

June – July 2024

KINGSTON PEACE NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF KINGSTON PEACE COUNCIL /
CAMPAIGN FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

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The General Election – issues for the Peace Movement

What can you do?

With the General Election having been called for 4th July, we want to make sure that every candidate is aware that where they stand on the issues of peace and nuclear weapons makes a difference at the ballot box. What do they think about Trident replacement; about a ceasefire in Gaza; about military spending; about nuclear power? CND has created an easy tool to help you contact all the parliamentary candidates in your constituency to ask them: cnd.eaction.org.uk/GeneralElection2024

Report back all answers to CND, who will compile the responses and publish them to help everyone make their best election choice.

You can find CND's campaign guide, links to opinion polling on key issues, and party positions on nuclear weapons at <https://cnduk.org/cnd-general-election-campaign-2024/>.

A further tool you can use is the Nuclear Morality Flowchart (see the article on page 2). Send

the link to your candidates and ask them to complete it.

KPC will be contacting other local organisations to ask whether they would like to share a hustings in their constituency, and we'll try to let you know if this happens. Otherwise, perhaps you could attend another hustings event to ask questions?

The anti-boycott bill

With the end of the present parliament, in advance of the general election, the toxic anti-boycott bill will now not become law. This repressive piece of planned legislation threatened to erode local democracy, restrict freedom of expression, and undermine campaigns for social and climate justice. It would have prevented public bodies such as local councils, universities, and public-sector pension funds from making ethical choices about spending and investment. The government's stated goal was to shut down campaigns against Israel's violations of Palestinian rights.

The government did not simply run out of time: it failed to get this draconian legislation through in the face of fierce opposition from all sides of the House of Commons and House of Lords.

Campaign issues

In the first major announcement of his election campaign, Rishi Sunak said a future Tory government would introduce national service in 2025, forcing 18-year-olds either to join the military for 12 months full-time or to work one weekend per month in their community with organisations such as the fire service, police and the NHS.

Labour have called the scheme 'unfunded' and criticised the Tories for cutting military spending, without raising any objection to the principle of reintroducing national service.

The Peace Pledge Union has said this is an attempt to introduce 'conscription by stealth' and they will refuse to join or in any way support the military if the scheme is ever implemented.

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Holding Election Candidates to Account

With the General Election looming we call your attention to the Nuclear Morality Flowchart <http://nuclearmorality.com/>.

Basically a “decision tree”, invented by Martin Birdseye and Charles Wicksteed of Kingston Peace Council, it’s a way to promote moral accountability of politicians in the field of nuclear weapons deployment.

The Flowchart is simply a network of all the relevant moral questions arranged in a logical order. You can use it yourself to help decide on the ethics of nuclear weapons. Your decision path

will be displayed on-screen and there’s a way to keep a record of it if you wish.

It would be good to think that our Government and parliamentarians would use it before deciding, as they do, on deployment of genocidal, ecocidal weapons, allegedly for our security. We can’t force people to be logical or morally responsible, but we can provide them with a framework for being so, and for making their decision path clear to themselves and others. Practical examples, including the response of Martin’s own MP at a previous election, can be seen at: <https://nuclearmorality.com/2015/02/>.

Ending the conflict in Russia and Ukraine: a pragmatic approach

While so much of the news concentrates on the appalling situation in Gaza, less prominence is given to the war in Ukraine. The following is the conclusion of Briefing Paper No.114, published on 21 May by Dr. Ian Davis for NATO Watch, a not-for-profit, independent information service, which works to promote public awareness and foster debate on the role of NATO in public life.

Small numbers of military personnel from NATO member states are already operating inside Ukraine. Pressure is growing for these to be supplemented by additional trainers or for NATO countries to use air defences based in eastern Europe to take down Russian missiles and drones targeting Ukraine. Either of these options would be another blurring of a previous red line and could draw the United States and Europe more directly into the war. Moreover, if Russia does pierce the Ukrainian lines and advance rapidly, will France and a few other NATO members back up their rhetoric and send combat troops to Ukraine? This seems unlikely, especially since a limited deployment of French or other NATO member troops would be unlikely to stop a major Russian advance in Ukraine.

