



2026 Issue No. 9, September

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Financial Support for LASER

The Next Edition of *LASER Pulse*

From Our Chair



Trisha Rogers

There have been dramatic political changes over the summer – both domestically and internationally. This gives us an important opportunity, as our new UK government firms up its priorities, to try to shape its foreign policy direction. Some of the issues are highlighted in [this statement of UNA-UK](#).

As UNA-UK Chair Ian Martin points out in [his recent article](#), Keir Starmer and his team showed a lack of respect for international law; we must urge the new government team to do better. They are taking some welcome steps to address the criminal activities of settlers in the West Bank, which we strongly support and would like strengthened; but they have done little so far to address the suffering in Gaza. This is underlined by the [recent devastating assessment](#) that Athena Rayburn (Chief Executive of the Association of International Development Agencies) gave to the UN Security Council on the actions of Trump's Board of Peace and the appalling – in many ways deteriorating – situation in Gaza.

As helpful background material, LASER member

Richard Shirres has kindly shared his 2-page summaries of: [the history of Zionist Settler-Colonialism](#); [some myths and realities about Israel/Palestine](#); and [genocide in Gaza](#).

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



The Britain-Palestine Project has sent a letter to our new Prime Minister (signed by more than 100 former ambassadors, including former UNA-UK Chair, Jeremy Greenstock), urging joint action by the UK and France to act together in upholding international law and the treatment of Palestine. They ask us all to encourage our MPs to support this letter, urging the governments of UK and France to:

- Uphold the decisions of the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court
- Suspend the EU Israel Association Agreement and the UK/Israel Trade and Partnership Agreement for breach of human rights

provisions

- Suspend arms transfers to and from Israel and all bilateral military cooperation
- Insist on unrestricted aid access to Gaza, led by UNRWA, other UN agencies and international NGOs, with consequences for non-compliance; access too for journalists, diplomats and Parliamentarians
- Ban all trade with West Bank settlements, including goods, investment, insurance and other financial services
- Warn potential bidders for the 'red line' E1 settlement (east of Jerusalem) or other settlement financing/construction that their interests in and with our countries will suffer
- Make it an offence for our citizens to buy property on stolen Palestinian land and remove charitable status from 'charities' funding settlements.

You can join see the full letter after entering your postcode [here](#); do then join the campaign!

LASER Events

LASER AGM and Presidential Address

The LASER AGM and the inaugural Presidential Address of our new President, **Sir Malcolm Evans** (eminent international lawyer and Principal of Regent's Park College, Oxford) will be on **14th November** in **Bermondsey Village Hall, 12:00-17:30**. The day will include presentations from inspirational branches/groups Further information and registration details will be sent in future editions of *Pulse*. Do save the date!

Do, too, think about whether you would like to stand for our Executive Committee or to be an Officer (or nominate someone else to do so)! The committee meets monthly on zoom for about 2 evening hours. Nominations will open in the next *Pulse*. You can see our constitution [here](#).

[Let us know, too](#), of inspirational activities being done by UNA Groups that we can share at the AGM, as well as of people standing down from their UNA service who should be considered for a Distinguished Service Award.



Other UNA Events

UNA Harpenden



On **12th September, 10:30**, UNA Harpenden will host a public lecture on ***The Future of Neoliberal Capitalism*** by **Professor Radhika Desai**, (Visiting Professor at the London School of Economics and Political Science). The event will be online and also at [Salvation Army](#), Harpenden AL5 2TG. Refreshments will be available. For more information and to register, please go [here](#) and scroll down. Contributions to the costs will be welcome.

UNA Bexhill and Hastings

On **19th September 13:45-17:00**, UNA Bexhill and Hastings is holding a free public seminar at **St Peter's Community Centre**, Church Street, Bexhill-on-Sea, **TN40 2HE** on ***Paving the Way to Sustainable Peace***, with keynote speaker **The Rev Dt Stephen Need**. Distressed by endless wars, in keeping with the UN *Sustaining Peace* Agenda, the group has been exploring and defining the nature of peace as experienced on all levels. In this next seminar, they will take a pragmatic turn to paving the way towards Sustainable Peace. To register or for more information please contact [the Chair](#).

On **24th October, 13:45-17:00**, UNA Bexhill and Hastings is holding a free public seminar at **St Peter's Community Centre**, Church Street, Bexhill-on-Sea, **TN40 2HE** on ***What's up with the United Nations?***, led by **Prof Richard Sakwa**. The discussion will focus on how the UN is misused, abused and corrupted by some Member States, which obstructs peaceful sustainable solutions to all other global problems from warfare to climate change. For more information and to register, please contact [the Chair](#).

UNA Wandsworth

On **22nd September, 19:30**, UNA Wandsworth is holding a public meeting at **The Community Church, SW15 2LL** on ***Sudan What Future?***. The main speaker will be **Mohamed Osman** (London School of Economics) and the meeting will be chaired by Robert Storey. Further information from [the Chair](#) or [the Vice Chair](#).

