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Table of Contents

From Our Chair

Campaigning

- Israel/Palestine

UNA LASER Events

- LASER Policy Conference
- LASER Summer Council
- LASER AGM and Presidential Address

Other UNA Events

- UNA-UK
- UNA Harpenden
- UNA Tunbridge Wells and Wealden
- UNA Warwick District

Groups' and Members' Information and Support

- Group Descriptions and Activities
- University and Community UNA Groups Working Together
- Inspirational Group Activities

UNA Working Groups

- Digital & Emerging Technologies
- Local Implementation of the SDGs
- SDG Guidance and Use Cases
- Achieving Peace in Europe
- Tyranny, Terrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction
- Imagining a UN Fit for the

- UNA Westminster

21st Century

Other Events

- United Against Inhumanity
- Palestine Frees Us All

Financial Support for LASER

The Next Edition of LASER *Pulse*

From Our Chair



Trisha Rogers

We are delighted to announce that Sir Malcolm Evans, distinguished human rights lawyer and Principal of Regent's Park College in Oxford, has accepted our invitation to become the next UNA LASER President. He has worked extensively on human rights issues for numerous international bodies and non-government organisations. He will give his first Presidential Address at our AGM on 14th November.

Our previous President, HE Dr Fatou Bensouda, has kindly shared her stirring [Farewell Presidential Address](#). She urged us to collaborate with others in widening public awareness of the UN and the structures of international law, reminding us that “the institutions of international law are only as strong as the public that believes in them”. She reminded us, therefore, to “insist that international law is not an abstraction but a shield for the vulnerable and a boundary for the powerful” and that we must continue to “petition, publish and persuade”. She finished by instructing us to be a “voice for the voiceless, a beacon of integrity and a bridge of peace”.

Campaigning

We encourage members to [engage with their MPs](#) when trying to influence UK government policy (which can then influence UN actions). We can, of course, 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.

Israel/Palestine



Among the world's many challenges we need to focus our efforts on where we can achieve most through lobbying our government and other leaders. Peter Osborne's shocking new book *Complicit: Britain's Role in the Destruction of Gaza* reminds us how our governments over recent years have failed to support international law; instead, continually supporting the illegal actions of the Israeli government and using the discredited [IHRA definition of antisemitism](#) (rather than the widely

respected [Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism](#)) to silence criticism. Both our main political parties give minimal criticism of what the International Court of Justice has determined is plausibly genocide being committed by Israel and ignore the calling of the Court for the protection of the rights of Palestinians. Both main parties support wide military support by the UK to Israel; they resist any imposition of boycotts or sanctions on illegal settlements; they silence criticism of the actions of the government of Israel as antisemitic, even though many Jews are leading critics of these actions.

Is it a coincidence that in the last two by-elections in the UK (Caerphilly's for the Welsh Assembly in October 2025 and Gorton and Denton's for the UK parliament in February 2026), the winners have been parties (Plaid Cymru and The Green) calling for international law to be respected, believing that all Israelis and Palestinians should have and be able to exercise full human and civil rights throughout Israel, Palestine and the occupied territories in Palestine. The suffering in Gaza continues with daily killings, its territory has been drastically reduced and international journalists (as well as many humanitarian actors) are being denied access.

Now Israel, with the USA, have again failed to follow international law or get any UN mandate, but have attacked a sovereign state and killed its Head of State, as well as many other leaders (and many innocent civilians, starting with more than 100 primary school students). The UN Secretary-General has [issued a statement](#) unequivocally condemning this action and calling for a cessation of hostilities and return to negotiations. The UK government – rather than getting sucked into this illegal war – should speak out and take action.

The government should

- Cease **all** military support to Israel, making it clear that current treaties, such as on security cooperation, cannot apply when international law is being broken
- Support UNWRA and criticise the Israeli Government's action in demolishing its headquarters in East Jerusalem
- Ban all trade with Israeli illegal settlements
- Place further sanctions on Israel for its continuing support of new illegal settlements
- Suspend the UK's free trade agreement with Israel.

