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## 2025 Issue No. 9, September 2025

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## From Our Chair



**Trisha Rogers**

### **Help Govern UNA-UK and UNA LASER!**

UNA-UK links the local, national and global in its promotion of human rights, peace and security and UN reform. It can facilitate grassroots involvement only if it has informed members with vision and energy. It is now inviting its members to stand for election to the UNA-UK Board, so do consider standing and helping in the governance of this crucial organisation.

For more information, please visit their **[Trustee Elections Page](#)** and review the **[Elected Trustee Information Pack](#)** which outlines the eligibility criteria, responsibilities, campaigning rules, and the process for applications, the closing date for which is **17:00 on 10th September 2025**.

UNA LASER needs you, too, to join our Executive Committee (EC) or be an Officer (Chair, Secretary or Treasurer). The EC meets about every 6 weeks by zoom on a weekday at 19:30 for about 2 hours; we also consult each other by email. Please consider either standing yourself or encouraging a fellow member to stand. Please see further details of requirements and application process in the ***UNA LASER Event*** section below. Please [contact us](#) if you are interested in shadowing – and providing some support to - one of the Officers for a year, while you consider standing in the future.

Today we are introducing, towards the end of *Pulse*, a new occasional *Useful Links* section, in which we share some less well-known websites that we find particularly useful in keeping up and engaging with international news. Do [let us know](#) ! what you think of this section and if you would like to suggest other websites to publicise in future editions of *Pulse*. Would it be useful to have such a section on our website?

## 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 only letters 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 full home address when you write, so your MP knows you are a constituent.

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## Israel/Palestine



Only a handful of aid trucks have begun to enter Gaza, where airstrikes continue. Photo credit: Saher Alghorra

There is now [famine in Gaza](#).

And [record killing of journalists](#), including through 'double-tap strikes'.

And the Palestinian leaders are being refused visas by the US to attend the UN General Assembly and meetings of [the UN High Level International Conference for the peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine](#).

We have been calling for months for more action by the UK government, and there have been some steps forward – including their signing of the [New York Declaration](#) in July and their commitment to recognise the state of Palestine – but not enough in the context of the horrifying deterioration described above. We continue to call for:

- A full cessation of all arms sales by UK to Israel.
- Advocating for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza, lifting of aid blockades, to include the release not only of all hostages but also of arbitrarily detained individuals on both sides.
- The banning of settlement goods (including by using the UN's [OHCHR database of companies involved in settlement activity](#)), in response to the ICJ opinion that Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory is unlawful.
- The suspension of the UK-Israel Trade Agreement while Israel continues what the ICJ has now determined is an illegal occupation of the Palestinian Territories and commits war crimes there.
- Support for the International Court of Justice Genocide Case, to recognise as genocide widespread destruction of medical facilities, blockades of food and water, and attacks on journalists, when combined with genocidal language such as that already identified in the preliminary hearings.
- Exploration of suspending Israel from the OECD (as has been done for Russia) because of growing evidence of war crimes committed in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, which the ICJ has declared to be illegally occupied by Israel.

We now add the demand to the UK government, to use the *Uniting for Peace Resolution* process in the General Assembly, as well as the work of the HighLevel International Conference on Palestine and any bilateral discussions to increase pressure on Israel urgently to allow full humanitarian support and to respect the full rights for everyone within their borders, noting that collective punishment is forbidden under international law.

As soon as it is safe to do so, the Palestinian people should be enabled to elect their representatives to help make progress towards a long-term solution, respecting the rights – and needs for security – of all the people living in Israel and Palestine, as well as respecting international law. In the meantime, their only elected Palestinian representatives must be present at discussions on their future, particularly at the UN General Assembly (on which Palestine has Observer Status), currently planned to meet in New York later this month; but for which – and in contravention of the UN Headquarters Agreement – Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and 80 of his staff have been denied US visas. If necessary, all relevant meetings should be moved – such as to Geneva – to ensure the Palestinian representatives can be present in-person.

