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From Our Chair



Trisha Rogers

10th December marks the 75th anniversary of the adoption by the UN General Assembly of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) (UDHR). This ground-breaking document starts its preamble noting that:

- "recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world";

and that

- “disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind”.

The UDHR theme for 2023 has been *Consolidating and Sustaining Human Rights Culture into the Future*. This is important and a continuing challenge to us all, but we should think too of the past and the many people who, since 1948, have given their lives in trying to ensure that people across the world have access to their full human rights, not least the more than 100 people since 7th October, working for the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) to give basic humanitarian rights to the people of Gaza.



Please join us on UN Green on 10th December at 12:00 for a short ceremony to lay wreaths and remember these human rights heroes. Further details in UNA Westminster’s entry in *Events* below.

Campaigning

The issues of our AGM’s two [Emergency Resolutions](#) (on Israel/Palestine and on COP28) continue to be crucial. After the AGM we wrote to the UK Foreign Secretary summarising our discussions and have received [this reply](#).

Israel - Palestine

The UN has received criticism from both sides in its attempts to be even-handed and check evidence before criticising actors in this horrific war since 7th October. We continue to support the statements of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, including his [24th October remarks to the Security Council](#) criticising war crimes, while explaining the context of the war.

While the week’s ceasefire at the end of November was welcome in the opportunities it gave for the release of some detainees by both sides and for humanitarian supplies to be replenished for the beleaguered people of Gaza, the displacement, bombing and lack of essentials in Gaza have now intensified. We call urgently for a ceasefire and determined attempts to find a long-term solution, respecting the rights of all people in the Holy Land.



People of all faiths and allegiances have come together in the secular [Together for Humanity](#) to hold moving vigils on Richmond Terrace (opposite Downing Street) and around the country and to build an alliance of respect for all to work towards fairer and more connected communities everywhere.

COP28

COP28 in Dubai started with a Loss and Damage mitigation agreement on the first day. This and other early pledges (such as by the oil producers Exxon and Saudi Aramco) provided an encouraging start. But checking the small print reveals that much of this is voluntary, vague, or inadequate. As UN Secretary-General Guterres noted: “We cannot save a planet with a firehose of fossil fuels”. The gap between what’s been done and what’s required is still huge. According to the Paris Agreement, each country, in 2025, will have to share its plan to close that gap. So they need shared goals and approaches to be agreed at this COP.



To receive a daily briefing, contact [Ed King](#) at the [Global Strategic Communications Council. Network](#)

Policy Conference



Our 2024 Policy Conference will be held at [Bermondsey Village Hall](#), London SE1 3TD – and online – on **9th March, starting at 12 noon**. If you want to join by zoom, please register [here](#). Registrations for attending at the hall are [here](#).

This is your chance to help decide what stance the Region should take on a wide range of international issues. Resolutions need to be on an international topic and must call for action by the UK government or the UN. They can also set out background facts or statements of concern that you would like the Region to support, and they can be put forward by UNA Groups or individual members. You can see our current resolutions – for inspiration and for the framework we use – [here](#). New resolutions need to be **175 words or fewer** in total. You can also suggest amendments to existing resolutions which should add **not more than 75 words** to the total length of the resolution.

If there are no objections, the Policy Committee will make minor edits (to bring them up to date) to Resolutions:

- 7. **Financial levy for clean water** (remove reference to the 2016 US election)
- 8. **Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR)** (remove reference to the Chief Executive election May 2022)
- 12. **Nuclear weapons** (remove reference to June 2022 conference).

The following need updating because things have moved on. We would welcome proposals to help the Policy Committee prepare a draft of a new policy for Resolutions:

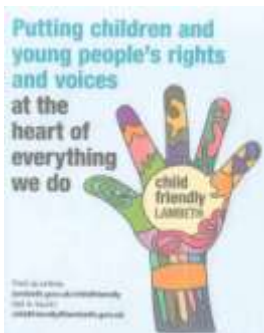
- 9. **How did Dag Hammarskjöld die?**
- 14. **Our world after the pandemic**
- 17. **Proposed laws restricting boycotts, divestment or sanctions**
- 20. **Refugees and Asylum Seekers in London hotels and elsewhere**
- 21. **Second Voluntary National Review of the UN Sustainable Development Goals**

The Policy Committee will prepare new merged and updated draft resolutions on which amendments can be submitted in the second round of submissions (by 26th February) on:

- **Climate Change** (combining Resolutions 4, 5, and the AGM Resolutions)
- **Israel/Palestine** (combining Resolutions 15, 29, AGM Resolution)
- **Ukraine**

Please send in draft policy resolutions to our [Policy Committee Chair](#) by **5pm on Monday 29th January**. We shall then share the draft agenda with you in the February *Pulse* for which you will be able to send in amendments by **26th February**.

