

[View this email in your browser](#)



The Laser Pulse
The Newsletter of UNA LASER

2025 Issue No. 5, April 2025

If you have difficulty following any of the links in this newsletter, please tell contact@unalaser.org.

Table of Contents

From Our Chair

Campaigning

- Israel/Palestine
- UK ODA
- Joint Action for Climate and Nature

Groups' News and Information

- Group Descriptions and Activities
- UNA Working Groups
- Celebrating UN80

UNA LASER Events

- UNA Summer Council
- UNA LASER AGM

UNA Group Events

- UNA Harpenden
- UNA Warwick District
- UNA Bexhill and Hastings
- UNA-UK 2025 Conference
- UNA Tunbridge Wells and the Weald
- UNA Westminster

- UNA Canterbury

Financial Support for LASER

The Next Edition of LASER Pulse

From Our Chair



It was good to debate with many of you at our recent Policy Conference. We are sharing the finalised resolutions with the relevant politicians and shall soon post them, with our accompanying letter to the Foreign Secretary, [on our website](#). The resolutions are the fruit of many hours of research, thought and work by you (our members and groups) benefitting from your wide range of experience and expertise. They covered an impressive range of issues.

All this comes from our active members and groups. Do [contact us](#) if you would like to help start or strengthen a UNA Group (in a local area or focusing on a certain theme). These activities could not happen without you and other local activists and organisers, building on the work of our predecessors, such as Roger Hallam.

Roger was one of the founders, in 2001, of UNA Enfield and the Barnetts, which he chaired for many years. He retired from this position a few years ago, when he moved to live near his son in Brighton. Not only did Roger build up his local UNA group and support UNA nationally in many ways, he was also an intrepid campaigner for racial harmony and founder of a local branch of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign. You can read more about his lifetime of social campaigning [here](#). Roger died last year; we send our condolences to his family and friends, as well as our warm appreciation for all he achieved.



We shared the domestic resolution on the governance of UNA and its relationship with UNA groups, along with a summary of the accompanying debate, with the Chair and Acting CEO of UNA-UK and received the following response from the Chair: “As your members recognised, UNA is indeed at an inflection point. I am certainly committed to ensuring the best possible relations between headquarters and groups, and it has been a significant consideration in our assessment of CEO candidates. We will take the concerns expressed by UNA LASER into account as we go forward.”

Campaigning

We encourage members to [engage with their MPs](#) when trying to influence UK government policy. We can, of course, all also write directly to the relevant [ministers](#), but ministers usually read letters only from MPs (while most other letters are dealt with by officials), so we prioritise getting MPs on board and encouraging them to contact the relevant ministers and ask questions in the House. It is important to give your address when you write, so your MP knows you are a constituent.

Israel/Palestine



Photo by [Toa Heftiba](#) on [Unsplash](#)

After a brief lull in the violence in Gaza, when many people from northern Gaza were able to return to their devastated homes for the first time in over a year, the violence is now worse than ever. And deaths, torture, illegal appropriation of land and illegal imprisonment are also increasing dramatically in the West Bank. Michael Barber - UNA LASER member, retired Director of UN Peacekeeping Operations and a co-founder of United Against Inhumanity (of which UNA LASER is a member) – has [movingly described the horrors](#) and how this has arisen. We must not let the UK be an 'Ally to Atrocities'. You can see [the two relevant resolutions](#) agreed at our Policy Conference. The most urgent demands of the UK government are to:

- Join with France and immediately recognise Palestine as a full UN Member State, based on the 1967 Green Line borders.
 - Strongly oppose any attempts by Israel, USA or any others to remove Palestinians from Israel or the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), to relocate Palestinians within Israel or the OPT, or to annex their land or property.
 - Immediately cease all trading with illegal settlements and to cease all military support to Israel
-

until they comply with their international obligations and humanitarian law and end the collective punish of innocent civilians.

- Require Israel to comply with its responsibilities as an occupying power, in accordance with the Geneva Conventions and the International Court of Justice (ICJ)'s rulings, including:
 - i. providing access to sufficient nutritious food, clean water and sanitation, energy, shelter, education, health and medical care (including vaccines and medicines), and
 - ii. protecting healthcare facilities, humanitarian workers and journalists.
- Continue to work with governments across the region, Europe and globally to develop and create momentum behind the Arab League Gaza plan and a future that respects the rights of the Palestinian people and guarantees the safety and security of all those living in the area.