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## Environment



**The Climate Coalition** (of which LASER is a member) is inviting people across the UK to take part in **Lobby Week (13-20 September)**: a nationwide push to meet your MP in your own community. Whether it's a chat in a café, a walk through your local park, or a meeting at their office, every conversation is a chance to show what matters to your community - and to call for the leadership we need.

## UNA LASER Event

Our AGM will be a hybrid event on **25th October, 11:30** at **Sands Film Studio**, 82 St Marychurch Street, Rotherhithe, London **SE16 4HZ**, a 381 bus ride east from London Bridge station, and also very close to Rotherhithe station. Come to hear what we have been doing, help shape our future, and award

outstanding achievements!

If you plan to come in person, please register [here](#) to help us judge numbers. Drinks and light refreshments will be provided. Please bring a packed lunch. We do not charge for attendance but, to help cover the expenses and if you can afford it, **you are encouraged please to make a donation when you register.**

If you plan to join us by Zoom, please register [here](#).

We shall email out the papers to those who have registered for the AGM on 18 October. There will not be paper copies available for everyone at the meeting.

## Executive Committee

As specified in [our constitution](#), we shall elect up to 10 members of our Executive Committee, as well as our Executive Officers (Chair, Secretary and Treasurer). The current committee can be seen [on our website](#). The committee meets about every six weeks, by Zoom at **19:30**. Nominations for the committee and Officers should be [sent to LASER](#), please, **by 13th October**.

Each nomination should include: up to 100 words about the person; their branch/group; the names of the nominator and the seconder. Please ensure that the person is happy to be nominated and would expect to attend most meetings.

If you think you might like to be an Officer in the future, and would like to dip your toe in the water to get the feel of it, do [contact us](#) about possibly being deputy to one of the Officers.

## Presidential Address

The afternoon 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. Dr Bensouda's legal expertise, as well as her experience as Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court during Donald Trump's first term as US President, gives her unique insight into the opportunities and processes of international law to address current global challenges. There will be an opportunity for questions and discussion.

## Inspirational Branch Activities

The day will also include presentations of inspirational activities from some of our member groups, which will later be added to [the list on our website](#). These will include presentations from UNA Canterbury, UNA Westminster, UNA Harpenden. We shall also be interested to hear what different groups are planning to mark UNA80.

## UNA Working Groups

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, resolutions or reports. 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.

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### Digital & Emerging Technologies

In December, the UN created the Office for Digital and Emerging Technologies, to support the newly adopted [Global Digital Compact](#) (GDC). The GDC is a framework that supports an open, sustainable, fair, safe and secure digital future for everyone.

The GDC will seek to address governance, inclusion, and access across technology and AI. This new Working Group will investigate and decide in which areas of the GDC we can lend support and develop plans and actions to advance its objectives. All are all welcome to join. People with experience in governance, community-led technology groups, open-source software and experience in emerging technologies (e.g. Blockchain, AI, Biotech, IoT) are encouraged to contact us. We expect to meet remotely every other month, with planned in-person gatherings occasionally. As we focus on particular topics, meetings may occur more regularly. Please contact [Cameron McAnsh](#) for more information and to join the group.

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### Local Implementation of the SDGs

Several LASER UNA groups, working with their local Councils on [local](#)

implementation of the **UN Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs**, have created this 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.

Groups usually work with other local civil society groups: to consider how best Councils can develop their infrastructure to meet local needs; to persuade their Councils to adopt the SDGs into their strategic planning; and to encourage their Councils to submit their Voluntary National Reviews to the United Nations.

Please contact Co-Chair of UNA Tunbridge Wells and Wealden, Marquerita Morton, if you would like to join this Working Group.

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## SDG Guidance and Use Cases

Since September 2024, this Working Group has been meeting every eight weeks to exchange experience and collaborate to promote the adoption and implementation of the SDGs by UNA groups.

One of the group's members is a UK representative at the ISO/UNDP PAS 53002:2024, ***Guidelines for contributing to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)***.

The ISO/UNDP guidelines address: setting SDG impact objectives and targets; engaging with stakeholders; collecting data on impacts; generating options; making risk-based decisions; and understanding trade-offs to increase positive impact.

