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From Our Chair



Trisha Rogers

I was honoured to join UNA-UK CEO **Jane Kinninmont**, representing you all at the opening on 1 October by HRH Prince William of the first Global Humanitarian Memorial, created by artist **Michael Lansbury**, which is in Gunnersbury Park, west London. **Tom Fletcher**, UN Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs, reminded us that 2024 was the deadliest year for humanitarian workers since records have been kept; 383 aid workers were killed across 27 countries, with many more injured, kidnapped and arbitrarily detained. 97% of these were local aid workers. Ukraine (on which we campaign this month), Sudan, Myanmar, Israel/Palestine are among the places where hundreds of humanitarian workers daily risk their lives to help others. They must not be forgotten.



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.

War in Ukraine: Don't Look Away!
The War is Still on Our Doorstep



Our Campaigns Officer, Valerie Minisini urges us to keep campaigning for a just end to the war in Ukraine. In [her article](#), she reminds us of: the continuing destruction of infrastructure; the increasing civilian casualties; the gradual progress of Russia in eastern Ukraine; and the enormous and growing influence of drones on the battlefield.

She asks us to:

- Urge our MPs to support a strong response, including providing military and humanitarian support, as well as ensuring accountability for war crimes
- Support other organisations – such as [UNHCR](#), [UNICEF](#) and the [International Rescue Committee](#) - providing aid to Ukraine
- Diversify our sources of Ukraine news – such as accessing [The Kyiv Independent](#) – and share reliable, nuanced information.

Nuclear Abolition Day



UNA LASER has endorsed the Appeal for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, alongside organisations focusing on peace, human rights, sustainable development and youth. Endorsing individuals include parliamentarians, local and national leaders, UN officials, academics, medical professionals, youth leaders, educators. The Appeal was presented to UN Member States at the [UN High-Level Plenary Meeting on September 26](#) by **Dr. Deepshikha Kumari Vijh**, Executive Director of the [Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy](#). You can endorse the Appeal [here](#). More than half the countries in the world have now signed the Treaty for the Prevention of Nuclear War.

UNA LASER Event

ALERT: There is now uncertainty about the venue for our hybrid AGM on 25 October, 11:30! The venue – in central London – will be confirmed in our mailing on 18 October, with the papers for the event.

Join us: to hear what we have been doing; help shape our future; and recognise 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](#).

In order to bring our practice and [constitution](#) in line, the Executive Committee will submit [this resolution](#). We have now passed the date for submission of other matters for the agenda, but emergency resolutions sent [to us](#) will be considered. We shall email out the papers on 18 October to those who have registered for the AGM. 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 once a month, by zoom for up to 2 hours, starting at 19:30. Nominations for the committee and Officers should be [sent to LASER](#), please, **by 13 October**. Each nomination should include: up to 100 words about the person; their branch/group; a photograph; the names of the nominator and the seconder (current or former members of the EC or UNA Group Officers). 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 or have time to give some support, but not to take on a full Officer role, do [contact us](#) about possibly being deputy to one of the Officers.

Presidential Address

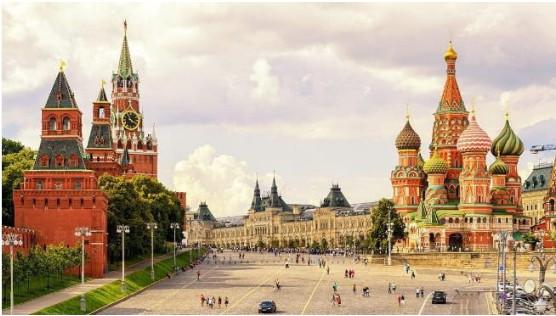
The afternoon will include the final Presidential Address for our President, **Her Excellency Dr Fatou Bensouda**, as she comes to the end of her 3-year presidential term. Dr Bensouda's legal expertise, as well as her experience as Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court during Donald Trump's 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 brief 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, UNA Luton and UNA Streattham. We shall also be interested to hear what different groups are planning to mark UNA80.

UNA Group Events

UNA Harpenden

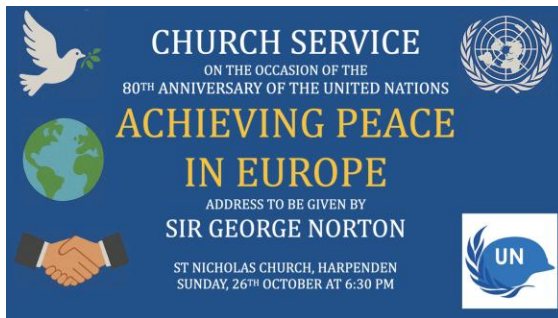


On **Saturday 11 October, 10:30**, UNA Harpenden will be holding a public lecture on **War or Peace – why sanctions are doomed to fail with Russia** by **Ian Proud**, Quincy Institute and former British Diplomat in Moscow, arguing that sanctions will only ever be an unsatisfactory middle ground for western powers between all-out war and peace through diplomatic engagement.

