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## 2024 Issue No. 6, June

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### Table of Contents

#### From Our Chair

#### Campaigning

- Electioneering

#### Groups' News and Support

- Financial Support for Groups
- SDG Support and Annual Service for Peace
- Threat to Democracy in India
- Working Group on UN Security Council

#### Events

- LASER Summer Council
- UNA AGM 2024
- UNA Eastbourne
- UNA Luton
- London UNA Trust
- UNA Blackheath and Greenwich
- UNA Warwick District
- UNA Harpenden
- UNA Streatham and Clapham
- UNA Wandsworth
- UNA Westminster
- Uniting for Peace

#### The Next Edition of Pulse

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## From Our Chair



**Trisha Rogers**

Elections provide a unique opportunity to influence politicians of all parties when they are anxious to win the votes of their electorates. Both as individuals and in our groups, let's use this rare politicians' listening time to ensure our political candidates know that, for many of us, international policies are high on our agendas and important in our voting choices. Not only should we write to [all our local candidates](#), but we can take part in local hustings – either our own or those organised by others. We can remind aspiring politicians that the UK deserves to remain one of only five permanent members of the UN Security Council only if it respects international rules and supports the rules-based international order, which it was a major actor in creating, 80 years ago.

## Campaigning

### Electioneering

[Here](#) are the detailed suggestions from our Campaigns Officer, Valeria Minisini. She suggests that, linking up with our earlier campaigns, we focus on:

- restoring UK overseas aid to 0.7% gross national income
- committing substantial support to the UN [Loss and Damage Fund](#)
- urgently phasing out fossil fuels
- stopping arms sales to Saudi Arabia
- signing the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons ([TNPW](#))
- cancelling [Trident](#)
- actively pursuing peace in Israel/Palestine
- supporting the rules-based international order.

The Climate Coalition, of which LASER is a member, asks us to call all political parties to commit to cut emissions, restore nature and support the hardest hit at home and around the world. They have launched a [Climate Hub](#) to share a map of election hustings events around the UK and to see what's happening close to each of us.

## Groups' News and Support

### Financial Support for Groups

Join the London UNA Trust webinar on **19<sup>th</sup> June, 19:30-21:00**, to:

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- learn how the Trust works
- discuss what types of project/work you think they should support
- walk through their application process.

Please register [here](#).

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## SDG Forum and Annual Service for Peace

We continue sharing inspirational activities by UNA groups in our region with this description of [Canterbury's SDG Forum and annual Service for Peace](#). Both these internationally recognised and widely influential initiatives have arisen from this small branch influencing and then partnering with larger, more powerful organisations – such as their local councils and Canterbury cathedral – who have then involved a wide range of other local organisations sharing many of their aims.

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## 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 is working to 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. [Click here to join the UNA India Resolution group](#).

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## Working Group on UN Security Council

At a 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, in spite of 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](#).

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## Events

### LASER Summer Council

Here is your final reminder to register for the free **LASER Summer Council, *Ploughshares into Swords!***, on **22<sup>nd</sup> June at 11:00 for 11:30** at **St Peter's Community Centre, Bexhill-on-Sea**. This is our annual chance to meet, hosted by a local group, in a different part of our Region and to focus together on some important aspect of UN activity. This year UNA Bexhill and Hastings are leading us to focus on the UN's work in creating a more peaceful world and how it can be made more effective. We are delighted that **Alyn Ware**, Founder and Director of LAW not War, will be joining **Emeritus Professor Richard Sakwa** as our keynote speakers. (Lord David Hannay has had to withdraw because of the convention for crossbench peers during an election campaign.) Further details are [here](#). The briefing and programme are [here](#). The draft Peace Policy Statement for discussion in the workshops is [here](#).

Please come and help shape the UNA and Bexhill draft Peace Policy Statement. Register [here](#). Please bring a packed lunch. Apply [here](#) if you need help with the travel costs. Face to face discussion will be an important part of the day,

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but, if you are not able to attend in-person, register [here](#) and you will be sent a zoom link.

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## LASER AGM 2024



**LASER AGM 2024 and Presidential Address** will be at Bermondsey Village Hall on 2<sup>nd</sup> November (not 2<sup>nd</sup> 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](#).

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## UNA Eastbourne

On **18<sup>th</sup> June, 17:30 – 19:00** UNA Eastbourne will hold its hybrid AGM at **Room 116, East Sussex College, ECAT House, Cross Levels Way, BN21 2UF**. The zoom link is [here](#). For further information, please contact [their Chair](#).

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## UNA Luton

On **18<sup>th</sup> June, 19:00 - 21:00**, UNA Luton is holding a webinar on ***Awareness-Raising on Autism***, with speakers **Dr Nazia Khanum** and **Mehedy Kabir** and a Bengali film, *Bornil Sutor Setu (A Bridge of Threads of Many Colours)* with English subtitles. The event will raise awareness about autism through this film based on a real-life family story. There will be discussion on socio-economic challenges and possible improvements in equitable access to services. Please join the meeting [here](#), with Meeting ID 810 5817 2682 and Passcode 152206. If you are not able to attend this webinar but would like to see the film, please contact [the Chair](#) for a link.