Preserving Ukraine’s sovereignty is critical. But instead of continuing with the failed approaches

that have only exacerbated global risks, France might be better placed to return to its former leadership role in pushing for more intensive diplomacy aimed at ending the conflict. A ceasefire could be accompanied by the establishment by the UN Security Council of a demilitarized or buffer zone along the more than 1,000km-long current frontline in the war patrolled by a UN peacekeeping force. To gain the necessary support in the UN Security Council, including that of Russia, the BRICS* countries need to be an integral part of the diplomacy. Similarly, any UN peacekeeping force could involve mainly BRICS countries with a strong track record in UN peace operations, such as China, India and South Africa. The demilitarization zone could be achieved without formally settling any respective territorial claims, enabling key aspects of the conflict (such as the status of Crimea) to be resolved peacefully via further diplomatic dialogue, by an international court or by a recognised plebiscite overseen by the United Nations.

* The BRICS bloc includes **B**razil, **R**ussia, **I**ndia, **C**hina and **S**outh Africa, but Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have recently confirmed they are joining.

Nuclear Information Service

For up-to date reports on nuclear issues you may wish to refer to the Nuclear Information Service (NIS), an independent, not-for-profit research organisation that investigates the UK nuclear

weapons programme and publishes accurate and reliable information to stimulate informed debate on disarmament and related issues.

See <https://www.nuclearinfo.org/>

Return of American nuclear weapons to USAF/RAF Lakenheath

There are advanced plans to deploy American nuclear weapons to USAF/RAF Lakenheath, Suffolk. Infrastructure to house troops and to defend storage facilities and shelters is underway, plus all sorts of other things we won't know about. RAF Lakenheath is also the home to the USAF's 48th Fighter Wing, the only unit in Europe that operates both the F-15E Eagle and the F-35A Lighting II fighter aircraft. USA and Israel are also using UK air bases to move weapons to Israel to be used in their war against Hamas in Gaza, Palestine. Jet fighters in particular and militarism in general fuel climate change.

The Lakenheath Alliance for Peace has been formed to try to stop this nuclear escalation.

LAP was launched at the gates of USAF/RAF Lakenheath on 26 March, delivering a letter to the base commander to demand **No deployment of Nuclear Weapons at Lakenheath.**

On 11 May there was a National Day of Action, led by CND. The various actions included a protest at RAF Lakenheath and a rally outside the US Embassy in London, in which KPC took part.



KPC outside the US Embassy

The main LAP event will start in Norwich on Saturday 13 July, when supporters will walk or cycle from Norwich to Lakenheath to raise awareness. Arriving on 15 July, a camp will be set up and vigils, demonstrations and peaceful direct action will take place over the following few days.

The ICC 'milestone' offers a glimmer of hope

The chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) Karim Khan, a British barrister, has announced that the ICC is seeking arrest warrants against top Israeli and Hamas officials: Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu; defence minister Yoav Gallant; the Hamas leader in Gaza, Yahya Sinwar; the head of its military wing, Mohammed al-Masri (known as Mohammed Deif); and the head of its political bureau, Ismail Haniyeh.

It is the first time that The Hague court has indicted the leader of a western-backed state.

Some points made in an article published in *The Conversation* (<https://theconversation.com/-search-for-icc-milestone>) are summarised below:

The ICC has long been criticised for an inability to challenge power inequalities and address structural injustices, but Karim Khan says he has "reasonable grounds to believe" the individuals bear responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity and has requested arrest warrants.

On 20 May, the US government called the ICC prosecutor's request for arrest warrants for the two Israeli leaders "outrageous", but even if the US decides to sanction the ICC prosecutor, as it did in 2020 when it wanted to avoid investigation of the actions of US citizens in Afghanistan and the role of Israeli officials in Palestine since 2015, this will have no effect on the Court's process.

The UK government, which has faced much criticism in recent years for failing to respect international law, said on Khan's charges that "we do not think the ICC has jurisdiction". This view is opposed by numerous experts in international law.

Khan says that the charges against Netanyahu and Gallant include

- extermination,
- causing starvation as a method of war
- and deliberately targeting civilians in conflict.

Several earlier cases involving heads of state were then noted.

The Villages Group

In the November issue of Kingston Peace News we published a message from Erella, an Israeli member of the Villages Group. Rosemary met Erella and Ehud (a UN worker), who operate mainly in the South Hebron Hills, when she was in the West Bank a few years ago. Erella drives into areas in the West Bank where abuse has occurred, providing support to affected families.