LASER Policy Conference

Our Policy Conference will be **on 28th March, 2026**, at the Sands Film Studio, in Rotherhithe, London SE16 4HZ and online, **starting at 11:30am**. Register for coming in-person [here](#); register to attend on Zoom [here](#). We welcome donations towards the cost of the venue. If you are attending by zoom, perhaps you could donate what travel would have cost you. Please [let us know](#) if you would like to donate and we will send details.

Thank you for the draft resolutions that you have been submitting and for the amendments, the deadline for which has now passed. The final agenda will then be circulated before the meeting.

This is your chance to help decide what stance the Region should take on a wide range of international issues. After the conference, we shall submit the resolutions to the UK government, relevant parts of the UN, as well as political party leaders with others actors of influence in the issue concerned. You can see our current resolutions – for inspiration and for the framework we use – [here](#).



LASER Summer Council

NOTE REVISED DATE AND VENUE!!

On **Saturday 4th July, 2026**, UNA Eastbourne will host our Summer Council at Eastbourne's **Victoria Baptist Church, BN21 1UE** (about half an hour's walk or short bus ride from Eastbourne station). The title is ***Climate Challenges' Risk Assessment and Adaptation Costs: International and Local Perspectives***. On **Sunday 5th July**, UNA Eastbourne will organise a walk along the Peace Path to the Peace Memorial at Beachy Head. So keep the whole weekend free to spend in Eastbourne! There will be further details in future editions of *Pulse*.



LASER AGM and Presidential Address

The LASER AGM and the inaugural Presidential Address of our new President, **Sir Malcolm Evans**, will be on **14th November** in **Bermondsey Village Hall, SE1 3TD**. Further information and registration details will be sent in future editions of *Pulse*. Do, now, save the date, consider whether you might like to stand for our Executive Committee and let us know of inspirational activities being done by UNA Groups and of people standing down from their UNA service who should be considered for a Distinguished Service Award.

Other UNA Events

UNA-UK

On 11th March, 18:00-20:00, UNA-UK is hosting a conversation between UNA-UK Chair **Ian Martin** and **Dr Augusto Lopez Claros** (Chair of the Global Governance Forum), focussing particularly on progress ***Towards a Second UN Charter***, focusing on the Forum's draft proposals for [a Second United Nations Charter](#). The event will be at **3 Whitehall Court**, and online. Please register [here](#).

UNA Harpenden



On 14th March, 10:30, UNA Harpenden is hosting a hybrid public lecture on ***Diverse Global Future – how the world is becoming less western*** by **Dr Samir Puri** (King's College, London) at [Salvation Army](#), Harpenden AL5 2TG. Refreshments will be available. Please see more about the speaker [here](#) and register [here](#).

UNA Tunbridge Wells and Wealden



On 17th March, 19:00, UNA Tunbridge Wells and Wealden, with Amnesty International Kent Network, is hosting a free, online talk on the ***Afghan Taliban's Relentless Assault on Women's Rights*** by **Dr Taliq Malik** (US National

University of Sciences and Technology). For further information and to register, please go [here](#).

UNA Warwick District

On **28th March, 12:30**, Warwick and District UNA is holding a hybrid event at **Leamington Spa Baptist Church, CV32 4RN** and on zoom on ***Is the Post-War International Rule-Based Order and the UN No Long Relevant?***, led by **Paul Graham** (University of Birmingham Centre for UN Studies). He will consider the Trump administration's paradigm shift in US foreign policy and not so much whether UN reform is needed, but who gets to shape it and through what process. To attend in person or through zoom, please contact [Gian Clare](#).

UNA Westminster

On **20th April, 18:30**, at **SOAS Gallery**, Russell Square, London WC1B 5DQ, UNA Westminster – with SOAS at the University of London, and the Bar Council of England and Wales – is hosting the **23rd Ruth Steinkraus-Cohn International Law Lecture**. **Professor Philippa Webb** (University of Oxford Blavatnik School of Government) will be speaking on ***Toppling Heads: Regime Change and Immunity in International Law***. This free, in-person lecture will be followed by a reception. Please register [here](#).

