were outlined and agreed upon towards the creation of a feminist future. We also celebrate the 20th anniversary of the passage of the United Nations Resolution 1325, on women, peace, and security. We have now ended the African women's decade (2010 -2020). As powerful and crucial as these milestones have been in feminist history, African and African diaspora women's voices have largely been neglected in the master narrative of feminism. As a result, we have put together this event to bring to the fore the voices of African women who have too often been left behind. This event will feature a series of panels, presentations, and keynote lectures from activists, international aid workers, and academics. Vivienne Hayes will be presenting on her work on supporting women's organisations by training them to use CEDAW. There will be a CEDAW training by the Women's Resource Centre (WRC). Dr. Adrienne Diop, the former gender expert for The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), will give a keynote presentation on the impact of neo-liberal politics on African women's economic outlook. Nwamaka Agbo will give a workshop on *restorative economics*. Kirstie Kwarteng, fresh from her TED Talk, will present on her work on founding The Nana Project. We will also hear from several campaigners from the Voices of African Women Campaign. Aleida Borges will present on African women's involvement in politics in Lusophone Africa. Professor Wendy Wilson - Fall will give a keynote lecture where she will reflect on her many years of research as an Africanist and will put forth some goals for the future. And much more.

This event is free and open to the public; registration is required. Doors open at 9:30am. Refreshments will be provided, and we ask for a donation for the lunch provided (vegan, gluten-free options will be

available). There will be access to a prayer room and a room for nursing mothers and children (with arts & crafts, films). The building is accessibility compliant for those with mobility restrictions. Please register via eventbrite at the link provided: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/african-women-front-centre-tickets-96420437123>

Please contact Stephanie Guirand at sg96@soas.ac.uk or KunmiOlatunji at ko23@soas.ac.uk with any questions or inquiries regarding this event.

**UNA Southern Region AGM Saturday 21st March 2pm
at St John's Church, St John's Road, Newbury, RG14 7PY
website: stjohnnewbury.org.uk**

Contact Graeme Panting for latest information at: oxfamexploration@hotmail.co.uk

Tributes to Fanny Lines, Dorking Branch, ex Regional Chair and HQ volunteer, with particular responsibility for arranging conferences. Suggestions for a fund in her recognition?

After the AGM business meeting there will be a discussion with representatives of London and SE Region - following the UNA-UK Conference in London in Nov 2019:

- i) How effective was it as a Members Forum? (only bi-annually), who decides on the programme and elects the chairman?
- ii) Trustees Board Elections - proposal that Candidates' contact details should be shown to make accessible.
- iii) UNA-UK lead on UN75 local programmes.
- iv) New Subscription format - consultation.
- v) Feedback from members on UNA Newsletter.
- vi) Campaigning priorities from Regions.

And finally: The future of the Southern Region, in association with other Regions and representations to H. Q.

**Reflections on Holocaust Memorial Day 2020
By Ruth Barnett MBE, Holocaust educator and writer**

There have been noticeably more events for and around Holocaust Memorial Day Jan. 27th 2020 than in any of the nineteen years since this international day of remembrance was inaugurated by the international conference in Stockholm in 2000. All of the Memorial events I attended, or contributed to, have been exceptionally moving. In particular, the main event, annually organised by the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, has become more moving and meaningful year by year. This year was superb and, for the first time televised in full to reach a worldwide audience.

It is now 75 years since the end of WWII and there is fear that the Holocaust will slip into history in the next few years when very few eyewitnesses will still be alive to give their testimony. The Holocaust cannot be

allowed to be forgotten, especially as the two main aims of remembering are far from being achieved. The first is racism of all kinds, and antisemitism particularly, are on the increase. The other aim of "Never Again" is still at the starting gate: it is "Again and Again".

How can we make progress with these two aims? We need to take a long hard look at Holocaust and genocide education at all levels. Learning and commemoration of the Holocaust and other genocides are essential but not enough without commitment to action by each of us. A 15 year old girl has shown us what can be done to challenge governments and businesses to take seriously our urgent need to protect the planet from our own abuse. People also need protection from leaders who become abusive. We need another movement to raise this issue to the same level.

I have no fear whatsoever that the Holocaust will be relegated to history any time soon. The excellent teaching/learning material produced during the last 30 years by the National Holocaust Centre, the Holocaust Education Trust, Jewish Museum and other educational organisations will keep the Holocaust alive in the minds of many generations to come. And it is improving all the time with online versions that can be streamed into schools. The second generation of Holocaust survivors, through their 2G network and G2G (generation to generation) are already giving talks about their parents' stories through their own experience of growing up with survivors; added to which, there are survivors of the Cambodian, Bosnian, Rwandan and Dafur genocides already speaking their testimonies; and there is at least one Uyghur survivor of the current identity genocide in China already speaking prolifically about the brainwashing concentration camps in Chiangying.

