



# FARINGDON PEACE GROUP

JULY/AUGUST 2021

Newsletter 16

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Meetings and Events organised by Faringdon Peace Group as well as by other groups.

For further information please contact  
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## MEETINGS AND EVENTS

### THU 1st JULY

Wantage & Didcot pre-COP 26 Climate summit on Zoom. (See separate notice)

### SAT 3rd JULY PEACE PICNIC

### WED 7th JULY FPG Monthly Meeting.

THU 8th JULY Oxfordshire Peace Campaign mtg. 2pm online. Delegates Jennie, Helen, Phil

FRI 6th AUG Hiroshima Day

MON 9th AUG Nagasaki Day. (Why did they need to drop **two** atomic bombs on Japan?)



## THIS NEWSLETTER COVERS JULY AND AUGUST

Please send your contributions for the SEPTEMBER newsletter by 25th August to [jennyridd@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jennyridd@yahoo.co.uk)

## BOOK THESE DATES!

18th-26th September Great Big Green Week

Saturday 25th September  
**Green Event in the Corn Exchange**

**'Faringdon Branching Out'**  
Tree Planting in November

*Details for all later*

## POVERTY

*exists not because we cannot feed the poor,  
but because we cannot satisfy the rich*

## FARINGDON PEACE GROUP

### MONTHLY MEETING

WEDNESDAY 7th JULY at 7.30pm

'Palestine Action'. Speaker invited from Oldham Peace and Justice group. On several occasions they have been successful in closing down 'Elbit Systems' who make armaments for the Israelis.

Meeting will be introduced by Bruce Kent, CND. 7.30pm on Zoom

If no speaker from Palestine Action, there will be a speaker from Campaign Against Arms Trade.

Zoom link has been sent to Peace Group regulars, but if you would like to come for the first time, please ask Sjoerd for the link.

The Zoom meeting will be open from 7.15pm - to give us time for pre-meeting chat.

## PEACE PICNIC

As you know, we can't hold the 40th Annual Grand Peace Fete this year, but we do want the opportunity of being able to get-together somehow. So we are holding a Peace Picnic on

**Saturday 3 July from 2-4pm**  
**at the Jubilee Field/village green, Uffington**

However, whereas for the Peace Fete we welcome everybody who wants to come, on this occasion we will be restricted to 30 people. Participants need to pre-book, on a first come, first served basis, and certainly by 30<sup>th</sup> June.

Please come self-sufficient – food, drink, chairs etc. Nothing will be provided by the Peace Group (but there is a useful village shop in the car park).

Parking and toilets - at the adjacent Thomas Hughes Memorial Hall.

## **SEEKING SAFETY IS NOT A CRIME. SAVING LIVES IS NOT A CRIME.**

So far this year more than 800 people have died attempting to cross the central Mediterranean.

The UK Government has exacerbated this appalling situation, having supported the Libyan coastguard through training and funding, enabling the return of refugees and migrants to detention centres where thousands of people including children were kept in inhumane conditions.

"The UK Government has a responsibility to refugees and migrants who have suffered due to its actions and inaction in Libya," said Vickie Hawkins, executive director of MSF UK.

"They were well aware of the detention conditions to which refugees and migrants were being returned through their own humanitarian support to those detention centres, and so we are calling on them to now provide safe and legal routes directly to the UK.

"They should also contribute to state-led search and rescue in the Mediterranean, and publicly support NGO search and rescue efforts at this critical moment to ensure that no one dies trying to flee to safety."

We're deeply concerned about proposals in the government's New Plan for Immigration outlining a system in which refugees would be punished for irregular arrivals even as the government steadily closes legal routes.

The Dubs Scheme was shut last year and the government rejected attempts to secure a replacement, and a proposed global resettlement scheme has still not appeared and no date for its launch has been provided.

"People in dangerous situations like Libya have no choice over how they get to safety. They should not be left to drown or to be locked up in detention centres as a punishment for taking the sea crossing or to deter others from making similar journeys. It is not too late for the government to change course away from this mindlessly punitive approach," says Hawkins.

Go to the Medecins Sans Frontieres website to send an email to your MP to urge the UK Government to support state-led search and rescue in the Mediterranean, or write to him directly.