Her latest message was sent on Israel's Independence Day, 18th May:

Dear Friends,

For many years now, I have not celebrated Israel's Independence Day. I find it hard to celebrate independence in a state that deprives independence from other people, so I usually spend this holiday with those of my friends whose freedom is deprived.

It was midday when we arrived at Rakeez. This is where Harun Abu Aram was shot in the neck in 2021, by a soldier of the state that has independence. He died from his wounds on the 14th February 2023. Yesterday we sat with his mother, Farsi. She told us that in the previous week, on 9th May, Harun's younger brother Muhammad, 18 years old, went out to graze the family's herd in their field, close to the cave in which they live.

While in the field, Muhammad noticed two armed settlers on the slope approaching him, one about the same age as him and the other older. He wanted to run away for his life. *"He is very scared since what happened to Harun"* emphasizes Farsi. But they reached him. The older man grabbed Muhammad's shirt, close to his neck, and pushed him to the ground while shouting "go away from here, go away from here". Muhammad stood up from the ground, cleaned his pants and started going back. The older settler hit the sheep with the gun he was holding. All the time, the younger settler was filming. (We know the drill: the aggressors create a provocation, expecting the victim to respond. If Muhammad had reacted, even with slightest act of self-defense, like repelling the hand that violently grabbed his shirt, the settler would have cut this part from the video, and the two settlers would have filed a complaint with the police, that a violent Palestinian attacked them, for no reason, and would have used the fraudulent evidence as proof). Muhammad went away from them with the herd and the older settler continued to shout after him aggressively.

When Muhammad arrived home, he told his mother that the family better return to the regional town of Yatta. *"It happens all the time, Mom, and eventually what happened to Harun might happen to me or to Dad. We have had enough, Mom."*

We said our goodbyes. We went out of the cave and Farsi went with us until the well, from which we could see Muhammad's 16-year-old sister, who is in charge of the herd today. We noticed A. from A-Tuwani, grazing his herd in his field, about 70 meters from the road at the top of the slope. While waving hello to him, we noticed a figure in army uniform and gear approaching him from the road. We approached him too. When we reached A., he told us that the settler in army gear already told him that he can graze the herd only at least 200 meters from the road. This would fall outside his grazing ground, so he kept grazing in his field.

Irene and I approached the soldier. "Happy Independence Day," he said. "Not happy and also not independence," I answered, and he quickly said that Happy Independence Day does not mean disregard for the pain on the hostages. We later learned from him that he is a resident of the Avigail settlement, and is a member of its emergency squad. He learned from us that I am from Kibbutz Shoal and Irene is from Tel Aviv, and A. has been our friend for 20 years now. "We, in Shoal, also have an emergency squad and its role is to guard the Kibbutz. Is it not the same for you?" I asked. *"I need to make sure, under order from the Central Command, that they will not come near the road,"* he answered and clarified that this is in order to prevent terror attacks. I asked which terror attacks happened there, that you need to guard from, and he said there weren't any. I asked when was the last time stones were thrown, and he said no stones were thrown. I said that the residents of the Massafer are pure-hearted, and he didn't answer.

I said, with no aggression, that the field is A.'s field and that it is far enough from the road and that there is no need to drive A. and his herd further away. After a while, the settler just went away. A., relieved, told us that usually it doesn't end this way...

Peace didn't break out, the settler in army gear will surely come tomorrow too, more violent settlers, like the ones that attacked Muhammad last week, will come, and even worse will happen. But one person, whom we know and love, managed to pass some grazing time in peace.

Barclays – Arming Israel’s Apartheid and Genocide

Barclays Bank now holds £2 billion in shares of companies whose weapons, components and military technology have been used in Israel’s attacks against Palestinians.

In addition, Barclays provides £6.1 billion in loans and underwriting to these arms and military technology companies.

This is the Executive Summary of a report which has been produced jointly by Palestine Solidarity Campaign, War on Want and CAAT:

Israel is engaged in a genocidal assault¹ on Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip. Across the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Palestinians are facing a surge in attacks by Israeli armed forces and settlers², while Palestinian citizens of Israel are subject to a campaign of discriminatory arrests, harassment and intimidation by the state of Israel.