The general fear is much more likely to be to do with denial. There is so much that cannot yet be faced for fear of its toxicity and political implications. Genocide is still being allowed to run its course against Yazidi, Rohingya, Sudanese, Uyghur and others out of fear of standing up to abusive leaders who deny that what they do is genocide. Each genocide that is not stopped and brought to justice, creates impunity for more genocide; otherwise leaders, who want to rid themselves of minorities they perceive as a threat or a nuisance, know they can get away with committing this crime. Earlier genocides, pre-dating the Holocaust have been relegated to history, wiped out of the current public narrative and denied. The current Holocaust narrative is truncated at both ends; genocide prior to the Holocaust and currently active genocide are scarcely mentioned. Both are avoided for political expedience. Education and commemoration are claimed to be non-political. But how can the main aims be fulfilled without pressure on the whole political establishment for the necessary changes in attitude and behaviour to prevent genocide? If you don't join up the dots, the elephant remains invisible in the room. But it is still there.

Most countries have their own shameful history. Myths are created to avoid admitting the truth and to protect against exposure. This is denial on a massive scale that creates a toxic legacy that we are trapped in today. Never has there been such a dysfunctional family as the family of nations that comprise the human race. We are, as yet, only half civilised. We have come a long way from living in caves but we have a very long way to go. A civilised race would not tolerate the atrocities that our self-centred silences ignore again and again. It is time for us to work together - perhaps through our local UNAs - to create the support and pressure to enable the UN to organise an 'amnesty' in which we all acknowledge the truth of our own and each other's shameful histories, in order jointly to aim for a better more truthful world. Britain might reclaim some of her world status, lost through Brexit, by leading the way and acknowledging publicly the shameful aspects of its own past history, to encourage others to follow suit. A line could then be drawn after which sovereign immunity would no longer protect leaders who commit crimes against humanity. Perpetrators could then be held to account by a more effective set of international criminal laws. To quote RahimaMahmut (a Uyghur) "No oppressor should be able to hide from the public gaze".

To begin to turn “Again and Again” into “Never Again” we need to piece together and understand not only the historical facts but the development of the Holocaust narrative which began in YadVashem Memorial Museum in the 1960s as a Jewish story. As the rest of the world was not ready to face the reality, the Holocaust became 'Jewish property', sometimes hotly contested as such. A myth arose that mentioning anything at the same time as the Holocaust would be sacrilege and dilute its impact. Incredibly, it was not until 2000 (55 years after the liberation of the camps) that an International Task Force met and created Holocaust Memorial Day. Gradually, the narrative began to include the other groups that the Nazis designated as unworthy of life, and reflections on the genocides since 1945. However, mention of genocide prior to the Holocaust and currently active genocides is still largely avoided in the narrative. Since The Gambia recently indicted Myanmar in the International Criminal Court for genocide against the Rohingya, it is becoming permissible to mention this genocide in the Holocaust narrative.

What concerns me deeply, is the exclusion of the Ottoman genocide against some of its Christian citizens over the period 1900 -1923, especially as persecution of Christians in Muslim countries, in particular North Korea, is growing as fast as antisemitism in the West. The killing and dispossession of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire was not a 'genocide' in the official view of the modern Turkish state, a view accepted by those other governments who prioritise trade with Turkey over truth, ethics and the security of peoples worldwide. I cannot overstress the impact of the Ottoman genocide on the century that followed it, yet it scarcely enters into the public narrative of the Holocaust.

I have long been convinced that, had the perpetrators of the Armenian tragedy been brought to justice after WWI (as promised by France and Britain during the war), the Holocaust would not have been allowed to happen. Imagine 'Istanbul Trials' on similar lines to those in Nuremburg. Had Raphael Lemkins' word 'genocide' been accepted internationally when he first coined it in relation to Ottoman policy, the 'Istanbul Trials' would have led to legislation against such crimes before WWII. The lack of justice for the Armenians has ensured impunity for more abusive dictators to 'know they can get away with murder'. I suspect that the rogue leaders who plan to remove unwanted minorities will have studied this thread of increasing impunity to commit genocide without risking being brought to justice. The widespread and deep-rooted denial of genocide suits them well. For France and Britain there is extra shame attached to their standing by at the sacking of Smyrna and their parts in the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne which included the removal of Christian minorities by Kemal Ataturk's Turkish Republic.

Denial or covering up of any injustices, especially those of shameful history, does not wipe them out but ensures that they remain toxic and poison the future. This toxic impunity has prevented our best efforts in Holocaust education from achieving “Never Again”.

I write this with a sinking heart as levels of hatred and violence are increasing. Yet again we are at crisis point of violent retaliation that could plunge the world again into a major war. This does not have to happen if enough of the vast passive bystander majority pledge to become Upstanders determined to prevent it. Since 1948 we have international laws to prevent genocide. We cannot use them effectively because 'sovereign immunity' protects genocidal leaders of countries. We need sharper international laws. Myanmar is getting away with mass murder by claiming that there was no intent. If you can't prove intent to murder in domestic law, it becomes the crime of 'manslaughter'. Failure to prove intent to annihilate a whole people could at least become the crime of 'failing to protect a minority of citizens'.

It only takes good people doing nothing for bad things to happen! The silence of the bystanders is a green light for perpetrators to know they can proceed with oppression and genocide.

Change is not likely to come from the top without ordinary every-day people like you and me, in tens,

thousands and millions, 'Standing Together' and pledging to make "Never Again" a reality.



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