## **GLOBAL TENSIONS CONTINUE TO RISE**

While the eyes of the world have largely been on the Covid-19 crisis in recent months, tensions around the world relating to nuclear weapons and states that are pursuing their own arsenals have continued to rise. The situation on the Korean Peninsula remains tense, with little sign of any diplomatic progress between the United States and Pyongyang. Rhetoric has been increasingly heated since Joe Biden took over in the Oval Office and has not been helped by the restrictions on the missile capability of South Korea being eased in May. The North Korean regime said this created a 'delicate' situation on the Peninsula. We continue to be in touch with the Bargn Nuri Christian Community in South Korea and were delighted they could join us at our recent 24-Hour Prayer Vigil. Please do keep them in your prayers as they work for peace. There has been some signs of progress in the other potential flashpoint – with parties involved with the Iran Nuclear Deal continuing to meet in Geneva for talks aimed at reviving the deal. The United States is not directly involved after Donald Trump unilaterally violated the Treaty in 2018, but has been taking part through intermediaries. The hope is that there will be a breakthrough which would see sanctions on Iran lifted in return for increased inspections and limitations on the level of uranium Tehran is able to enrich. Another part of the world to keep in our prayers over the coming months.

*Thanks to Christian CND for this piece.*

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14-17 September: DSEI the world's worst arms fair plans to return to the London Docklands in September. Help Stop the Arms Fair organise resistance!  
Email: [resistDSEI@protonmail.com](mailto:resistDSEI@protonmail.com)  
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David Johnston OBE MP  
invites you to the

### **WANTAGE AND DIDCOT PRE-COP26 CLIMATE SUMMIT**

1st July 2021 at 9am – 1.30pm  
Location: Zoom

Join me and local/national experts to discuss  
some of the key issues and collect our ideas  
for the Government ahead of COP26.

Register at  
[www.david-johnston.org.uk](http://www.david-johnston.org.uk)  
[www.david-johnston.org.uk](http://www.david-johnston.org.uk)



News from Bidibidi Refugee camp, in the NW of Uganda, which is visited by a young friend of ours based in Gulu. Immediately prior to this lockdown, they were able to take in clothes, shoes (no prizes for guessing what sort of shoes) and various other necessities. This camp houses 300,000 refugees, mostly from South Sudan, but increasingly from Congo, and is said to be the largest refugee camp in the world.



## GOVERNMENT UNVEILS PLANS FOR MORE NUCLEAR WEAPONS

The big announcement trailed ahead of the publication of the Integrated Review was the huge increase in military spending, even while cutting billions in aid to the world's poorest. So it came as something of a shock when reports emerged that Boris Johnson wanted to increase the UK nuclear warhead stockpile by 44% by the middle of the 2020s.

Since the end of the Cold War, when the UK stockpile peaked at around 500 warheads, successive governments have had a policy of gradual reduction. The Security Review of 2010 set a cap on the number of warheads the UK would hold at 180, a commitment reaffirmed in 2015. The increase of that cap to 260 comes despite no request from the military and not one MP raising the size of the stockpile in Parliament.

Condemnation of the announcement was swift. The UN Secretary General said, through his spokesperson, that the increase would be a breach of international law, as Britain has signed the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty. The German Foreign Minister also distanced himself from the move saying Germany "wants to see nuclear stockpiles decrease".

Christians have also joined the criticism of the announcements. A statement issued by the Joint Public Issues Team and signed by seven denominational representatives described the decision as a "retrograde step that will not make any of us safer." The Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, speaking in the House of Lords, called the increase "very serious and concerning".

Also included in the Integrated Review were steps to increase secrecy around the UK nuclear weapons programme – the government will no longer tell us how many warheads it has or how many are operational. There is also a potentially deeply worrying change in when nuclear weapons could be used by the UK. Previously governments have stated that nuclear weapons would only be used in retaliation for a nuclear strike against the UK — but now it's possible they could be used in response to a non-nuclear attack and even against a cyber attack. The Archbishop of Canterbury said that the increased ambiguity around the circumstances when a nuclear weapon might be used "increases the risk of disastrous miscalculation".



## 40 YEARS SINCE GREENHAM!

Were you at Greenham? It'll be the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp this summer, with many activities planned to mark the occasion. Were you at Greenham at any point over the years? If so, and you would be willing to speak to the press, please contact [pressoffice@cnduk.org](mailto:pressoffice@cnduk.org)



## NUCLEAR FUSION NOT THE ANSWER

CND Vice-President and expert consultant on radioactivity in the environment Dr Ian Fairlie explains why the latest nuclear idea from the government cannot be supported.

