

# United Nations Association

## Westminster Branch

Campaigning for a strong, credible and effective UN



### Annual Report 2021-2022

This annual report refers to the period ending 31 March 2022. It will be formally presented at the next annual general

meeting together with an oral report of events and initiatives up to that date.

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#### **Our activities**

The COVID19 pandemic continued to interrupt our programme but we are proud of our record of activity through the year.

**18<sup>th</sup> Annual Ruth Steinkraus-Cohen Law Lecture**  
Held in memory of Ruth Steinkraus-Cohen, the lecture was given by Sir Howard Morrison QC, and titled *The International Criminal Court: more needed yet more challenged than ever*. We were delighted we could hold an in-person event, which was well-attended being so topical.

Following the lecture, hosted by the Centre for International Studies and Diplomacy at SOAS, the International Relations Committee of the Bar Council of England and Wales hosted a supper for our guests.

#### **International Day of UN Peacekeepers**

Our 18<sup>th</sup> Conference to mark this UN anniversary was held online. It featured a dialogue between Bintou Keita, Special Representative of the Secretary General, MONUSCO, speaking from Kinshasa, and Dr Karin von Hippel, Director-General of the Royal United Services Institute.

We coordinated a reduced wreath-laying ceremony at the Cenotaph which was filmed for screening at the annual UN Peacekeepers Day conference held the following week. Participants in the ceremony included the Rt.

Hon. Lord Ahmad, Minister of State for the United Nations accompanied by former military and police UN peacekeepers. Military attachés from Poland, Thailand, Ghana, Argentina and Australia represented their continents and the UN Veterans Association carried the UN standard.

Later the film crew moved to United Nations Green where pupils from the Grey Coat School for Girls and the City of Westminster School for Boys laid a wreath at the Flags of the UN display. The film can be viewed in the News Pages for that day.

#### **United Nations Green, 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday Party**

To mark the naming of United Nations Green on 10 January 2020, we held a *Welcome United Nations Green* party which gave our members and friends the opportunity to meet in person after so long in isolation. Members of the diplomatic community, and refugees and asylum seekers also joined us. Attractions included the *UN75 flags of the UN* display, a peace dove release, short lectures on UN-related issues, *Climate Change* hopscotch, and access to the record of the first meeting of the UN General Assembly held in the Methodist Hall's archive room. Members of the public walked the *Mandela Mile*, from Nelson Mandela's bust at the Southbank to his statue in Parliament Square, receiving badges.

## **The Dag Hammarskjöld programme**

This webinar marking the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death while seeking peace in the Congo was chaired by the Rt. Hon, Lord Boateng. Speakers included Asa Theander, Embassy of Sweden; Senator Dr Sydney Sekeramayi, speaking from Zimbabwe; Dr Henning Melber, Emeritus Director, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation; the Rt. Revd. Trevor Musonda Mwamba, former Bishop of Botswana and recent contender for the presidency of Zambia; and our chair, David Wardrop. Justice Richard Goldstone from South Africa and a member of the Hammarskjöld Commission also contributed.

## **Letters to HMG, the P5 and High Commissions**

Writing to the Foreign Secretary in our capacity as a member of the UK Forum on Freedom of Religion or Belief, we shared our concern on the government's Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme, also calling on the Government to request the protection and safety of those adhering to marginalised religions and beliefs whilst remaining in Afghanistan. We signed a joint letter to P5 states, following the postponement of 10<sup>th</sup> Nuclear non-proliferation Review Conference. Also, we sought clarification from the high commissions of those Commonwealth states who did not support the UN General Assembly vote on Russia's invasion of Ukraine (3/3/22).

## **Covid-19, Foreign Policy & Human Rights**

We co-organised with UNA-UK and UNA's London and Southeast Regional Council a webinar tackling the key international challenges presented by the Covid19

pandemic. Introduced by our Vice-Chair Paul Mrazek, and moderated by Natalie Samarasinghe, CEO of UNA-UK, the speakers were María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, Member of the Lancet Commission on Covid-19 and former President of the UN General Assembly; Dr David Nabarro, Special Envoy on Covid-19 for the WHO; and Mandeep Tiwana, Chief Programmes Officer at CIVICUS, the World Alliance for Citizen Participation.

## **We The Peoples Film Festival**

We were unable to run our traditional *We the Peoples* film festival, but we have shortlisted films that might be screened later, separate from the planned 2022 festival in November.

## **Marking the UN's inaugural meeting in 1946**

Westminster UNA and UNA-UK co-hosted a webinar comprising two dialogues marking London's centrality in the UN's earliest days. The first featured Baroness Anelay, incoming UNA-UK Chair and former UK Minister for the UN, and Sir Peter Marshall, former diplomat. The second featured Lord Malloch-Brown, UNA-UK Patron, former UN Deputy Secretary-General, and Natalie Samarasinghe. We hope to repeat this initiative annually.

## **Westminster UNA Young Professionals**

Westminster Young Professionals hosted an online meeting with Jordan's ambassador, HE Mr Omar Al Nahar, moderated by Isabella Qin, Chair, Westminster Young Professionals.

## **UNA Connecticut**

Our twin, the UNA Connecticut chapter continues its busy programme online.

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## **Our Honorary Officers**

We are delighted that Baroness Cox of Queensbury has agreed to continue as President. Juliet Colman and HH Prince Mohsin Ali Khan have both agreed to continue as Joint Vice-Presidents and we are also

delighted that Sir Peter Marshall KCMG, former diplomat and Deputy Commonwealth Secretary-General has accepted our invitation to join them.

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## **Our Funds**

Our ambitious programme of events is underpinned by the generous legacy of Ruth Steinkraus-Cohen.

The Fidelity Fund in which we have invested has rewarded us well.

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**We welcome your comments. Please contact us on [info@unawestminster.org.uk](mailto:info@unawestminster.org.uk)**

**David Wardrop, Chairman**

**Paul Mrazek, Vice-Chairman**

**Vivienne Eka, Hon Secretary**

**6 June 2022**