UNA Warwick District

On **10th October, 12:30-13:45**, UNA Warwick is hosting a free hybrid event (online and at **Leamington Spa Baptist Church, CV32 4RN**), with **Ed Green** (Warwickshire Wildlife Trust) talking about ***Biodiversity: Local and Global***. For more information and for the zoom link, please contact [the Chair](#).

On **7th November, 12:30-13:45**, UNA Warwick is hosting a free hybrid event (online and at **Leamington Spa Baptist Church, CV32 4RN**), on ***Challenges facing the next Secretary-General***, led remotely by **Abiodun Williams** (former UN Director Strategic Planning, and Professor at Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University), exploring the formidable challenges awaiting the next UN Secretary-General and their implications for the future of the UN. For more information and for the zoom link, please contact [the Chair](#).

UNA Canterbury



On **25th October**, in the evening, in **Canterbury Cathedral**, UNA Canterbury will hold their annual event marking UN Day. More information soon.

UNA Climate and Oceans

On **14th November**, at **St Peter's Community Centre**, Church Street, Bexhill-on-Sea, **TN40 2HE**, UNA Climate and Oceans, with Sussex Dolphin Project, Sussex Underwater, and Community Supporters, will be hosting an **Ocean Symposium and Marine Exhibition** inspired by the UN World Oceans Day theme, ***Reimagine: Beyond the World We Know, a new Relationship with our Oceans***. Policy makers, government agencies, business leaders, non-government organisations, community representatives, scientists, educators, innovators and engaged citizens - all committed to the protection, restoration and sustainable management of our oceans – will share speeches, panel events, discussions, films, exhibitions and networking opportunities. More information soon; save the date.

Groups' and Members' Information and Support

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.

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.

Peace Letters

Peace Letters is an initiative of the Enfield and the Barnets UNA. It focuses on anecdotes, stories, initiatives and efforts of women and men who tirelessly work to promote tolerance, understanding, mutual respect and peace in their communities and beyond. They inspire us all! They intend to publish the Peace Letters periodically and encourage readers to share their stories at local, community, national and international level, to foster awareness and honour the altruistic work of the unsung heroes for peace. To contribute to Peace Letters, or join the mailing list, please contact [the Chair](#).

Inspirational Group Activities

You can find descriptions of inspirational activities from other groups on [our Groups' page](#). Please [tell us](#) if you know of other 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.

Beyond Sovereignty



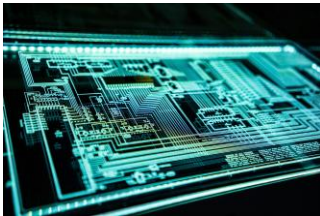
This Working Group has the objective of identifying the drivers and inhibitors of creating a safer world, including a UN that could meet the aspirations of the majority of the peoples of the world living in peace and harmony. An introductory paper entitled **Engineering a Safer World** can be found [here](#). We welcome anyone wishing to discuss and contribute to this subject in a constructive manner. The convenor is Suheil Shahryar. To join the group, please register [here](#).

UN Article 109 General Conference

Many consider that the *UN Charter* of 1945 (little changed over 80 years, during which our world has changed in many ways) needs revision. *UN Charter Article A109-1* is the provision for a General Conference of UN Members, if approved by 2/3rds of the General Assembly Members and 9 of the Security Council Members. In the UN's 80+ years history such a General Conference has never been held. The [A109 Coalition](#), within the auspice of the [Global Governance Forum \(GGF\)](#), aims to mobilise UN Member States to call this General Conference at which the GGF draft Second Charter

would be tabled. This new Working Group, convened by **John Crowe**, will explore how UK civil society, particularly UNA members, could promote – and respond to – the tabling of such an A109 motion. It is open to all. For further information and to get involved, please contact this group via A109@Freedomia.net.

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 (such as blockchain, AI, BioTech, IoT) are encouraged to contact us. The group expects 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.

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 Shahryar**. 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](#).

Reimagining and Exploring a UN Fit for the 21st Century

The 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 has adopted a novel research method to creatively 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.

The group met fortnightly, developing and weighing eleven Driver and nine Inhibitor Influences. They then used a dual-rooted architecture based in international law and classical Indian statecraft to develop a detailed framework for citizens to build a

fairer and more ethical way for humanity to govern itself. The overview of this process is described in the [Executive Summary](#). More detailed Volume 1 of the Working Group's Report can be seen [here](#). For more information or to join the Working Group, 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 our new Virgin Money 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 £3.50' in the form of a standing order? Please [let us know](#) of any donations or if you would like help in setting this up.

The Next Edition of LASER *Pulse*

Please send us any materials for the next edition of *Pulse* by **2nd October, 2026**. While *Pulse* usually goes out in the first week of each month, 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. 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**, because 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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