### **Nuclear fusion would be far from cheap, clean, safe or healthy.**

*from CND Campaign magazine, with thanks*

THE GOVERNMENT'S new panacea for our energy needs – nuclear fusion – has almost nothing to do with our needs and everything to do with Prime Minister Boris Johnson's ill considered techno-dreams. It will most likely join the line of Boris' flops after the Thames Gateway airport, the Emirates air-line cable car, the Thames Garden bridge etc. But this time the taxpayer will have to pay billions rather than millions. What is nuclear fusion? It's a dangerous process whereby radioactive hydrogen (tritium) is smashed into another form of hydrogen (deuterium) at massive temperatures and pressures inside a plasma to release much radiation and some heat. The same process occurs in our Sun, but safely located 93 million miles away. Formidable technical problems exist. Since it commenced in 1983, the UK's JET fusion torus at Culham in Oxfordshire has not produced a single watt of usable electricity.

Many critics have stated that JET's success is always 30 years in the future: it is the same today as it was 30 years ago. In October 2019, the UK government announced funding for a smaller fusion reactor called STEP (Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production) based on the unsuccessful JET prototype at Culham.

Quite why the STEP project is expected to work when its prototype has failed is unexplained in official documents. In December 2020, the government asked local authorities to come forward with potential sites. Many LAs are so strapped for cash and close to bankruptcy that several have responded, regardless of the myriad problems. The plan is for the government to choose a site by 2024.

The government promises fusion will deliver cheap and clean energy to help move to a zero-carbon economy with little radioactive waste. But these claims are simply untrue – like many government statements in recent years. The reality is that fusion reactors, if ever operated, would produce many radioactive by-products that are far from harmless. Most (around 80%) of the energy would be high-energy neutrons causing structural damage, much radioactive waste and the need for biological shielding to protect operators and the public nearby. In short, nuclear fusion would be far from cheap, clean, safe or healthy. Dr Daniel Jassby is a former research physicist at the Princeton Plasma Physics Lab, US and has worked for 25 years on neutron production from fusion. He says: "When you consider we get solar and wind energy for free, to rely on fusion reaction would be foolish". Quite.

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## RECONCILIATION & PEACEBUILDING

**Conscience** will be hosting its next webinar on **Thursday 15 July at 18.30 – 20.00**

We are honoured that Jo Berry, founder of Building Bridges For Peace, has kindly agreed to speak at our next webinar.

The title of her talk will be: 'Reconciliation and peacebuilding: personal experience of being affected by terrorism and becoming a peacebuilder'

There will be plenty of time to listen to and reflect on Jo's extraordinary story, and hear how it has inspired people all over the world, including in many conflict zones.

You can register now by going to the Conscience website

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## PHOTOGRAPHER GOES INSIDE CHERNOBYL TO DOCUMENT THE POST-MELTDOWN NUCLEAR POWER PLANT



**New Safe Confinement (NSC) surrounding the old sarcophagus, a centre of serious radiation**

For more info about this, please go to:  
<https://mymodernmet.com/arkadiusz-podniesinski-chernobyl/>

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## RED POPPIES

Royal British Legion will no longer sell poppies in the European Union due to red tape following Brexit, according to reports.

The charity, which provides support to members and veterans of the British Armed Forces, is said to have sent an email to supporters stating it will “need to cease sales to customers in countries in the EU” for the foreseeable future until legislation surrounding Brexit is reviewed.

The i-newspaper reported that it could not justify the expense, including customs charges, to send poppies overseas following Britain’s departure from the EU’s customs union.

## CAAT CALLS FOR INVESTIGATION FOLLOWING EVIDENCE OF UK-MADE TEAR GAS USED AGAINST PROTESTERS IN OMAN

Images link tear gas made by UK company to repression in Oman. UK has licensed over £16 million worth of tear gas to Oman since 2015 and Oman is one of world’s largest buyers of UK arms.

Campaign Against Arms Trade has called for an investigation into the use of UK-made tear gas. (26th May 2021)



## RIGHTS BODY FINDS ISRAEL GUILTY OF APARTHEID

In a report published on 26<sup>th</sup> April, the New York-based Human Rights Watch accuses Israeli officials of the crimes of apartheid and persecution, claiming that the Israeli government enforces a policy of “maintaining the domination by Jewish Israelis over Palestinians”. It claims that after decades of warnings that the Israeli government’s hold over Palestinian life could lead to apartheid, it found that the “threshold” had been crossed. The report compares policies and practices towards the nearly seven million Palestinians in the occupied territories and Israel with those towards a similar number of Jewish Israelis there.

Apartheid is a crime against humanity under international law. It is defined under the 1998 Rome Statute as an “institutionalised regime of systematic oppression and domination by one racial group over any other” with the intent of “maintaining that regime”.