Support For Groups/Branches



We continue to share inspiring experiences of groups/ branches from the AGM presentations. Sarah Webster, Chair of UNA Streatham and Clapham, described their experience of engaging with their local authority (Lambeth), which is part of [UNICEF's Child-Friendly Communities Programme](#). Branches might like to discuss this programme with their own local authorities and encourage them to join the other 8 areas in the UK that are currently part of the programme.

Grants Available

The [London UNA Trust](#) (registered charity number 290951) exists to increase the understanding of global problems and the role of the UN in tackling them. They allocate some funds to provide bursaries for young people and others to learn more about the UN. They also allocate funds to support initiatives by United Nations Association groups – or others – to educate people about international issues, including the work of the UN. And they have emergency grants for refugees: for food, clothing and legal fees. The trustees meet periodically to consider applications; to apply for a grant, please use the [application form](#) on their website. For further information,

please contact [the Trust Chair](#).

Events

UNA Westminster

On **10th December, 12:00**, there will be a short ceremony on [United Nations Green](#) entitled ***Not Forgotten: UN personnel who have died in Palestine 1948-2023***. Marking the 75th anniversary of both the UDHR and the first UN fatalities in Palestine, we will lay a wreath and share a moment of reflection, with speakers **David Wardrop** and **Rev Tony Miles**. For further information and to register go [here](#). Registration would be helpful to give an indication of numbers, but it is not essential: do just turn up!

UNA Harpenden



On **Saturday 9th December, 18:00**, UNA Harpenden are holding their **Quiz Night** at the **Park Hall, AL5 2LX**. A Fish and Chips Supper, with a vegetarian option, from Godfreys, will be served at 19:30. The quiz will consist of eight rounds, plus a general, picture round. Please call Suheil Shahryar on 07711-532903 if interested in joining.

UNA Twickenham and Richmond (TRUNA)

On **27th January, 12:00** TRUNA will be hosting **Jon Holloway, Climate Champions Team**, to talk about the work of the **International Maritime Organisation**, the only UN agency headquartered in the UK. This will be followed by the TRUNA AGM, when they will consider the future of TRUNA. The event will be upstairs at [The Adelaide, Teddington](#) TW11 0AU (just around the corner from Teddington station). Please let [the Secretary](#) know if you plan to attend.

Heartstone



On **15th January, 15:30-1800**, at the **Tower of London**, [Heartstone](#) will be holding a photo-documentary exhibition of the Kosovo Force (KFOR) in 2000-2001, entitled ***KFOR and Kosovo +25***, showing a [reworking of their original 2001 photo-documentary](#), ready to mark the 25th anniversary of the UN Resolution that led to the intervention one year later.

Speakers will include **Lord George Robertson**, NATO Secretary-General at the time of the intervention, **Lord David Hannay**, Chair UN APPG in Parliament, **Ilir Kapiti**, HE Ambassador of Kosovo, **General Sir Nick Carter**, **Sita Kumari**, Director of Heartstone. Admission will be by invitation only. If you would like an invitation, please email [the Director](#), stating the UNA branch with which you are linked.

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office Association (FCDOA)



On **13th December, 11:00**, the FCDOA is hosting a webinar on ***Can Diplomacy Save Human Rights?***, with speakers **Rahmin Sagoo** and **David Griffiths**, both from Chatham House, to be moderated by **Dame Audrey Glover**, former FCDO legal adviser. The cost is **£5**. For further information or to register, please email [here](#).

On **9th January, 2024, 11:00**, the FCDOA is organising an online talk by **Sir Malcolm Evans**, Principal of Regent's Park College, University of Oxford, on ***UK Engagement with Multilateral Bodies: reflections from an international human rights perspective***. The cost is **£5**. For further information or to register, please email [here](#)

UNA Bexhill and Hastings: LASER Summer Council



On **22nd June, 2024**, UNA Bexhill and Hastings will host the **LASER Summer Council** in **Bexhill**. The theme will be ***Peace and Human Security: Ploughshares into Swords?*** Further information will be in future editions of *Pulse*, but book the date in y our diaries now!

Next Deadline for Submissions

Please [send us](#) any materials or suggestions for the next edition of *Pulse* by **10th January 2024**.

NB: For announcement of events, it is helpful if you can download and use [this template](#).



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