

London & South East Region

Resolutions agreed on 27th February 2021

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A. Introduction

Each year, UNA members and supporters in the London & South East Region are encouraged to present resolutions or amendments to previous resolutions for consideration at the Region’s Policy Forum which is open to all members and supporters. The first draft resolutions are then circulated to all members and supporters seeking further amendments. And this year the Policy Committee also encouraged further consideration of a number of the outcomes of the What Next for the UN? event organised to mark the UN’s 75th Anniversary (<https://www.whatnext4un.org/>). The final resolutions and proposed amendments were considered and adopted at our Policy Forum over Zoom on February 27th 2021.

B. Resolutions and amendments adopted

1. Arms Trade impacts on the lives of women and children

UNA London & South East Region:

- a. Recognising that women and children suffer disproportionately through armed conflicts which depend heavily on the arms trade, and the proliferation of small arms,
- b. Deeply concerned that the UK may be in breach of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), by continuing to sell arms to authoritarian regimes such as Turkey and Saudi Arabia who directly and indirectly target women,

Calls upon the UK Government:

1. To cease all arms sales to countries (such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia) who violate international humanitarian law;
2. To ensure that women comprise at least half of the UK parliamentary committees monitoring arms exports: International Development (currently 4/11); Foreign Affairs (2/11); Defence (2/11); International Trade (1/11)), and of the Department for International Trade's Export Control Joint Unit;
3. To re-establish regular and thorough scrutiny of Arms Export through the Committee on Arms Export Control or a new select committee devoted to the task;
4. To support judicial review of UK arms sales to regimes wherever there is firm evidence of very serious violations of human rights, in particular violence against women and girls or sexual violence;
5. To work with international and UK Women's NGOs on the impact of UK arms exports on women and girls;
6. To cease co-hosting UK Arms Trade Fairs with states that violate international humanitarian law in conflicts.

Agreed 27th February 2021.

2. Climate change and its impact on Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

UNA London & South East Region notes in the context of the forthcoming COP26 that:

- a. In 2020, the UN General Assembly adopted both:
 - i. the 'Follow-up to and implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway, and
 - ii. the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS',
- b. The majority of SIDS are members of the Commonwealth,
- c. A recent UNDP report records only 31 Member States who have submitted their National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPA) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change of which only 8 are Commonwealth members with only 6 SIDS,
- d. At the Climate Adaptation Summit (January 2021) the UN Secretary-General, warned of the need for a breakthrough on adaptation and resilience,
- e. That the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) will take place in Kigali (Rwanda) in June,

Calls upon the Commonwealth Secretariat and Commonwealth Member States:

To adopt bold proposals in Kigali which address the particular challenges facing SIDS to table for discussion at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26).

Agreed 27th February 2021.

3. Financial levy for clean water

UNA London & South East Region:

- a. Concerned that every day international financial transactions and markets generate millions of dollars in profit, a large proportion of which are entirely speculative, and do not create real wealth,
- b. Deeply concerned that such transactions create little income for the wider population,
- c. Noting that a 0.05% levy on such transactions would yield enough income to ensure that every man, woman and child on the planet had access to clean water and sanitary provision,
- d. Conscious of the need to control international health issues that can exacerbate global pandemics,
- e. Keeping in mind that in 2016 both China and the US Democratic presidential candidate urged similar measures,

Calls upon the UK government:

1. To work for the adoption by the UN of an international agreement to impose such a levy on all financial transactions over £100,000, including high frequency transactions;
2. To set up, with the income thus generated, a special fund to ensure that every man, woman and child on the planet gains access to clean water and sanitary provision.

Agreed 27th February 2021.

4. Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR)

UNA London & South East Region:

- a. Noting the deterioration of civil and political rights in Hong Kong and the challenges facing the 'one country, two systems' model agreed between the UK and China in 1984,
- b. Noting the peaceful mass protests for democracy and full implementation of the Basic Law, exercising fundamental rights to freedom of assembly and expression,
- c. Noting the UK government views the national security law introduced on 30th June 2020 as a violation of the Joint Declaration, and have pledged that British National (Overseas) status holders and their dependents will be eligible to live and work in the UK for five years, apply for settled status and seek citizenship after a further year,
- d. Noting that the National Security Law criminalises activities including undermining the power of the central government, and allows the National Peoples' Congress to interpret Hong Kong law,
- e. Noting that the National Security Law introduced by Beijing has no democratic foundation in Hong Kong and that a Beijing hardliner has been appointed as head of a powerful agency to oversee implementation,
- f. Noting arbitrary arrests without bail of Hong Kong pro-democracy protesters, lawmakers and business leaders have been made under the National Security Law,
- g. Noting that the National Security Law has been used to force HSBC to close the accounts of an exiled HK democracy activist "as a cost of doing business" in Hong Kong,
- h. Expressing deep concern about incidents of violence on all sides and the sentencing of pro-democracy demonstrators and reports of police violence in Hong Kong in contravention of the Sino-British declaration,

Calls on the UK Government:

1. To work with other countries, the G7 and the EU, to encourage Beijing to retract the National Security Law;

2. To consider expanding the right of abode in the UK further and to help create an international 'lifeboat' system if the situation in the region deteriorates further;
3. To work with the Chinese government to fulfil the promises made during the handover;
4. To call for open dialogue between the Hong Kong authorities and people on this sensitive issue;
5. To reaffirm its moral and legal responsibility to support and uphold democracy, the rule of law and fundamental human rights in Hong Kong;
6. To suspend (with our partners) all crowd control equipment export licenses to Hong Kong;
7. To use the UK's Global Human Rights Sanctions Regulation to hold Hong Kong and Chinese officials to account in the event of any gross violations or serious breaches of human rights in Hong Kong;

Further calls on the UK Government to work with the UN and all member states:

8. To call for an immediate end to violence;
9. To ask the authorities for restraint and to protect the human rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Basic Law;
10. To appoint a UN Special Rapporteur to investigate all claims of the use of excessive force against demonstrators.

Agreed May 16th 2020 & updated 27th February 2021.

5. Human Rights

UNA London & South East Region:

- a. Mindful that in 75 years the UN has created an impressive body of law between nations greatly contributing to world peace and to fundamental human rights for all,
- b. Recognising that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is widely respected, and is given enhanced status by customary international law, and that all international human rights treaties take their source from the UNDHR,
- c. Seriously concerned that not all UN member states ratify or accede to all human rights treaties and that many make reservations to a number of specific provisions of the treaty on becoming a party,
- d. Welcoming the UK's past leadership at the UN Human Rights Council on issues such as violence against women and girls, modern slavery, Sri Lanka and the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Iran and congratulates the UK on its election to the Human Rights Council for the period 2021-2023,
- e. Welcoming the UK's contribution of \$9.2m to the Office of the High Commission for Human Rights in 2020,

Calls on the UN:

1. To intensify efforts to achieve ratification of all human rights treaties by all member states;
2. To encourage the withdrawal or removal of all reservations made to human rights treaties, and work towards the prevention of any reservations upon future ratification of, or accession to, existing and future human rights treaties;
3. To strengthen the Human Rights Council and human rights treaty bodies and to increase their capacity to ensure full implementation of human rights treaties and the protection of human rights worldwide;

Calls upon the UK Government:

4. To honour the declarations of government ministers to “help strengthen the Council, and to support countries working to improve their human rights record” including by engaging constructively with all UN human rights mechanisms and Special Procedures, responding positively (and with respect) across government to UN expert investigations and enquires and by ensuring that the Human Rights Council and treaty bodies are given all the means necessary to fulfil their mandates;
5. To ensure that any future changes to UK human rights law strengthen, rather than weaken, the protection of universal human rights (including social and economic rights) in the UK and to refrain from introducing exemptions for acts taking place outside the UK;
6. To adopt an ethical foreign policy which prioritises the advancement of human rights as an aim in itself;
7. To desist from shielding allies where criticism is justified;
8. To ensure that aid spending takes account of human rights concerns;
9. To refrain from withdrawing from existing human rights commitments.

