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**2023 - Issue No. 3**

## Table of Contents

### From Our Chair

- UN Reform
- Remembering Bruce Kent

### Campaigns

- Oceans
- Climate Change
- Stop Killer Robots

### Branches

- LASER Website
- Managing Data

### Events

- UNA-UK
- UNA Harpenden
- UNA Westminster
- UNA LASER Summer Council
- American Friends of Combatants for Peace

### LASER Pulse

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**Trisha Rogers**

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**Trisha Rogers**

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## UN Reform

We are in a time of several global crises. Ghana President Akufo-Addo recently reminded us to be positive as “[Crises are the best time to make reforms.](#)” What are the priorities for reform of the UN? UNA-UK former Chief Executive Natalie Samarasinghe has written about 5 ways in which she feels the UN should adapt to be part of the solution to the current widespread lack of trust. These are: help globalists become nationalists; remedy gaps and double standards; get localization right; make ‘multistakeholderism’ the norm; be transparent on appointments. See Natalie’s article and add your comments [here](#).

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## Remembering Bruce Kent

At the beginning of March, a walnut tree was planted in Finsbury Park in memory of Bruce Kent, an inveterate peace campaigner and long-time member of UNA. Around 200 people attended the ceremony organised by CND, with Hilary Evans flying the UN flag. You can see the event [here](#).

## Campaigns

### Oceans

Our Climate and Oceans Officer, Gonzalo Alvarez, calls the remarkable new *UN Oceans Treaty* “a landmark achievement for the World Oceans; a historic triumph for multilateralism”. He describes the Treaty more fully [on our website](#). For the treaty to come into effect, we need [to persuade our MPs](#) to urge the government to ratify this treaty. Gonzalo writes, “This Ocean Treaty gives us some hope for the future of this damaged planet.”

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## Climate Change

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People across the country are coming together between **10th and 18th June** in a week-long celebration of community action to tackle climate change and protect nature. There is still time to plan local events for this [Great Big Green Week](#), coordinated by the Climate Coalition (of which LASER is a member).

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## Stop Killer Robots

In February, 33 states from Latin America and the Caribbean issued a historic call from the region for “the urgent negotiation of an international legally binding instrument on autonomy in weapons systems.” Currently, no specific international law regulates the use or development of autonomous weapons. UNA-UK, together with the Stop Killer Robots campaign, has been calling for this legal gap to be addressed for over ten years. As the deployment of systems with autonomous capabilities has been reported in Ukraine and Libya, this objective has become an urgent priority. There is further information [here](#) from which you can urge your MP to persuade the UK to push for a new international law.

## Branches

### LASER Website

We hope you find our website useful. Thanks to Annesha Kar Gupta, all events publicised in *Pulse* are on the [Events](#) section of our website. You can also directly consult [past editions of Pulse](#), as well as finding previous LASER [Policy Resolutions](#), along with government responses to them. We often include the backgrounds to our campaigns in our [News](#) section. The current UNA Public Liability Insurance that covers branch events is [here](#).

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## Managing Data

It is important that we respect the privacy of those who have shared their contact details with us. Often people are happy to have their details shared with others with common interests and goals. However, if you have not informed them that their details will be shared, please blind copy (in the BCC field at the top of emails) rather than publicly copying emails to long lists of recipients.

## Events

### UNA-UK

**The UNA-UK Policy Conference** will be held online only (as a result of the rail strike) on **1<sup>st</sup> April. 10:00 – 16:30** Therefore UNA LASER will not be holding a Spring Council and Policy Conference; we encourage all our members to support this national event to consider key international issues. It will include an opportunity to hear from the staff and Chair of UNA-UK. The cost is £5. The deadline for registration has been moved to **Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> March**. Please register [here](#).

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## UNA Harpenden



On **22 April, 10:30-12:30**, UNA Harpenden is holding a Discussion Group Meeting on ***The NHS: Reform or Privatised?*** at **Park Hall, Leyton Road, Harpenden AL5 2LX**. Participants will consider the NHS's operational problems, structural problems, threats or risks, strategic solutions and tactical solutions. [Registration](#) is required no later than **April 2**.