UK banks and financial institutions are facilitating and profiting from Israel’s attacks against the Palestinian people by providing investment, loans and underwriting³ to companies supplying Israel with weapons and military technology.

Our previous research, released in July 2022, demonstrated that Barclays, one of the UK’s largest high street banks, had shareholdings in, and/or provided loans and financial services to, at least nine companies known to be producing weapons and military technology sold to Israel and used in its militarised attacks on Palestinians.⁴

This updated report reveals that since our previous research, Barclays has substantially increased the level of its financial ties with these nine companies, despite Israel’s devastating and unlawful attacks on the Palestinian people.

Barclays is facilitating Israel’s war crimes and grave violations of Palestinian rights. It must take the immediate actions detailed at the end of this report, including ending all investment and provision of financial services to arms companies whose equipment has been used by Israel to carry out unlawful attacks on Palestinians.

References:

1 The ICJ ruled it plausible that Israel is committing genocide against the Palestinian population of Gaza www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20240126-ord-01-00-en.pdf

2 UN Human Rights Chief deplores new moves to expand Israeli settlements in occupied West Bank:

www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/03/un-human-rights-chief-deplores-new-moves-expand-israeli-settlements-occupied

3 Underwriting refers to a bank raising investment capital in the form of bonds or shares for a client and selling them to investors.

4 Campaign Against Arms Trade, Palestine Solidarity Campaign, War on Want (July 2022) - *Barclays: Arming Apartheid*.

The full report can be read at

<https://caat.org.uk/publications/> (search down the page).

Barclays is also the target of a major consumer campaign saying **Boycott Barclays** over its arms trade and climate emergency fueling investments. Hundreds of campaigners have pledged to close their accounts. In addition, Barclays branches have been picketed up and down Britain.

Not the Ham Fair

As Maggie reported in the last edition of Kingston Peace News, we were refused a stall at this year’s Ham Fair on 8th June. “With armed conflict in the Middle East, and sadly other parts of the world, the Ham Fair committee now feels that Ham Fair can no longer be a platform for any campaign groups, regardless of which country or national campaign they are supporting.”

Our press officer Phil Cooper contacted the *Kingston Nubnews* website and they have run the story on their Kingston, Richmond and Teddington sites: <https://kingston.nub.news/> (search for Ham Fair)

Maggie has written about this to her MP, Sarah Olney (MP for Richmond Park), who replied: “If I am re-elected after the general election, I will be more than happy to look into this issue further, particularly in advance of Ham Fair next year”.

Maggie will be holding a garage sale, on the same day as Ham Fair, 8th June, from 11am until approximately 4 pm. The garage is at the rear of 289 Richmond Road, Kingston KT2 5DJ, and is accessed via Lower Ham Road.

Help in the garage for the sale would be very much appreciated - please let Maggie know if you can spare an hour or two: margaret@galdor.co.uk or 07770 558547.

Book review – The Holocaust Is Over – We Must Rise From Its Ashes

by Avraham Burg

Martin Birdseye finds reasons for hope.

5 April 2024

Where can we look for hope? Without it all our efforts for peace and justice in Palestine will be miserable indeed. Without hope, bitterness, which itself can lead to hatred and violence, may overtake us. There seems almost no grounds for hope. But some vision of a viable future for all the people of Palestine is essential.

Two things have cheered me.

One is the people. On every cease-fire demonstration, with tens of thousands of ordinary people of every race and religion I can guess firstly that very many are Palestinians. Maybe loud and strident, but still good natured in the face of the most distressing current events and long-term history of their homeland, they are a powerful witness to the power of hope and humanity. Then, among all the rest of us - thousands of peace loving ordinary British people - there are Jewish people – a Jewish bloc seeming larger than the Christian bloc – by their presence saying that for them, violence is not the answer.

For me the second token of hope is a book. Thanks to Hounslow Library I found THE HOLOCAUST IS OVER – WE MUST RISE FROM ITS ASHES by Avraham Burg. This book is not new (2007) but it is prophetic and provides a very clear picture of the history and origins of the current situation. Avraham Burg was formerly Speaker of the Knesset. His parents were Holocaust survivors. His vision of the positive role Israel could play in the world if it can escape from extreme right-wing Zionism, which promotes and thrives on the Shoah victimhood mentality, is truly inspiring.

