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The Next Edition of Pulse

From Our Chair



Trisha Rogers

Two places continue to experience immense civilian suffering and deaths after months of conflict: Sudan and Gaza.

Key UN agencies trying to help are the World Food Programme (WFP) in Sudan and the UN Relief and Works Agency in Gaza. The UN's top aid official in Sudan, Clementine Nkweta-Salami, has said "People are resorting to eating grass and peanut shells" and are "trapped in an inferno of brutal violence". At least 165 members of UNWRA have been killed in the line of duty since 7th October. This work is dangerous and desperately underfunded as the [UN Secretary-General recently described for Sudan](#).

We can all help fund [the WFP work in Sudan](#) and the work of [UNWRA in Gaza](#)

LASER Dates

Our 2024 AGM will be at Bermondsey Village Hall on 2nd November (not 2nd December as stated in March). It will include a Presidential Address from **HE Dr Fatou Bensouda**, former Chief Prosecutor at the International Criminal Court. If you would like to describe an activity of your group, please [contact LASER](#).



On 22nd June, 11:00 (for 11:30) – 16:45, at St. Peter's Community Centre, Church Street, Bexhill-on-Sea, TN40 2HE, UNA Bexhill and Hastings are hosting the **LASER Summer Council on *Ploughshares into Swords***, considering ways to replace wars by sustainable peace as envisaged in the UN Charter. There will be outstanding speakers – **Lord David Hannay of Chiswick** (former UK Permanent Representative at the UN, former Chair of UNA-UK, and Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on the UN) and **Emeritus Professor Richard Sakwa** (author and academic from the University of Kent) – as well as workshops building on UNA Bexhill and Hastings' *Peace Policy Statement*, which will be shared before the event.

For further information, including on travel suggestions, please see [this handbill](#). Please register [here](#). Although the event will be available online (with [registration here](#)), discussion will be an important component, so we encourage you

to attend in person. If you need help with travel, please [contact EASER](#). For further information about the event, please contact [Sheila Kesby](#).

Campaigning

Using Financial Pressure to Protect Human Rights



Students around the world are pressurising their institutions to use their financial powers to protect basic human rights in Gaza. The *Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters)* Bill – which is scheduled to have its final day of committee stage in the House of Lords on **4th June** – would prevent bodies that receive public funding from boycotting or divesting from a country or company of whose behaviour they disapprove, as many do now, for example, over goods made in illegal Jewish settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Do [write to your MPs](#) and to members of the House of Lords (such as former Chairs of UNA-UK, [Baroness Anelay of St Johns](#), [Lord Wood of Anfield](#), [Lord Hannay of Chiswick](#)) to resist this Bill, if you think bodies that receive public funding should be able to use their financial leverage to protect human rights (as they did, to great effect, in the campaign to end apartheid in South Africa).

Long-term peace in the Holy Land

@Balfour Project



While we continue to campaign for a ceasefire and for UN support for UNWRA, it is important also to consider how to reach a long-term solution. Returning to a situation like that on 6th October last year would continue to deny the rights of the Palestinian residents of Gaza and the West Bank and generate further violence.

The Balfour Project argues that we must change the imbalance of power between the State of Israel and the Palestinians by moving towards Palestinian independence. They say, "There can be no just solution without an independent Palestinian state in which the Palestinian people are free to live in security and shape their own future. No longer can the political will of powerful states continue to stifle the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people. Now that the US has vetoed the Palestinian request for recognition as a state at the UN, it is time for Britain to do what it should have done decades ago – recognise the State of Palestine." If you agree, use [this link](#) to write to your MP.

Great Big Green Week



Climate change and protection of the environment continue to be major concerns. The [Great Big Green Week](#), promoted by the Climate Coalition of which LASER is a member, is on **8th-16th June** and provides an excellent opportunity to join with others in local action. [Here](#) is the *Great Gig Green Week* film. Be inspired [here](#) on local events and sharing your swaps. Do, too, encourage your local teachers to [sign up](#) to receive Climate Coalition resources straight to their inboxes.

Groups' / Branches' News and Support

Congratulations!



Congratulations to the Chair of UNA Luton, **Nazia Khanum**, for having been identified in *Business America* as one of 100 successful Bangladeshis in the UK! Congratulations to her, too, for having been granted the Freedom of Luton – the first ethnic minority woman to be granted such an honour!