First agreed 24th November 2018 & amended 27th February 2021.

6. Maximising the impact of the UN’s work

UNA London & South East Region:

Recognising the value of a continuous focus on good practice, and alignment of efforts across the UN system to maximise the impact of its work,

Calls on the UN to maintain a focus on:

1. Identifying and combatting the root causes of problems globally;
2. Encouraging in-country projects to be community-led;
3. Establishing global reward and recognition schemes to incentivise change and embed goals such as the SDGs in economic systems (for example the food system);
4. In work requiring social transformation, working with all members of civil society, particularly marginalised groups, to build a social revolution that promotes shared ownership and responsibility;
5. Ensuring that youth is represented even in the highest fora, despite local and national cultural obstructions;
6. Adopting multi-stakeholder approaches to new challenges (such as digital issues) including a wide range of actors such as companies, civil society, NGOs and human rights watchdogs.

Agreed 27th February 2021.

7. Our world after the pandemic

UNA London & South East Region:

- a. Mindful that over 2m people have died worldwide from COVID-19,
- b. Aware that lockdowns are economically ruinous and are impacting disproportionately the lives of the poor and vulnerable,
- c. Acknowledging that many countries were ill-prepared for the crisis,
- d. Regretting that member states gave priority to national action over a co-ordinated international response,
- e. Conscious that the WHO’s mandate is to inform rather than to direct global health policy,

Calls upon the UN:

1. To set up a task force to develop a blueprint for the management of future pandemic outbreaks, including:
 - i. The fair and equitable distribution of all available vaccines globally;
 - ii. Measures to mitigate the spread of the virus that are proportionate to the severity and limited to the duration of the crisis in conformity with the fundamental principles of human rights;
 - iii. Financial support for countries least able to withstand severe economic trauma;
2. To undertake an extensive audit of Member States' responses to the pandemic in order to explain its origins and causes and to propose ways of preventing similar catastrophes;
3. To strengthen the WHO to enable it to lead proactive monitoring and intervention to halt potential pandemics, as well as to coordinate pandemic responses;
4. To strengthen the legal obligations of all member states to take all possible steps to prevent the spread of communicable diseases (to safeguard their own residents, as well as the populations of other countries) and to give early full, accurate and honest information to the WHO to enable it to take appropriate action.

Agreed 27th February 2021.

8. Palestine 100 years after the Balfour Declaration

UNA London & South East Region:

- a. Notes that November 2017 marked the centenary of the Balfour Declaration by the UK Government about the future of Palestine as a shared Jewish and Arab homeland which established the "dual obligation" that became part of the League of Nations Mandate for Palestine:
 - (i) the establishment in Palestine of a national home for Jewish people ...,
 - (ii) the clear understanding that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine,
- b. Believes that attention should be drawn to failure to respect or carry out the second part of the dual obligation as the land allocated to Palestinians has dwindled to tiny broken-up areas, and some three-quarters of a million settlers live in illegal Israeli settlements built on Palestinian land,
- c. Denounces the discriminatory regime codified by the Nation-State law,

Calls upon the UK Government

1. To oppose the continuation of the occupation and further settlement activity and any attempt at annexation of the Occupied Territories by Israel,
2. Whilst acknowledging Israel's right to full membership of the UN, to work at the UN to achieve the recognition of the rights of Palestinians to be full citizens of a sovereign UN member state,
3. To encourage the Israeli government at the UN to give Palestinians now living in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory the same rights as their Jewish neighbours to ensure greater trust between both communities as a first step towards a more long-term durable resolution of the conflict on the basis of the two states solution in accordance with long-standing UN resolutions and international opinion or, if that cannot be achieved, to reconsider the practicality of all approaches that have previously been advanced to solve the problem, one of which could be a single democratic state.

First Agreed 26th May 2018, updated May 16th 2020 & 27th February 2021.