## UNA Westminster

On **2 May, 18:30**, UNA Westminster is holding a public meeting in **Room 4A, House of Lords** on ***Towards Press Freedom: New hope or false dawn?*** to mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of World Press Freedom Day (3 May) and also the 10th anniversary of the *UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists*. Speakers will include: **Lord David Neuberger of Abbotsbury**, Chair of the High Level Panel of Experts on Media Freedom; former President of the UK Supreme Court (invited); **Amberin Zaman**, UK-based Turkish journalist, *AI-Monitor* international correspondent; Coalition of Women Journalists press freedom 'Hero'; **Marianna Spring**, BBC Disinformation and Social Media correspondent (invited); **William Horsley**, UK Chair, Association of European Journalists.

On the eve of high level meetings at the UN and at UNESCO, our speakers will present bold but practical pathways to reclaim the information sphere for unhindered journalism, open public debate and free and fair elections. Admission free by registration only on [UNA Westminster UNA Future Events page](#).

On **23 May, 13:00 – 15:00**, UNA Westminster, with UNA-UK and the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) is organising the **20<sup>th</sup> International Day of UN Peacekeepers Conference (online)**, commemorating the International Day of UN Peacekeepers with practitioners, academics and policymakers focused on peacekeeper training. This event will pay tribute to the men and women who have served and continue to serve in United Nations peacekeeping operations, for their high level of professionalism, dedication, and courage, and to honour the memory of those who have lost their lives in the cause of peace.

The keynote Folke Bernadotte Memorial Conversation will be held between **Dr Karin von Hippel**, RUSI Director-General and Nicholas Haysom, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General and Head of the UN Mission in South Sudan. There will also be a Panel Discussion on Peacekeeping Training worldwide.

The free event is open to all. [Please register here](#).

On **25 May, 13:15**, at the **cenotaph in Whitehall**, UNA Westminster is organising the **20<sup>th</sup> Annual Wreath-laying Ceremony to mark the International Day of UN Peacekeepers**. This ceremony pays tribute to the men and women who have served and continue to serve in UN peacekeeping operations, for their high level of professionalism, dedication, and courage, and to honour the memory of those who have lost their lives in the cause of peace. The ceremony will be joined by representatives of government, the armed services and police, and members of the diplomatic community. The Band of the Royal Marines will provide musical support. All are welcome to attend.

On **12 July, 18:30**, in **Room1, House of Lords**, UNA Westminster is hosting a public meeting on ***Who cares about human rights beyond the horizon?***. The speaker will be **David Hammond**, Chief Executive, Human Rights at Sea.

This century saw a sharp rise in piracy in the Indian Ocean, leading to the capture for ransom of passing cargo ships. This revealed a shocking truth, well-established mechanisms for valuing and negotiating the release of a ship's hull and its cargo, but none for securing the safety of its crew, destined to remain hostage in appalling conditions, sometimes leading to their death. David Hammond will review progress towards international policy change and introduce the new *Geneva Declaration on Human Rights at Sea* which sets out to extend human rights engagement under existing international law.

The event is open to all, but space is limited. [Please register here](#).

## UNA LASER Summer Council



UNA Canterbury is kindly hosting our Summer Council on **1<sup>st</sup> July, 10:30 for 11:00** in central Canterbury. The theme will be ***Migrants and Refugees***. Please put the date in your diaries and be ready to receive further information!

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## American Friends of Combatants for Peace

The Joint Memorial Ceremony, the largest ever Israeli-Palestine peace event, will be online on **24<sup>th</sup> April at 18:30, BST**. Every year the joint Memorial Ceremony takes place on Yom Hazikaron – Israel's Memorial Day, a solemn day in which Israelis remember those they have lost to the ongoing violence – providing an opportunity for Israelis and Palestinians to grieve and heal together, building bridges of deep compassion. [Please register here](#).

## LASER Pulse

Please [send us](#) any materials for the next edition of *Pulse* by **24<sup>th</sup> April**. For announcement of events, it is helpful if you can download and use [this template](#).



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