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The Next Edition of Laser Pulse

From Our Chair



Trisha Rogers

2023 included horrific wars around the world; at the start of 2024 widespread slaughter and destruction continue in Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan and others, denying many people their basic human rights. It is easy to become despondent over the inadequate progress towards peaceful resolutions. However, at the moving ceremony on [United Nations Green](#) on 10th December 2023, Human Rights Day, marking both the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and

the deaths of more than 100 UN staff in the Israel-Gaza war, UNA Westminster Chair, David Wardrop [reminded us](#) of the importance that we, members of the United Nations, should be united not only in our grief but also in our determination to reaffirm our faith in – and continually to work for – fundamental human rights. We must raise our voices together to ensure our government pursues peaceful resolutions, safeguarding the human rights, particularly of the most vulnerable.

Campaigning

Our Campaigns Officer, Valeria Minisini, has [taken stock](#) of the achievements and shortcomings of COP28 and suggests that we should write to our MPs, pressing for the UK to take the following actions:

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050
- Commit substantially to the Loss and Damage Fund
- Make these contributions in the form of grants, not loans, and as new funding
- Move fast: timing is everything!

As well as writing individually to our MPs, and realising that this is likely to be a UK election year, local groups might like to join UNA LASER in signing [the Climate Coalition's letter](#) from community groups to UK political party leaders. And this is a good time to start planning for the [Great Big Green Week](#) (8th - 16th June) of community environmental activities.



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.

Since there have been no objections, the Policy Committee is making minor edits (to bring them up to date) to Resolutions:

7. [Financial levy for clean water](#)
8. [Hong Kong Special Administrative Region](#)
12. [Nuclear weapons](#)

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](#)
-

- 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) (see 4. [Climate](#), 5. [Climate change and its impact on Small Island Developing States, 2023 AGM resolution 1](#))
- Israel/Palestine (combining Resolutions 15, 29, AGM Resolution) (see 15. [Palestine 100 years after the Balfour Declaration \(*\)](#), 29. [Vaccination for Palestinians living in the Occupied Palestinian Territories \(OPT\), 2023 AGM resolution 2](#))
- Ukraine (combining Resolutions 28 and the Executive Committee's resolution on the use of international law in relation to the invasion) (see 28. [Ukraine crisis](#), LASER EC: [The use of international law in relation to Russia's invasion of Ukraine](#))

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

Group/Branch Support



We continue to share 2023 AGM presentations of inspiring activities of some LASER groups/branches. Ali Hessami, of UNA Enfield and Barnet (EBUNA), shared [this useful summary of climate change](#), giving a long-term perspective, as well as the current challenges. EBUNA is working with the Enfield Climate Action Forum to use [En-Roads](#) (developed in collaboration with the

Massachusetts Institute of Technology) in support of local climate action. [EBUNA](#) is willing to collaborate with other LASER branches and present their climate awareness training to the members and the local community.

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 Harpenden



On **Saturday 20th January, 10:30**, at the [Salvation Army, Harpenden AL5 2TG](#), UNA Harpenden is hosting a talk by **Victoria Collins**, an experienced internationalist, as well as Liberal Democrat Candidate for Harpenden and Berkhamsted. Please use [this link](#) to register for the talk, and also to say if you would like to have lunch with the speaker and others at [Pasta Cibo](#), for which you should then await confirmation.

UNA Warwick District

On **Saturday 20th January, 12:15** at **Leamington Spa Baptist Church**, Chandos Street, CV32 4RT, Warwick and District UNA is holding a hybrid meeting to include their **AGM**, followed, at **12:30**, by **Sarah Millar** and **Jason Garrett**, talking about **Post-COP28: a Success or Another Talking Shop?** [Here](#) is the zoom link.

UNA Westminster



DIGNITY, FREEDOM & JUSTICE FOR ALL

On **23rd January, 19:00** in the **CPA Room at the Houses of Parliament**, UNA Westminster is hosting its **AGM**, followed by a debate to mark the 75th anniversary of the UDHR on ***Universal Human Rights: goals for all to reach or mere political construct?***

Schona Jolly KC, Visiting Professor at Goldsmiths University, will lead the debate, which will be chaired by **Baroness Frances D'Souza**, former Director, Article 19. This will be followed by a reception. To register, [click here](#).

On **29th February**, at **Senate House**, University of London, UNA Westminster is hosting a conference on ***Dag Hammarskjöld's plane crash: The Continuing Search for Truth***. As more UN Member States vote to support the inquiry, attention focuses on the USA and UK, which have chosen to dismiss the initiative. Why? Registration will soon open. For more details, as they become available, see UNA Westminster [Future Events page here](#).





On **19th March, 18:30**, at the **Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre, SOAS, WC1B 5DQ**, UNA Westminster is hosting the **20th Annual Ruth Steinkraus-Cohen International Law Lecture**. The lecture will be given by **Professor Kingsley Abbott**, Director, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, School of Advanced Studies at the University of London. For more details, as they become available, see UNA Westminster [Future Events page here](#).

On **15-19 April**, UNA Westminster is organising a 5-day, 6-night **Study Visit to the UN Centre in Vienna**, host to several important UN agencies and programmes, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and respected Think Tanks. For further information, please email [here](#).



On **23 May**, UNA Westminster, with the Royal United Services Institute will host the **International Day of UN Peacekeepers, 20th annual conference**, with a break at 13:00 for the **global diplomats' wreath-laying ceremony at the Cenotaph**. For more details, as they become available, see UNA Westminster [Future Events page here](#).



Twickenham and Richmond UNA (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.

UNA Bexhill and Hastings

On 24th February, 13:15, at the **Quaker Meeting House, Bexhill-on-Sea**, TN40 1DG, UNA Bexhill and Hastings are hosting their **AGM**, followed at 14:00 by a public seminar on **Refugees & Migrants and Local Communities**, with speakers **Sheila Kesby, Barbara Echlin** and **Bea Rogers** discussing how to unite our local communities to welcome refugees and migrants. Please register [here](#).

UNA Luton



On 25th February, 16:00-18:00, at the **Postgraduate Centre of the University of Bedfordshire**, Luton LU1 3JO or **Luton Sixth Form College, LU2 7EW** (venue to be confirmed soon) UNA Luton, with Purbachal: the Eastern Sky, will hold a free cultural programme (with short talks, poetry, dance, recitation to educate and inspire multicultural communities) on **International Mother Language Day Celebrations**, as peace is stronger when diversity is respected. Please register [here](#).

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.

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 your diaries now!

The Next Edition of Laser Pulse

Please [send us](#) any materials or suggestions for the next edition of *Pulse* by **12th February 2024**.

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



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