UK ODA



Photo by [Hanna Morris](#) on [Unsplash](#)

The proposed cut in UK Overseas Development Assistance (or ODA) down to 0.3% of our Gross National Income (GNI) (compared to the UN agreed 0.7% GNI that we had reached between 2015 and 2020) is due to come into effect in 2027. So, it is not too late to persuade the government to change its mind on this (and fund military assistance to Ukraine in other ways, such as cutting our nuclear weapons budget, increasing the tax on the vast profits being made by gambling organisations or modifying the Chancellor's 'fiscal rules', to give just three possibilities). As we agreed in [the Aid resolution](#) at our Policy Conference, we must urge the government to "formally recognise the relationship between international aid and UK security and prosperity in the context of understanding the root causes of global issues including the climate crisis, energy dependency, international migration and terrorism", as well of course,

as the importance to try to alleviate the suffering of the world's most disadvantaged people. And thus to return our ODA to 0.7% GNI.

Joint Action for Climate and Nature



On 7th-15th June, *Great Big Green Week* will bring together 1 million people to show the breadth and depth of the public mandate for action on climate and nature.

If you are organising local events as part of this campaign, you can now add them to the great [Big Green Week website](#), so more local people can find out what's happening and join the event. Event organisers can also sign up for a free pack of branded promotional materials, including posters, bunting and more. There is a [step-by-step video](#) to guide you. For further help, contact the [Climate Coalition](#), of which UNA LASER is a member.

Groups' News and Information

Group Descriptions and Activities

There is a list of LASER UNA Groups [on our website](#). Please check your entries and [let us know](#) of any changes you would like made.

As well as publicising activities of our LASER UNA Groups in *Pulse*, we also sometimes publicise other activities in our region that are relevant to our work, as well as activities outside our region that are accessible online to people in our region. Please see the end of this newsletter for how to submit material.

UNA Working Groups



Photo by [Hanna Morris](#) on [Unsplash](#)

These Working Groups bring together groups and individual members to work together on key areas. There are no set structures or required outcomes. They mostly meet online and might want to develop campaigns, awareness-raising materials, presentations, or reports.

Our Working Group on *The Protection of Minorities in India* submitted the results of its deliberations to the Policy Conference, which agreed a resolution on this issue. The group will no longer meet to develop this analysis, but will take forward its proposals.

The Working Group on *Accountability for the Use of the UN Security Council Veto* had its resolution accepted and will continue meeting to consult and refine its ideas.

If there is a topic you would like to research and take forward in consultation with other interested members, do [contact us](#) about starting a new UNA Working Group.

- **UN Security Council Veto Reform**

Several UNA groups and individual members have come together, with some international experts as advisers, to consider how to make the UN Security Council more effective, with particular emphasis on the veto. This working group is investigating how to constrain the veto if it can't be removed altogether. If you would like a summary of the recent meeting and would like to join the group, please email Group Convenor, [David Cheesman](#).