We intend to generate an overview resource from this standard for the benefit of other UNA groups. We shall also discuss specific SDG adoption, research and use cases by various groups, including SDG initiatives on SDG2 (**Hunger**) and SDG 13 (**Climate Impact**) in UNA Enfield and the Barnets. Please contact Ali Hessami for further information.

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## Achieving Peace in Europe





The group aims to develop a resolution on ***Defending Europe Responsibly*** for submission to the 2026 UNA LASER Policy Conference, to be accepted by LASER and then presented to the UK Foreign Secretary and other European leaders.

The background information to the formation of the working group can be found [here](#), with further information in the paper **How does Europe defend itself responsibly?** by **Suheil Shahryar**. To join the group, please register [here](#).

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## **Tyranny, Terrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction - Interrogating the Draft Second United Nations Charter**

The Group aims to assess how well this **Second UN Charter** (written by an international consensus on UN reform) will strengthen international law through a series of discussions each starting with an attempt to 'diagnose' the root causes of our unpeaceful world, which in its present course, is predicted to make itself extinct. It will then try to find, in each case, a 'cure' for this 'disease', working from our own experiences and our findings in the 'Second Charter'. Finally, in each case, and later in summary, it will attempt to expedite these 'cures' through the 'force of law' - as expressed in all the various forms of International Law.

The group will be chaired by LASER Head of Policy, **Peter Webster**, and will convene by Zoom.

For more information and to join the group, please contact [Greta Vipond](#).

Even if you do not want to join the group, [Greta Vipond](#) would be very interested to receive your responses to the following three questions, as this would add greatly to the work of the group:

- What are the basic requirements for effective, and dynamic World Governance at this moment in time?
- What are the core principles you would like to see as the basis of a Second UN Charter?
- Which core principles should we retain that are embedded in the present UN Charter?



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## Imagining a UN Fit for the 21st Century

The classical and inflexible governance of the UN, built around classical institutional models of post war era, renders it unfit for a dynamic and new multipolar world order. The UN governance can and should be re-engineered for the brave new world.

This Working Group is adopting a novel research method creatively to explore the drivers and opportunities for a reformed structure and governance, leading to a UN that will be agile, inclusive, representative, transparent, accountable and fair to the needs, rights and values of the international community in this century of exponential change and shifting power dynamics. It is intended to produce a consensus-based, ideal structure/governance/regulatory model and associated brief narrative for the UN in the 21st century.

The groups have agreed that the aim of the creative study is ***UN Reforms Through Diverse, Representative and Agile Coalitions***. For more information and to join, please contact [Ali Hessami](#).

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## Systemic Transformation Network



This Working Group will be launched at the UNA Groups' Meeting on **16th September** by **Professor Barrie Oxtoby** of UNA Shropshire. Barrie has many years of experience working with the UN, including with **Kofi Annan**, on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Barrie and **Suheil Shahryar** (UNA Harpenden) are planning to develop systemic transformation frameworks to deliver the SDGs.

They would be keen to hear from others with experience on systemic transformations ([click here](#)) . For more information, see [here](#).

# Groups' Information and Support

## Group Descriptions and Activities

There is a list of LASER 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 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.

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## UNA-UK CEO Keen to Meet with Local Groups



**Jane Kinninmont**, new UNA-UK CEO, is happy to speak with groups, both in-person and online. Contact [UNA-UK](#) to arrange this.

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## Tyranny, Terrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction Working Group Survey

Please encourage your members to respond to **Greta Vipond** their answers to the following three questions, as this will greatly add to the work of the group:

- What are the basic requirements for effective, and dynamic World Governance at this moment in time?
  - What are the core principles you would like to see as the basis of a Second UN Charter?
  - Which core principles should we retain that are embedded in the present UN Charter?
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## Marking 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 two upcoming dates that you could use: UN Day (**24th October**, when the UN Charter came into effect after 1945) and **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 Northern Ireland have kindly agreed to share [this letter](#) they successfully wrote to all their local Councils in case it might be useful to other groups.