Threat to Democracy in India

The Chair of UNA Harpenden, **Suheil Shahryar**, invites you to join a small working group to help devise a campaign on the current threats to democracy in India, including the demonization of India's 200+ Muslims and other ethnic minorities (14% of India's total population), with its potential for huge human rights abuses. The group would analyse the situation, draft a resolution for LASER to consider, raise awareness (such as through creating a presentation for local groups) and suggest other ways of taking the campaign forward.



Working Group on UN Security Council



At the recent UNA Groups' meeting, following presentations from UNA Luton and UNA Bexhill & Hastings on projects they had each been doing on how to enable the UN to be more effective in building peace, despite a divided Security Council, it was agreed to establish a **Working Group on UN Reform**. If you would like to join this Working Group, please email our [elected trustees](#).

Workshop to Empower Women's Grassroots Organisations

The groups of **South London UNA (SLUNA)** are planning a workshop to empower grassroots women's organisations. If you would like to help, please [contact them](#).

Financial Support Available for Groups

[The London UNA Trust](#) has funds to support groups. To find out more and help shape the trust, [register to join](#) the **19th June** online event described below.

Summary of Recent UN Activity and Other News

A useful way to keep up to date with key activities of the UN family of organisations is to subscribe to the [UNA Harpenden monthly Newsletter](#).



Chair for UNA Blackheath and Greenwich

The committee for UNA Blackheath and Greenwich had lapsed. We are building up an excellent new committee and are now looking for a new Chair. Please [send](#) suggestions.

Events

UNA Warwick District



On **25th May, 12:30-13:45**, UNA Warwick is holding a hybrid meeting at the **Leamington Spa Baptist Church, CV32 4RN** on ***UN & Multilateral and Multidimensional Peacekeeping Operations - Are they fit for purpose?*** The speaker will be **Dr Jair Van Der Lijn**, Stockholm International Peace and Research Institute (SIPRI). To join online, go [here](#).

London UNA Trust

The UNA London Trust has funds to support groups. They are holding an online meeting on **19th June, 19:30-21:00** to discuss: how they work; what types of projects you think it's important for them to fund; their application process. Please use – and help shape – this important component of the Region's work; register [here](#).

UNA Luton

On **27th May, 13:00-16:00**, starting at **St George's Square, Luton**, next to Luton Town Hall, UNA Luton would welcome participation in their **Annual Women's Carnival Peace Parade**, a well-established part of the Luton International Carnival, to give a message of peace to the multi-cultural audience at Europe's largest one-day street festival. For further information, please contact [UNA Luton Chair](#).

UNA Harpenden



On **1st June, 10:30-11:30**, UNA Harpenden is hosting a free talk on **Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions against Israel** at the **Quaker Meeting House AL5 1PD** by **Peter Segal**, founder of St Albans Friends of Palestine. The effectiveness and challenges of the BDS campaign against Israel will be examined in the context of the achievements and experience of the BDS movement against apartheid in South Africa. To attend the free event, please register [here](#).

The event will be followed, at **11:30** by the **Annual Garden Party**. Cost £5 per person. Please register [here](#) and say whether you will bring a savoury and/or a sweet dish.



