



Westminster United Nations Association

Campaigning for a strong, credible and effective UN

Annual report

This annual report for the period ending 31 March 2026 will be formally

presented at the next Annual General Meeting together with an oral report.

22nd International Law Lecture

Our 22nd annual lecture titled “*Toppling Heads: Regime Change and Immunity in International Law*” was given by Professor Philippa Webb, Professor of Public International Law, Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford. Professor Webb examined the role of the Head of State in regime change, naming five routes to regime change: war, assassination, capture, prosecution, non-recognition and sanctions. We are not in a legal vacuum where “might is right” and each route to regime change has legal obstacles, she explained. Regimes are built to endure, their change being a relatively rare phenomenon. However, in a time of poly-crisis or omnishambles, it is not only monarchs who feel uneasy about the future. The lecture at SOAS was co-hosted by its Centre for International Studies and Diplomacy and generously supported by the Bar Council of England and Wales.

Marking the International Day of UN Peacekeepers

We co-hosted a Round Table with the Royal United Services Institute, studying the full spectrum of the UN’s peace activities within multidimensional missions. The wreath-laying ceremony at the Cenotaph in Whitehall attracted many foreign diplomats who joined representatives of government and, the armed forces and the police and members of civil society.



Members of 5 Regt. Royal Artillery, recently returned from Cyprus, participated and the Band of HM Royal Marines Portsmouth provided musical support. In memory of Count Folke Bernadotte, the UN appointed Mediator in Palestine who was assassinated in Jerusalem in 1948, a wreath was laid by his grandson Count Edward Bernadotte.

Marking the 80th anniversary of the signing of the UN Charter

We coordinated the LASER Summer Council in Methodist Central Hall where the UN General Assembly first met. Following messages of goodwill from the mayors of San Francisco and Westminster, topics covered a report by former diplomat Mark Bowden on his recent official mission to South Sudan. There were robust presentations by Professor Can Yeğinsu, Deputy Chair, High Level Panel of Legal

Experts on Media Freedom and Caoilfhionn Gallagher KC, a leading Human Rights lawyer and expert in journalists' safety and arbitrary detention.

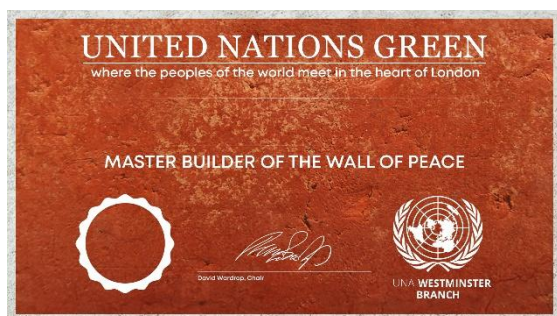
Also, Jane Kinninmont, newly appointed CEO of UNA-UK, spoke on the need for urgent resumption of multilateral diplomacy. The event closed with general debate on 'The UN at 80: New challenges facing We the Peoples'.

Civil war in Sudan

Several Westminster UNA members were invited to a briefing at the Embassy of Sudan on the continuing fighting in Darfur, especially in the regional city of El-Fasher. Later, Westminster UNA arranged a public meeting titled "Sudan: Paths to progress and to peace", held at the embassy of Sudan in association with UNA Global South. HE Babikir Elsidig Elamin, Ambassador of Sudan to the UK updated all present of the crisis in his country.

Bricks buy signs!

We have installed four new signs on the entrances to United Nations Green, indicating its name. Until now, visitors to the Green, from nearby offices eating their sandwiches or tourists taking pictures of Westminster Abbey, had no idea of the Green's significance. This was part-funded by a *Buy A Brick* appeal, with donors' names on bricks added to the virtual *Wall of Peace*. Please visit the United Nations Green webpage.



Victims of Acts of Violence based on Religion or Belief

We have supported this UN International Day since its adoption in 2019. This year, we noted that delegates to the 2025 International Religious Freedom Summit reaffirmed that Governments should recognise that religious freedom is a strategic mainstream foreign policy priority, not merely a human rights issue.

UNA Connecticut

Our sister chapter continues with its successful scholarships programme targeting schools in the State.

Westminster UNA Young Professionals get dynamic

The group has elected a new committee led by Chevon Whyte, Chair, and Dr Veronique Ehamo, Vice-Chair. A successful social event was held at The Feathers pub in St. James's, and a schedule of meetings and social events has been mapped out for the coming year. A group visited the headquarters of the International Maritime Organisation, the only UN agency based in London. Similar visits are being planned.

Dr. Kishan Manocha – a sad loss

We recall fondly Dr. Kishan Manocha (1968–2023), representing the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the UK on our committee. He offered excellent advice in the selection of our speaker for the annual International Law Lecture.

Our Honorary Officer and our Finances

We are delighted that Juliet Colman has agreed to serve again as our Vice-President. Our programme is under-pinned by the generous legacy of Ruth Steinkraus-Cohen. The annual accounts for all years are available for inspection.

We welcome your comments. Please contact us on

info@unawestminster.org.uk

David Wardrop, Chair

12 April 2026

Vivienne Eka, Hon Secretary