9. Promoting peace

UNA London & South East Region:

Recognising the importance of the UN Culture of Peace programme as reinforced through the UN General Assembly adoption of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010,

Calls on the UN:

1. To encourage nations to strengthen the capacities of education institutions and other civic society bodies to raise awareness of conflict prevention and peacebuilding;
2. To encourage negotiators in all settings to respect, understand and take account of each others' interests, and share publicly evidence to that effect as part of reaching mutually acceptable outcomes;
3. To encourage media regulatory reform which promotes post-conflict peace settlements and their implementation, and which restricts the use of the media for non-inclusive factionalism.

Agreed 27th February 2021.

10. Recognising Ecocide as an international crime

UNA London & South East Region:

- a. Recognising that the nations of the world have a collective duty to protect the natural world,
- b. Believing that long term damage to the environment of planet Earth is caused by actions seeking short-term economic benefits by both corporations and governments,
- c. Concerned that irreparable and long-term damage is being done to soil, forests, atmosphere, oceans, and fresh water threatening to make much of the world uninhabitable for all forms of life,
- d. Concerned also that the damage is rendering all development unsustainable and is causing long term harm to the world population and biodiversity by contributing to the pollution of the air, land and water as well as to the food chain,
- e. Welcomes the development of legal precedents by Courts all over the world including rulings that governments' efforts in fighting climate change are inadequate, as in the case of Urgenda Foundation vs the State of Netherlands and the ruling of the Paris administrative court against the French Government,
- f. Noting proposals to establish an International Court for the Environment,

Calls on the UN

1. To adopt a new international legal instrument and to encourage the adoption of national legislation which provide for personal civil and criminal liability of corporate executives and government ministers for damages made to the eco-system;
2. To set up monitoring and prevention procedures and legal enforcement mechanisms.

Agreed 27th February 2021.

11. Refugees and Asylum Seekers in London hotels and elsewhere

UNA London & South East Region:

- a. Concerned by continuing shocking reports of poorly organised hospitality in London hotels for asylum seekers and refugees awaiting determination of their status by the Home Office ([The Independent, 14 February](#)),
- b. Welcomes the decision of the Home Office to ensure the transfer of these asylum seekers and refugees from these hotels to suitable long-term accommodation ([The Independent, 24 February](#)),
- c. Determined to prevent any repetition of the chaotic decant of asylum seekers and refugees to those hotels in 2020 in the course of this new initiative, and
- d. Dissatisfied with the continuing lack of an overarching strategy shown by the Home Office,

Resolves:

To join the London Initial & Contingency Accommodation Civil Society Forum;

Calls upon the UK Government:

To ensure that the Home Office works with NGOs experienced in asylum and refugee matters to resolve these matters and report upon the steps taken to the Home Affairs Committee before parliament recesses in July 2021.

Agreed 27th February 2021.

12. Sri Lanka

UNA London & South East Region:

- a. Noting that it has been 12 years since the end of the war in Sri Lanka, and yet hardships and distress, affecting widows especially, continue in the North and East of the country, and restrictions on freedom of expression continue,
- b. Regretting the decision taken in February 2020 by the recently elected President to withdraw from the UN Human Rights Council's resolution 30/1 on reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka,
- c. Acknowledging the concerns of the Core Group on Sri Lanka about the prospects for accountability in Sri Lanka through domestic or hybrid mechanisms¹,

Calls upon the UK government:

To sponsor a New Resolution at the 46th session of the UN Human Rights Council which:

1. Establishes an **International Independent Investigative Mechanism** to collect evidence of the most serious international crimes and violations of international law and to prepare files for criminal prosecution, which would take into account evidence from the Tamils affected by the genocide and the evidence in the OISL Report of September 2015;
2. Calls upon the UN Security Council and the UN General Assembly to **refer it to the International Criminal Court (ICC)** to investigate the crime of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity;
3. Mandates the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to continue to monitor Sri Lanka for ongoing violations and to establish a field presence in country.