As **Can Yeğinsu** reminded us at our Summer Council, this anniversary matters. Not because it invites nostalgia, but because it demands renewal. A renewal of the conviction that brought the world to Westminster Methodist Central Hall in 1946: That peace cannot be built on power alone — it must rest on the rule of law, on fundamental rights, and on truth. And that the defence of truth, however difficult, is the first responsibility of any democratic society — and of the international institutions that serve it.

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### Support for Schools' Work in Sustainable Development Education

The [Global Schools Network](#) of the [UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network](#) (SDSN) is active in about 1560 schools in 105 countries. It provides teachers with free tools, frameworks and training to teach sustainable development. Maybe some of your local schools would be interested in signing up?

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## Support for Groups' UN80 Activities

The London United Nations Association Trust is offering support to projects marking UN80. To apply for a grant please use the form on [their website](#).

### UNA Group Events

#### UNA Tunbridge Wells and Wealden

On **13th September, 10:00-17:00**, UNA Tunbridge Wells and Wealden, members of the Tunbridge Wells Climate and Nature Coalition, will stage a stall at Calverley Ground, **TN1 1SJ**. They are also taking part in water monitoring and are working to establish a Plastic-Free Tunbridge Wells. For further information, please contact [Marguerita Morton](#).

On **25th October, 19:00-20:30**, UNA Tunbridge Wells and Wealden are holding a **UN80 Choral Concert** at **King Charles the Martyr Church**, 3 Warwick Park, Tunbridge Wells **TN2 5TA**, £20 for adults, £15 for Concessions and £10 for children under 15 years. (Several people will be going from the LASER AGM in London by public transport to this event.) Tickets are available [here](#).

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#### UNA Wandsworth

On **23rd September, 19:30-21:30**, UNA Wandsworth is holding an in-person event at **Community Church Putney**, Werter Road, **SW15 2LL** with talks and discussion on ***Politics and Experiences in Iran***, led by **Masoud Ahmadi** and **Ahmad Ibrahimi** from the International Liberty Association. For further information, please contact [Meena Storey](#).

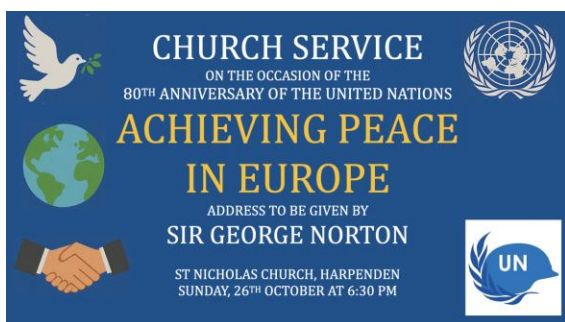
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#### UNA Harpenden



On **27th September, 10:20-12:30**, UNA Harpenden is hosting a public lecture at the **Salvation Army**, Leyton Green, Harpenden **AL5 2TG** on ***UN Peacekeeping in the 2020s*** by **Dr David Curran**, Coventry University. Please register [here](#).

On **Friday 24th October at 10:15 for 10:30**, UNA Harpenden will be **Raising the UN Flag** with the Mayor of Harpenden (TBC), followed by refreshments at the **Town Council**, Leyton Road, Harpenden **AL5 2LX**. [Register here](#) to attend.



On **Sunday 26th October, 18:15** at **St Nicholas Church**, Church Green, Harpenden **AL5 2TP**, there will be a **UN at 80** service with an address on ***Achieving Peace in Europe*** by **Lt General Sir George Norton** (former UK Military representative to NATO). [Register here](#) to attend.

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## UNA Bexhill and Hastings

On **25th October, 12:15-16:45**, UNA Bexhill and Hastings invites you to an in-person public seminar at **St. Peter's Community Centre**, Church Street, Bexhill-on-Sea, **TN40 2HE** on ***Israel-Palestine: Are two states the solution?***

To counter the Government's preparation for war in its [Strategic Defence Review](#), the seminar, led by **Sheila Kesby** and **Barbara Echlin**, will prepare for peace, beginning with individuals, working through nations, to prevail at the United Nations. As an example for ending wars, the seminar will offer a plan for

Securing Peace in Israel and Palestine. For further information and to register, please contact [Sheila Kesby](#).