On **21st May, 13:00**, at the cenotaph in Whitehall, UNA Westminster will be coordinating the annual Peacekeepers Day, marking the ***International Day of United Nations Peacekeeping***, honouring those who have died in the cause of peace and recognising those from 120 countries who have served as UN Peacekeepers. More information on the [UNA Westminster website](#) and in future editions of *Pulse*.

Other Events

United Against Inhumanity

On **5 March, 17:30**, [United Against Inhumanity](#) (of which LASER is a supporter) is hosting, with the **Geneva Graduate Institute**, a public hybrid roundtable asking ***Do Afghan Lives Matter?*** It will consider some of the human consequences of sanctions, frozen assets, coerced returns, and economic restrictions. For more information and to register for in-person or online attendance, please go [here](#).

Palestine Frees Us All

From **21st March to 30th March**, Palestine Frees Us All is holding ***Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW)***, rooted in campuses around the world. This will start on March 21st, the *International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination* and will include [Palestine Land Day on 30th March](#). Please register events [here](#).

Groups' and Members' 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 or easily reached by people in our region. Please see the end of this newsletter for how to submit material.

University and Community UNA

Groups Working Together

Several groups have productive partnerships, involving community groups and universities (and colleges). These can include shared lectures and outings (often with politics or international relations departments), supporting Model UN events, special youth events. Enfield and the Barnets UNA Group had a flourishing relationship with its local university, but personnel changes on both sides caused these to lapse. They would welcome advice from other groups on effective ways of finding areas of mutual interest and then building and sustaining a mutually supportive relationship. Please send any suggestions to [Sarah Hargreaves](#).

Inspirational Group Activities

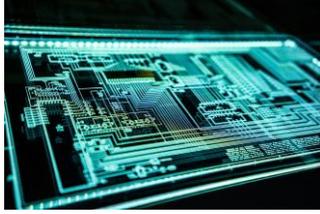
You can find descriptions of inspirational activities from other groups on [our Groups' page](#). Please [tell us](#) if you know of another inspirational activity by a UNA group that we could share.

UNA Working Groups

These Working Groups (which are also listed on the [LASER website](#)) 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. The groups can lead to further research, campaigning or other action.

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 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 [Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs](#), have created a Local SDG Working Group to support and learn from each other. Some UNA Groups have several years' experience and have established effective local SDG committees; others are just starting. Do contact Co-Chair of UNA Tunbridge Wells and Wealden, [Marquerita Morton](#), if you would like to join this Working Group. The UN SDG Working Group has focused on SDG11 Sustainable Cities and Communities, SDG12 Responsible Consumption and Production, and SDG13 Climate Change.

The SDG Forum works with the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and the Business Improvement District. It has participated in the Tunbridge Wells Climate Fair and this year will help to establish a Climate Hub. The UNA TWW is cooperating closely on a joint venture to ban the use of single use plastics in order to establish a 'Plastic Free Tunbridge Wells'.

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 aims to develop a resolution on *Defending Europe Responsibly* for submission to a 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**. People interested in joining this group should

please contact [Suheil Shahryar](#).

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 team of experts 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 contribute to the thinking of the group:

- What are the basic requirements now for effective, and dynamic World Governance?
 - 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](#).

Financial Support for LASER

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

How about a monthly 'cup-of-coffee £3.00' in the form of a standing order?
Please [let us know](#) of any donation.

The Next Edition of *LASER Pulse*

Please send us any materials for the next edition of *Pulse* by **2nd April, 2026**. We suggest that events are initially publicised over a month ahead, as the *Pulse* mailing date may have to be varied to fit in with other constraints – such as preparations for the Policy Conference. Please keep announcements short and, for forthcoming events, 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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