- **Local Implementation of the SDGs**

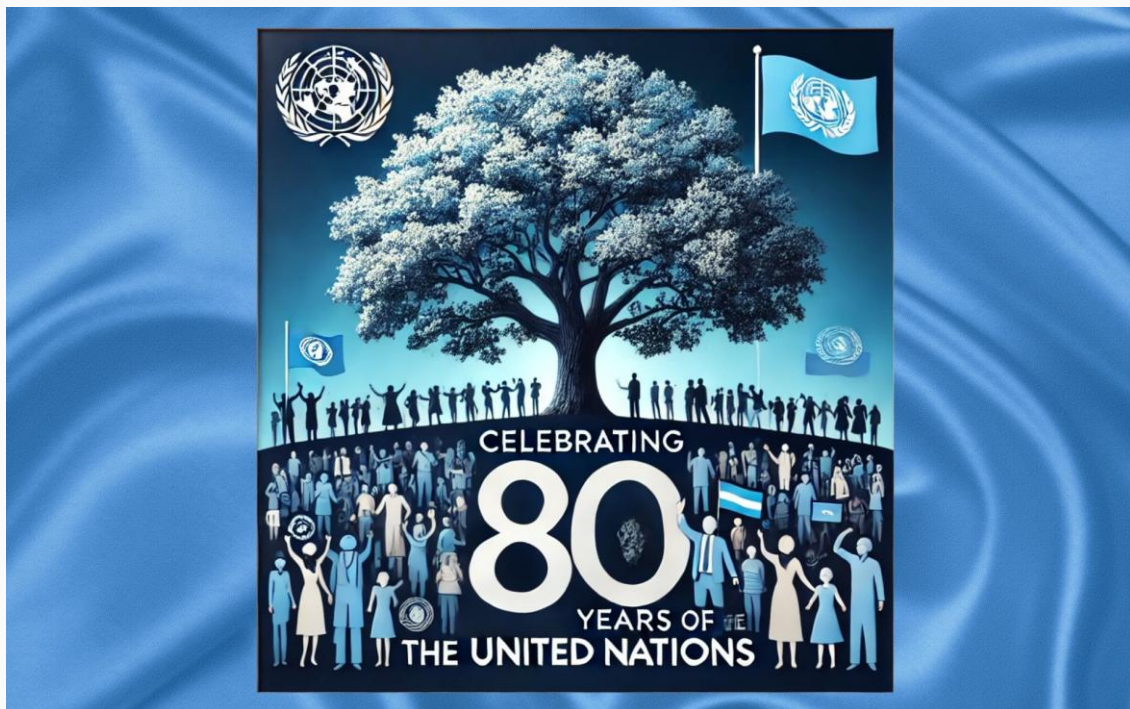
Several LASER UNA groups, working with their local Councils on [local implementation](#) of the [Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs](#), have created a Local Implementation of the SDGs Working Group to support

and learn from each other. Some UNA Groups have several years' experience of this work and have established effective local SDG committees; others are just starting. Do contact Co-Chair of UNA Tunbridge Wells and the Weald, [Marguerita Morton](#), if you would like to join this Working Group. UNA Enfield and the Barnets (EBUNA), part of this Working Group, is focusing on [SDG 2 \(Zero Hunger\)](#) and [SDG 13 \(Climate Action\)](#) and has issued their [EBUNA SDG Interim Research Report](#). The group welcomes engagement with civic society and the local authorities. They are planning five online workshops [Exploring Food Insecurity in the Borough of Enfield](#) (with passcode 158688). They will be at **17:00 on Wednesdays**, starting on **16th April**. For further information on their work and to join the group, please contact [Ali Hessami](#).

- **Strengthening International Law - Amending the Charter**

Members are invited to help make history by joining a new Working Group to analyse and improve [this Resolution](#) on how to make the UN more effective. The group will be chaired by UNA LASER Head of Policy, Peter Webster, and will convene by zoom. For further information, please contact [Greta Vipond](#).

Celebrating UN80



UN80 gives many opportunities to engage your local community, media and leaders in thinking about the work of the UN and our roles in helping its effectiveness. There are three key dates that you could use: 26th June when the Charter was signed in San Francisco; UN Day (24th October, when the UN Charter came into effect); 10th January 2026 (80 years since the first meeting of the UN General Assembly, which was held in London). Some groups mark the day by their local Council flying the UN flag, floodlighting its

building in blue, or inviting MP (s) and other local leaders and media to a flag-raising ceremony. Note that an 80th anniversary is an oak anniversary, so you might like to mark UN80 by planting an oak in a prominent local position, with appropriate ceremony, community and media involvement and plaque.

UNA LASER Events

UNA Summer Council



The **UNA LASER Summer Council** is being hosted by UNA Westminster on **21st June, 10:30-16:00**, at **Methodist Central Hall, London SW1H 9NH**. With the theme ***The United Nations at 80: time for reset or keep to a steady course?***, this prestige event will mark the eightieth anniversary of the signing of the United Nations Charter in June 1945 in San Francisco.

The programme will feature presentations and discussion on systemic attacks in the media on the UN and also addressing the challenges facing the [World Health Organisation's long-awaited Pandemic Agreement](#). We will share archive films of the UN's founding conference held in San Francisco and its inaugural General Assembly held in Central Hall Westminster in January 1946. Members of UNA Westminster Young Professionals will contribute, and we will invite all participants to join us as we introduce surprises on United Nations Green. Please make a note of the date. Registration details and the complete programme will be in future editions of *Pulse*.