Forthcoming UNA Luton events include:

- ***Conflicts, Peace & Remembering Srebrenica*** on **31<sup>st</sup> July, 18:00 – 20:00**
  - ***Options for Public Investment in Social Housing*** on **20<sup>th</sup> September, 17:00 – 19:00**
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## UNA London Trust

On **19<sup>th</sup> June, 19:30-21:00** the UNA London Trust is hosting a webinar for people to: learn how the Trust works; discuss what types of project/work you think they should support; walk through their application process. Please register [here](#).

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## UNA Blackheath and Greenwich

On **25<sup>th</sup> June, 18:45 for 19:00**, UNA Blackheath and Greenwich is hosting an **election hustings** at **Mycenae**

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House, 90 Mycenae Road, SE3 7SE. For further information, please contact [the Chair](#) (also 0208 858 8489) and [LASER](#).

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### UNA Warwick District

On 29<sup>th</sup> June, 12:30 – 14:00, UNA Warwick are hosting a **General Election – Question Time** at the Leamington Spa Baptist Church, CV32 4RN. Please send questions to [the Chair](#).

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### UNA Harpenden



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

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### UNA Streatham and Clapham

On 9<sup>th</sup> July, 19:00, UNA Streatham and Clapham is hosting a hybrid event on ***Modern Slavery, trafficking and human rights: lessons from the work of NGOs, governments and United Nations organisations***. The speaker will be **Salem Mezhoud**, who will assess the successes, the challenges and what remains to be done on these issues from his perspective from more than 30 years working with NGOs, governments and UN organisations, particularly in the Sahel and northern Africa. The event will be in **Balham Library, SW12 8QY**, or on zoom with this [registration link](#).

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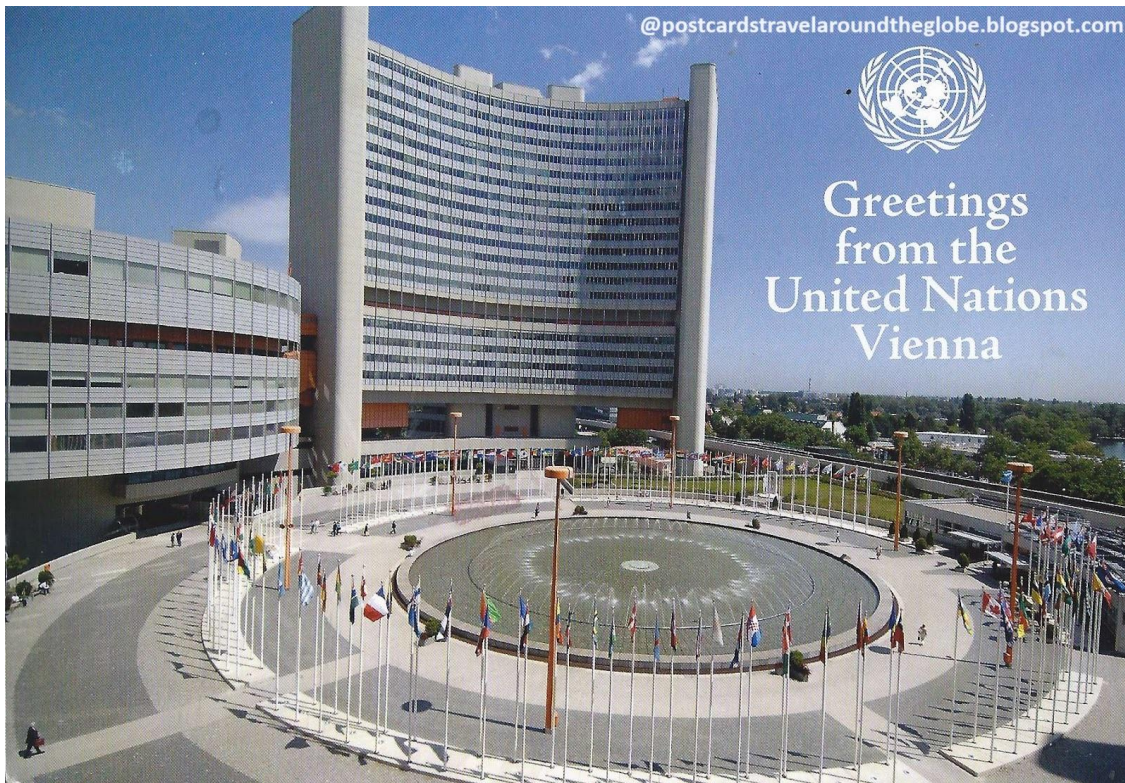
### UNA Wandsworth

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On 10<sup>th</sup> July, 18:45, at **The Community Church**, Putney, London SW15 2LL, UNA Wandsworth, with other members of South London UNA, is running an event to support women's grassroots organisations in networking and obtaining grants from the UNA London Trust. The facilitator will be **Gillian Dare**, UNA LASER, and the speakers will include **Peter Webster**, UNA LASER. For further information and to register, please contact [the Chair](#).

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## UNA Westminster



On 16<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> 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](#).

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## Uniting for Peace

On 9<sup>th</sup> 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](#).

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## The Next Edition of LASER Pulse

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

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