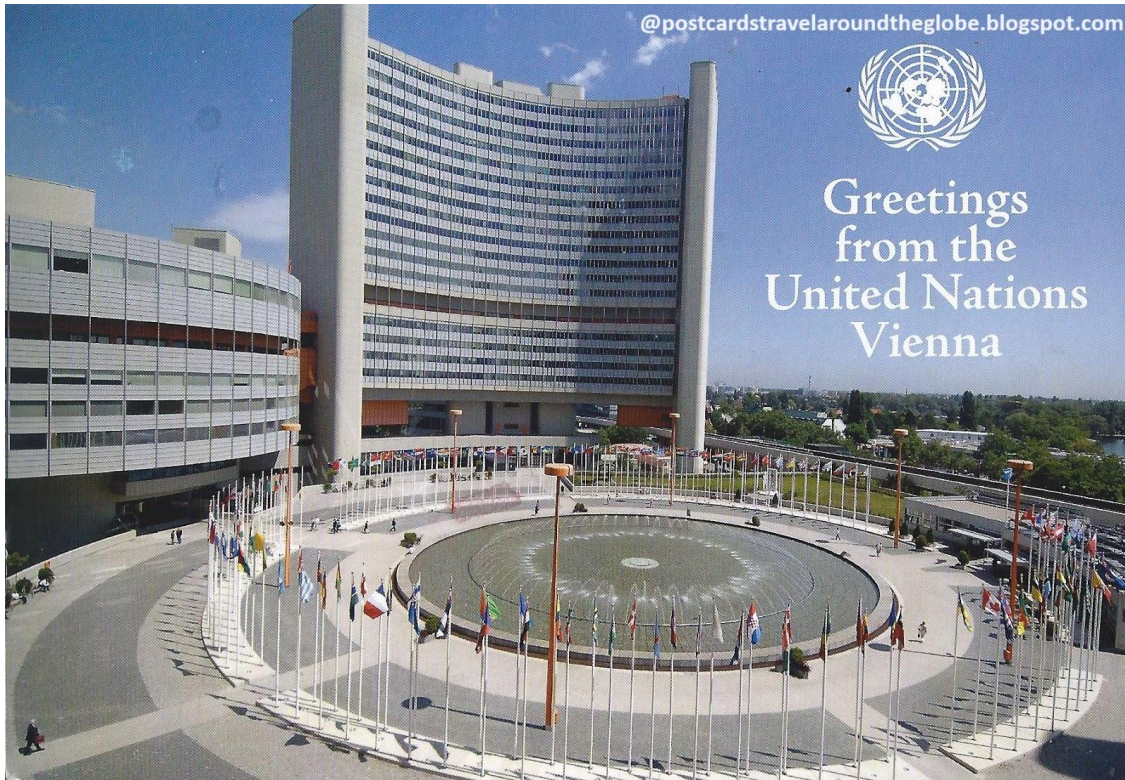
On July 6th, 10:30, UNA Harpenden is hosting a hybrid talk on *The Decline of the Unipolar World - and what the future world order looks like*, at the Salvation Army Hall, Harpenden AL5 2TG by Professor Glenn Diesen, University of South-Eastern Norway. Please register [here](#) for in-person or remote attendance.

UNA Westminster



On 23rd May, 10:00-16:00, UNA Westminster is holding its *International Day of UN Peacekeepers 20th Annual*

Conference at the Royal United Services Institute, Whitehall, SW1A 2ET, addressing: *Host Nation Consent, Cyprus at 60; Caring for the Peacekeepers*. The conference will pause at 13:00 for the Diplomats' Wreath-Laying Ceremony at the **Cenotaph**. Lunch will be provided. Please register [here](#) for the free conference. No need to register to join us on Whitehall for the moving Ceremony of Commemoration for those who have lost their lives when peacekeeping with the United Nations.



On **16th-20th September** UNA Westminster is organising a 5-day, 6-night **Study Tour to the UN in Vienna**. It will include presentations by several UN agencies and by leading diplomatic institutes, as well as opportunities to visit the Sigmund Freud and Peace museums and fully to enjoy this delightful city. Without any commitment, please register your interest [here](#).

UNA Cardiff and District



On **5th June, 19:00**, UNA Cardiff and District is hosting a free webinar on ***How to Foster Resilience to Environmental Change***, with speaker **Abid Mehmood**, researcher and teacher in climate change. [Here](#) is the link.

Uniting for Peace



On 9th July, 18:00-20:00, Uniting for Peace will be holding a webinar on ***Wars, Militarism and the Arms Trade – How Peace Activists Can Make a Difference***. Speakers will include **Rita Payne**, President Emeritus, Commonwealth Journalists Association, **Vijay Mehta**, author *How Not to Go to War*, **Alfred de Zayas**, international law expert and lawyer, **Andrew Feinstein**, Director, Shadow World Investigations, **Taylor O'Connor**, conflict researcher and peace-building practitioner, **Rosa Brooks** (TBC), law professor. In a world marked by persistent conflicts, rampant militarism, and the flourishing arms trade, this conference serves as a vital platform for dialogue, collaboration, and action. Please register [here](#) and join the conference [here](#).

The Next Edition of Laser Pulse

Please [send us](#) any materials for the next edition of *Pulse* by 16th June. Please keep announcements short; it is helpful if you can download and use [this template](#).



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