UNA LASER AGM



The **UNA LASER AGM** will be held on **25th October** at **Sands Film Studio, 82 St. Marychurch Street, Rotherhithe, London SE16 4HZ**, a 381 Bus ride from London Bridge station.

This will include the final Presidential Address for our **President, Her Excellency Dr Fatou Bensouda**, as she comes to the end of her three-year presidential term. Please [send us](#) suggestions for future UNA LASER Presidents to join [this distinguished list](#). The day will also include presentations of inspirational activities from some of our member groups, which will later be added to [our website](#). Please [let us know](#) if your group would like to describe one of your activities.

UNA Group Events

UNA Harpenden



On 26th April, 10:30-12:30, UNA Harpenden will host a hybrid event at **The Salvation Army, Harpenden, AL5 2TG** on ***Black Swans, White Swans and the Purple Transition***. The speaker on zoom, **Dr Simon Michaux** (Geological Survey of Finland), will consider the *Purple Transition* to phase out fossil fuels, based on the four foundation technologies: liquid fuel fission using thorium as the fuel; burning iron powder; ammonia-fuelled internal combustion engines; and electric vehicles, powered by alternative battery chemistries. Please register [here](#).

UNA Warwick District



On 26th April, 12:30-13:45, UNA Warwick are holding a hybrid meeting on ***Has the Trump Administration declared independence from the post-war international order and its institutions?***, led by **Professor Michael Cox, Founding Director of LSE IDEAS**, who will speak on the current international geopolitics being shaped by the Trump administration.

He will consider how Trump's foreign policy in the next four years will affect multilateralism, international

diplomacy and the role of the UN (with the US already having withdrawn from some of its Specialised Agencies). The meeting will be at **Leamington Spa Baptist Church, CV32 4RN** or online with [this zoom link](#), meeting ID: 850 7054 1874 and Passcode: 420096.

UNA Bexhill and Hastings



On **26th April, 13:45-16:40**, at **St. Peter's Community Centre, Church Street, Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex, TN40 2HE**, UNA Bexhill and Hastings invites you to a public seminar on ***UN Mother Earth Day: The Environment, Capitalism, Peace and Justice***, looking at the tensions and connections between the environment and capitalism, and between peace and justice. For further information and to register, please contact [the Chair](#).

UNA Tunbridge Wells and the Weald



On **10th May, 14:00-16:00**, in **The Old Auction House, Linden Park Road, TN2 5QL**, UNA Tunbridge Wells and the Weald will hold a discussion on ***The International System in the Age of Trump***, led by **Mike Martin, MP**, followed by the group's **AGM**. For further information, please contact [here](#).

UNA Westminster



On **22nd May** UNA Westminster will be holding its twenty-second annual ***International Day of UN Peacekeepers Conference and Wreath-laying***, based at the **Royal United Services Institute, 61 Whitehall, London SW1A 2ET**.

This morning-only conference will be hosted by the Royal United Services Institute, in association with Westminster UNA and UNA-UK. The conference will pause at 13:00 for the diplomatic wreath-laying ceremony at London's Cenotaph in remembrance of UN Peacekeepers who lost their lives while in service. Both the conference and the ceremony are open to the public. Further details, as they become

available, will be on the [UNA Westminster website](#).

UNA Canterbury



On 26th October, in the late afternoon, UNA Canterbury will be holding its annual Peace Service in **Canterbury Cathedral**. More details will be coming in future editions of *Pulse*, but do save the date!

Financial Support for UNA LASER

UNA LASER does not ask for subscriptions from its members or groups, nor does it charge for attendance at its events. We therefore welcome donations to UNA London and South East Region account. Please [let us know](#) if you would like to make a donation.

The Next Edition of UNA LASER *Pulse*

Please send us any materials for the next edition of *Pulse* by 13th May, 2025. Please keep announcements short and include all the information requested in [the Pulse template](#). We welcome pictures, but **please ensure that any pictures you send are not copyright-protected, as we add each edition of *Pulse* to our website for public access and will be charged copyright fees.**



Copyright © 2025 London and South East Region UNA, All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).



