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**2023 - Issue No. 4**

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### LASER Pulse

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**Trisha Rogers**



**Trisha Rogers**

While we remove our masks and stop frequently washing our hands, many of us are having another COVID inoculation, reminding us that this disease is not fully defeated. In the UK it has become an occasionally annoying intrusion into normal life, but in parts of India, with low vaccine coverage, it is still rampant, with devastating effects on many people. Therefore we welcome the launch this week by the World Health Organisation of its new [Preparedness and Resilience for Emerging Threats Initiative](#) and hope that countries are better prepared for the next pandemic. Some UNA branches have ensured wider awareness of the issues involved.

We are half way through the term of the [UN's Sustainable Development Goals](#), their “universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity”. Some UNA branches belong to local fora working in their communities to help deliver these goals both locally and internationally. Other branches use the 17 goals – no poverty, no hunger, good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth, industry innovation and infrastructure, reduced inequalities, sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumption and production, climate action, life below water, life on land, peace justice and strong institutions, partnerships for the goals – as important subjects for their branch activities.

The current UK media focus is on the civil war in Sudan. Many UK nationals are fleeing from the fighting, while UN agencies are working out how to address the humanitarian needs on the ground. Some UNA branches are looking at the history of this situation, as well as at how the international community can help.

Human rights – sustainable development – peace and security: these are the 3 pillars of the United Nations on which we are trying to increase awareness and in which we must encourage more effective – and more generous – UK government engagement. All pillars are addressed in the events in this edition of Pulse.

## Campaigns

### **Accelerating the UN's Crisis Response**

The UN's slow response in response to the earthquake-induced suffering in the rebel-held areas of north-western Syria resulted in widespread unnecessary suffering and, sadly, is not unique. Our Campaigns Officer, Valeria, [gives details here](#) and asks us to lobby for improvements in the UN's response to such emergencies.

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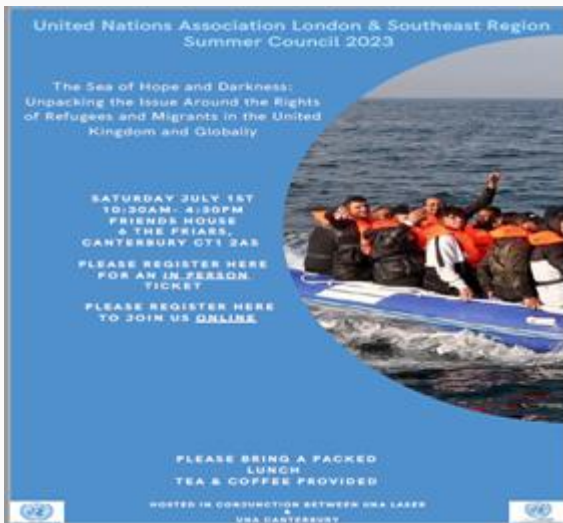
## **Environment**

As you know, LASER is a member of the Climate Coalition. If you are thinking of running a local event as part of the Climate Coalition's Great Big Green Week (**10-18 June**), you will find helpful the [Great Big Green Week resources page](#).

## Branches

Several branches would like to recruit new committee members. General recruitment advertisements for volunteers are much less successful than tapping someone on the shoulder and saying "We'd love you to join us"! Have you tried meeting with your local Rotary Clubs, international specialists at your local universities or colleges, members of other NGOs and belief groups interested in aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals? [Please let us know](#) of any successful strategies you have tried so we can share them!

## LASER Summer Council



UNA Canterbury is hosting our Summer Council on **1<sup>st</sup> July** on ***The Sea of Hope and Darkness***. Places are limited, so please register (free) as soon as possible: [here](#) if you plan to attend in person; [here](#) for online attendance. We look forward to seeing you there!

## Events

### UNA Bexhill and Hastings

Over the last five years, at their annual UN Day Peace Events, Bexhill and Hastings UNA have been running a ***Peace and Human Security Programme***. They are now drafting ***The Way Forward***, the first part of which is a ***Peace Policy Statement*** that can be used, for example, for lobbying parliament. [Here is the draft Peace Policy Statement](#) for discussion. Please send your comments to their [Chair and Peace Project Coordinator](#).

### UNA Harpenden



On 20th May, 10:30-12:30, UNA Harpenden are holding a free in-person meeting on **Realism, Ethics and the Ukraine War** at the Salvation Army, Harpenden AL5 2TG. The speaker will be **Emeritus Professor Richard Sakwa**, University of Kent. [Please RSVP here.](#)

## Realism, Ethics and the Ukraine War

by

Emeritus Professor Richard Sakwa

On 27th May, 12:30-15:30, UNA Harpenden will hold its **AGM and Garden Party** at the **Quaker Meeting House**, 12 Southdown Road, Harpenden AL5 1PD. Cost £5. Contributions of food will be welcome. [Please register here.](#)



## 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 30th 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, Al-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. 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 **20th 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, 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. This free event is open to all. [Please register here.](#)

On 25 May, 13:15, at the **Cenotaph in Whitehall**, UNA Westminster is organising the **20th 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.

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## UNA Climate and Oceans

On **18<sup>th</sup> May, 18:00-21:00**, UNA Climate and Oceans Chair, **Gonzalo Alvarez**, will be speaking – along with **Alice Tebb**, Marine Conservation Society, **Oliver Sterno**, Plastic-Free Eastbourne – at a free public meeting on **Beachy Head East Marine Conservation Zone**, part of the **Spring Water Festival** at the **Lansdowne Hotel**, Eastbourne. Please register [here](#).



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## UNA Warwick District

On **Saturday 20th May, 12:30 - 13:45** there will be a hybrid meeting considering ***The role of the International Community in the Wars in South Sudan, Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea and the Horn of Africa***. The speakers will be **Dr Lutz Oette**, Professor of International Human Right Law, SOAS, and co-director of the SOAS Centre for Human Rights Law, and **Dr Mohamed Abdesalam Babiker**, Associate Professor of International law at the University of Khartoum and UN Special Rapporteur for the situation of human rights in Eritrea. The meeting will take place at **Leamington Spa Baptist Church** (Warwick Hall), Chandos Street, CV32 4RN. Please [register here](#) and [join the zoom link here](#).

On **3rd June, 12:30-13:45**, Warwick UNA will hold a hybrid meeting, at **Leamington Spa Baptist Church**, Chandos Street, CV32 4RN, on **Myanmar** with **Zoya Phan**, Burma Campaign. To register in-person or to get the zoom link, please [contact here](#).

## LASER Pulse

Please [send us](#) any materials for the next edition of Pulse by **30th May**. For announcement of events, it is helpful if you can download and use [this template](#).



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