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## UNA Canterbury

On **26th October, 17:30**, UNA Canterbury will be holding its **Annual Peace Service** in **Canterbury Cathedral**. The keynote speaker will be **Ian Martin**, Chair of UNA-UK. All are welcome.

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## UNA Climate and Oceans



On **15th November**, UNA Climate and Oceans will join policy makers, civil society organisations, marine scientists, artists, educators and young people for an event with the theme ***WONDER: Sustaining what sustains us.***

This day – dedicated to protecting and celebrating oceans – will include expert speakers, new marine project launches, panel discussions, underwater films, community-led ocean initiatives and a showcase of cutting-edge ocean technology and marine innovation, as well as many stalls.

## Useful Links

We are introducing a new feature of useful internet links to keep us all informed. Please [let us know](#) if you find this section useful and if you would like to share some links for possible inclusion in future editions of *Pulse*.

**PassBlue** is an award-winning, independent, women-led, non-profit news company that closely covers the US-UN relationship, women's issues, human rights, peacekeeping and other urgent global matters playing out in the world body.

To receive the newsletter of the **World Federation of United Nations**

**Associations** (WFUNA) – your “one-stop-shop for UN related resources and information” – sign up at the end of [this page](#).

**[Stop the Inhumanity at Europe’s Borders Manifesto](#)** explains the work of this organisation of which LASER is a signatory.

**[Global Climate Diplomacy Briefings](#)** provide excellent monthly updates in the lead up to COP 30 (and follow up from earlier COPs) from **Ed King** of the [Global Strategic Communications Council Network](#).

**[The Overseas Development Institute](#)** (ODI Global) “leads thinking and agendas to build a more just and equitable future for all... Through research, convening and influencing, [they] turn bold ideas, evidence and broad expertise into action advice to confront global challenges” Sign up [here](#) for their newsletter with links to their podcasts.

**[Proximities](#)** is a daily UK-written newsletter that briefly highlights three non-Western news stories.

**[The Foundation for Global Governance and Security](#)** (FOGGS, based in Belgium), has a regular newsletter to which one can sign up.

**[Al-Jazeera](#)** weekly newsletter provides the biggest stories of the week. You can also sign up to their Breaking News Alerts.

One can get regular YouTube updates on current key issues – such as on **[Palestine Deep Dive](#)**, with their important latest suggestion by former UN speech writer Mark Seddon’s suggestion of the UN General Assembly using the Uniting for Peace process to establish a protective international force to defend Palestinians in Gaza.

To be kept informed about the views of Jews who support international law and full human rights for all inhabitants of the Holy Land, [subscribe](#) to the newsletter of **[Yachad](#)**.

The **[Disorder Podcast](#)** teases out the key principles that connect seemingly disparate challenges: from climate change to unregulated cyberspace, to neo-populism, to the wars in Ukraine or Gaza. At the conclusion of each episode, the podcast proposes inventive, win-win solutions to the globe’s most pressing challenges in their ‘Ordering the Disorder’ segment.

**[Energise Africa](#)** is not a charity but an investment platform (to buy bonds of 2-5 years duration, with interest rates of 5-8%) to provide support to organisations bringing clean and affordable energy access to families living off-grid in sub-Saharan Africa. This provides a truly transformational impact to raise living



standards, health, education and wellbeing of Africa's current and future generations. While it reduces the investment risk by lending to companies that have secured grants that can be used to repay the loans, do not invest money you could not afford to lose.

**Semafor** provides daily email briefings on 10 of the top international stories.

## Financial Support for LASER

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 Southeast Region** Account. Please [let us know](#) if you would like to make a donation.

## The Next Edition of LASER *Pulse*

Please send us any materials for the next edition of *Pulse* by **6th October 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 would be liable for copyright fees.**

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