The public lecture will be an in-person event at the **Salvation Army**, Leyton Green, Harpenden **AL5 2TG**. Please register [here](#).



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



On **Sunday 26 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.

UNA Enfield and the Barnets

On **17 October at 14:00**, to mark UN 80, UNA Enfield and the Barnets, with the local Council and Friends of Broomfield Park, is 'opening' a birdbath that was originally donated to the Borough by the League of Nations Union in 1927 and now has been renovated by the local UNA Group. The event will be in [the Garden of Remembrance, Broomfield Park, Palmers Green, London N13](#). If you would like to come, please email [UNA Enfield and the Barnets](#).

UNA Medway

On **24 October, 10:00**, the UN flag will be raised at **Gun Wharf, Chatham**. This will be followed by coffee in the Ithamar Chapel, **Rochester Cathedral**, at about **11:00**. All are welcome.

UNA Tunbridge Wells and Wealden

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

UNA Bexhill and Hastings

On **25 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](#).

UNA Canterbury

On **26 October, 17:30**, UNA Canterbury, with Canterbury Cathedral and Canterbury City Council; will host their annual ***UNA Canterbury Service for World Peace*** in Canterbury Cathedral, commemorating the 80th anniversary of the founding of the UN. The service will be preceded by a procession of local peace activists and climate guardians. The keynote speaker will be **Ian Martin, Chair of UNA-UK**. All are welcome. This event will be in **Canterbury cathedral** and also live-streamed on the [Canterbury cathedral YouTube page](#).

UNA Climate and Oceans



On **15 November 10:00-16:30**, UNA Climate and Oceans will join policy makers, civil society organisations, marine scientists, artists, educators and young people for an event at **St Peter's Community Centre, Bexhill TN41 2HE**, with the theme ***Ocean 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. The cost is £7:21 and you can book [here](#).

Events of Other Organisations

Debt Justice

On **8 November, 10:00-17:30**, Debt Justice are hosting their ***Debt Justice National Gathering*** at **Oxford House**, Bethnal Green, London E2 6HG. Speakers, including **Heidi Chow**, **Grace Buckley**, **Sotez Chowdhury** and **Jo Barker-Marsh**, will explain about the 54 countries currently in debt crisis and also share campaigning skills and plans. The event is free, with lunch provided. Reserve your place [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.

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.

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 2 upcoming dates that you could use: UN Day (24 October, when the UN Charter came into effect in 1945); 10 January 2026 (80 years since the first meeting of the UN General Assembly, which was held in London). [Here](#) are some ideas that local places of worship or social groups might like to include in an event around these dates.

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](#).

Useful Resources for Teaching about the UN

Teach the UN was developed by the UN Visitor Centre for children aged 5-18 to help teachers include UN content in their teaching.

UNA-UK Learn and Teach Hub is a collection of resources on the United Nations for teachers and students.

Home – Go Goals! SDG Board Game aims to help children understand the Sustainable Development Goals.

The United Nations Matters is a teaching resource to develop students' awareness and understanding of the UN system and the global issues it tackles.

Local Activity linked to Food Security (SDG 2)

Enfield and the Barnets UNA (EBUNA) conducted some local research in 2024 regarding SDG2. They were invited to join with the Enfield Food Partnership to do some exploratory work on food security in the borough to help vulnerable local groups. [Here](#) is the report of the project for the use of other branches and boroughs.

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.

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.

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, **Marguerita Morton**, if you would like to join this Working Group.

SDG Guidance and Use Cases

Since September 2024 this Working Group has been meeting every 8 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.

Achieving Peace in Europe

The group, launched on 21 May, 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 [here](#) in the paper *How does Europe defend itself responsibly?* by **Suheil Sharyar**. To join the group, please register [here](#).

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 3 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?
-

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 has 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](#).

Systemic Transformation

This Working Group was launched at the UNA Groups' Meeting on 16 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) have developed a systemic transformation framework that can be applied to deliver the SDGs. They are currently working with the UNA Youth Platform. They would be keen to hear from others interested in systemic transformations. For information, see [here](#).

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 South East 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 **28 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. Please note, too, that, since previous editions of *Pulse* are available on our website, **any announcements should include only information (such as contact details) that you are happy to have publicly accessible on the internet**.



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