First agreed 25th November 2017, amended May 16th 2020 & 27th February 2021.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/un-human-rights-council-45-statement-on-behalf-of-the-sri-lanka-core-group>

13. Strengthening training and leadership for UN peacekeeping and peace-building missions

UNA London & the South East Region:

- a. Firmly believing that effective UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding is the best and most cost-effective way to maintain international peace and human security,
- b. Noting that 45 UN Member States host members of the International Association of Peacekeeping Training Centres (IAPTC),
- c. Further noting that whilst the UK:
 - i. Is the fifth largest contributor to UN peacekeeper operations budget and a P5 member,
 - ii. has agreed to the UN Action for Peace (A4P) Declaration of Shared Commitments on Peacekeeping Operations,
 - iii. has troops serving with the UN in Mali, and previously in South Sudan and Somalia,
 - iv. seeks to be a stronger force for good in the world in a post-Brexit 'Global Britain', it is only the thirty-seventh Troop Contributing Country (TCC) by numbers and has no dedicated UN Training facility,

Calls upon the UK government:

1. As a responsible P5 member, to increase its contribution in troops and police to UN Peacekeeping duties including an increased number of women in both roles, and to share its valuable expertise;
2. To assist the UN Department of Peace Operations by increasing support for its Integrated Training Service (ITS);
3. To establish a dedicated Peacekeeping Training Centre to prepare troops, police and civilians of all ranks/grades, both from the UK and other troop contributing countries, for UN Peacekeeping deployments including through training in working with local and international NGOs and awareness of the role of women in peace and security.

Agreed 27th February 2021.

14. UK Aid budget

UNA London & South East Region:

- a. Noting that the UK is one of the P5 at the UN and therefore must lead by example,
- b. Further noting that the Covid pandemic has decimated progress achieved by the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals and has increased poverty,

Calls upon the U.K. government:

1. To retain its legal commitment to 0.7% of its GNI for aid spending and seek to maintain its pre-pandemic spend;
2. To direct aid to where it is most needed rather than to pursue short-term commercial interests;
3. To fully support the continued existence of a robust review committee on aid;
4. To maintain strong capability and capacities to deliver aid effectively that were previously the mandate of DfID.

Agreed 27th February 2021.

15. Vaccination for Palestinians living in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT)

UNA London & South East Region noting:

- a. That Israel has vaccinated Palestinian prisoners, health workers and a number of other Palestinians living in East Jerusalem,
- b. That a number of international organizations such as the WHO, are trying to secure and administer the vaccines in the OPT,
- c. That Israel has a legal responsibility to vaccinate the 5 million Palestinians subject to military occupation of the area,
- d. Under Article 56 of the 4th Geneva Convention, an occupying power has the legal responsibility to ensure that all citizens are vaccinated to 'combat the spread of contagious diseases and epidemics', a responsibility which is not currently being fulfilled in Israel/Palestine,

Calls upon the UK Government and the WHO:

1. To put pressure on the Israeli government to ensure a fair distribution of the vaccine;
2. To highlight the two-tier health system which operates in Israel/Palestine;
3. To send observers to Israel to monitor and highlight the flaws of their health policies concerning the Palestinian people.

Agreed 27th February 2021.

16. Women, Peace and Security

UNA London and SE Region:

- a. Recognising that Security Council Resolution 1325 (and those which followed) are essential to the protection of women in conflict and to the achievement of international peace and security and welcoming the government's commitment to this agenda over time including the UK's 4th National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security,
- b. Welcoming the commitment to strengthen the UK capabilities in Strategic Outcome 7 of the National Action Plan, but concerned that no indication of the budget has been given for this important initiative,

Calls upon the UK government and the Security Council:

1. To apply a human rights based approach as a framework for the future work on Women, Peace and Security including economic and social rights rather than focussing only on security considerations;

Calls upon the UK government:

2. To include the role of the Arms Trade Treaty UNATT and also the post conflict situation in Northern Ireland within the scope of work on Women, Peace and Security;
3. To examine how upholding the rights of refugees and asylum seekers coming to the UK can advance the Women, Peace and Security agenda and make necessary adjustments;
4. To ratify the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence;
5. To appoint a special envoy for Women, Peace and Security at the new FCDO;
6. Provide adequate provision of funding for implementation of the National Action Plan;

Calls upon the Security Council:

7. To adopt a periodic review of resolution 1325 incorporating updates to reflect innovatory practice from local, regional and national level;

8. To support a significant provision of financial resources to women's NGOs at all levels who are working to prevent armed conflict;

On Mediation/Peace Building

Calls upon the UK government:

9. To encourage funding, promote training and work towards the establishment of international professional standards for international peace mediation monitors;
10. To call for the provision of gender training for all UN peace mediators;
11. To ensure greater use by the UN of women-led negotiations;

Calls upon the Security Council:

12. To enable the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (UNDPPA) to strengthen partnerships with women NGO peace makers;

On Peacekeeping

Calls upon the UK government:

13. To ensure a better gender balance in the UK armed forces, reserve forces and the UK Cadet Class Association;
14. To expand gender training conducted by the British Peace Support Team;
15. To show global leadership by both advocating the provision of, and providing more female peacekeepers;

Calls upon the Security Council:

16. To encourage countries to allocate military and police officers to peacekeeping operations which include women at all levels;
17. To ensure standard and globally consistent training of peacekeeping troops. And to include gender training and proper screening of peacekeepers in relation to past behaviour;
18. To ensure there is a verifiable independent monitoring and accountability of peacekeeping forces from different countries.

First agreed 10th March 2018, amended 27th February 2021.

17. Yemen

UNA London & South East Region:

- a. Noting that after nearly six years of war, Yemen's famine is the world's worst in 100 years: 100,000 children have died. 10 million adults and 500,000 children face starvation,
- b. Noting that four million people are internally displaced; only 22% of rural and 46% of urban population have public water supplies (intermittently); and that there are one million suspected cholera cases,
- c. Further noting that 24.3 million people, including 12m children require humanitarian assistance, that women and girls are disproportionately affected with 1m malnourished pregnant women and 120,000 women and girls at risk of violence, while UN Donors have cut pledged funds by 50% and the number of people the UN can feed has dropped from 13m to 8m,
- d. Noting that the UN Security Council's Panel of Experts has described Saudi airstrikes against civilians as violations of international humanitarian law, that the UK is, behind the US, the second supplier of arms, including aircraft and bombs to Saudi Arabia, and that

the Houthis have also been accused of grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, laying 100,000 land mines, killing children by sniper fire in Taiz and shelling refugee camps and civilians notably in Marib as they advanced on the city which is home to a million internally displaced people thus increasing the risk of a further humanitarian crisis,

Calls upon the UK Government:

1. To begin informal Security Council discussions on a new resolution following UNSCR 2216 which will recognise the pluralistic nature of post-Conflict Yemen and reinforce the need for a negotiated nationwide ceasefire;
2. To use its leverage with Saudi Arabia, Iran and through direct talks with the Houthis:
 - (iii) To pursue a ceasefire and the resumption of direct talks;
 - (iv) To demand that Saudi Arabia put an end to its airstrikes on populated areas;
 - (v) To demand an end to Houthi cross-border attacks, credible long-term assurances for the security of the Saudi border and a halt to Houthi military advance on Marib;
 - (vi) to demand an end to Saudi blockade and resumption of fuel supplies to Yemen;
3. To double UK humanitarian funding for Yemen from £200m to £400m;
4. To urge the Saudis, Kuwait and the UAE to increase humanitarian funding to the UN, Noting that these countries have substantially cut back their funding for Yemen, with the UAE not providing any aid in 2020;
5. Noting the US decision to stop supporting the Saudi military campaign, to suspend all arms sales to Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and all combatants in Yemen;
6. To support the independent international investigation mandated by the UN Human Rights Council into violations of international humanitarian law by all combatants in Yemen.

First agreed 24th November 2018, amended May 16th 2020 & 27th February 2021