Burg reminds us that before World War II the majority of Jewish people opposed the creation of a Jewish state. They opposed the Zionist minority and feared the consequences of national and political revival – a Jewish political entity might create intolerant nationalistic sentiments that would alter the character of the Jewish people. We learn that after the Holocaust, and as a consequence of it, this fear was certainly justified. At the heart of Burg's thesis is the idea that, having emerged from the most terrible genocide in history, the Zionists achieved their aim and

were then dependent on maintaining the Holocaust victim mentality (at one point he calls it the “Shoah industry”) to maintain their power and Israel's military determination to keep fighting all those around them.

How this played out over the subsequent 77 years is the long, complicated and tragic story, with devastating consequences for Palestine, that finds Israel itself now accused of a genocide in progress.

In the final chapters of his book Burg first of all identifies Jewish racism and its origins in biblical and national experiences. He goes on to analyse the two trends of exclusivity and inclusiveness, effectively bad and good, in Jewish history. Hitler tried to cut out the Jews from the world; will Israel's isolationism, trying “to live the past without building a new present”, complete his work? “The winning answer”, Burg says, “is the union of all good people in the world against the coalition of evil, which includes some of my own people.” He calls for “not just withdrawal from the occupied territories, but also the creation of a new Jewish identity” holding out to us a vision of peace and benefit to all humanity. That vision seems to be devastated by recent events. But for me it provides the grain of hope that we so desperately need at this stage, which comes with an admittedly controversial opinion.*

One only has to look at the latest map of Israel/Palestine to see that the so called two state solution is now barely possible. Material infrastructure alone would seem to make a genuine independence impossible as was grimly revealed by Israel's disruption of water and electricity supplies to Gaza. If ever Palestine/Israel can recover from the psychological wounds of the present conflict then it must surely be as one state, where all citizens are equal, with freedom of opportunity and religion, like any other modern state.

For the next cease-fire demonstration, after reading this book, I made a new placard: “Israel wake up; rejoin humanity”. (See opposite page)

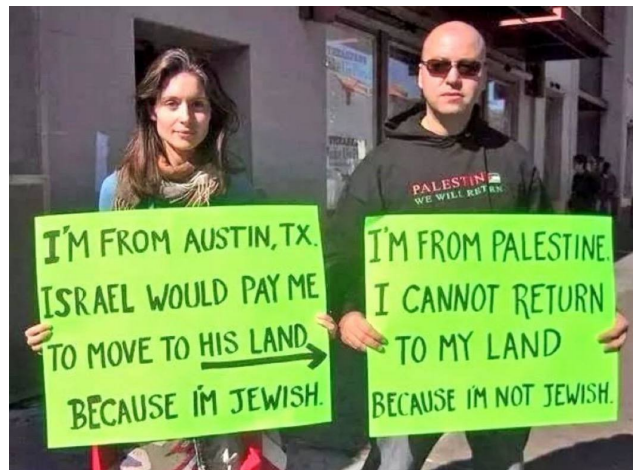
* Further discussion of the two state solution can be seen at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Two-state_solution#Renewed_focus_on_two-state_solution

National Demonstrations for Palestine

KPC members have joined the recent marches in London calling for justice for the Palestinian people, an end to Israel's violence, and for a ceasefire in Gaza. The latest, on 18 May, commemorated the 76th year of the Nakba, when over 700,000 Palestinians were driven from their homeland by the newly created state of Israel. The Nakba (Arabic for catastrophe) is ongoing and each year we march to remind the world of the injustices suffered by the Palestinian people. This year the march had added urgency, with Israel's ethnic cleansing reaching unimaginable levels of brutality in Gaza.



Martin's placard (see Page 6)



Hello, KPC members

There are 76 members of Kingston Peace Council/CND, but we do not have contact with many of you. We understand that you may be active in other organisations, or you have spent much of your life campaigning for peace, and feel that you have 'done your bit', and we are grateful for this and for the financial contributions you make to our Group.

However, since we no longer have 'in person' meetings, you may feel a bit cut off, and we'd like to encourage you to make yourself known to us. You could come and say 'hello' at one of our Saturday stalls in the Marketplace, at Maggie's garage sale, or the Hiroshima/Nagasaki commemorations in August. See "Diary Dates" on page 8 for details of these events.

KINGSTON PEACE
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Disclaimer: The views
expressed in this edition are
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Subs and newsletter

Is your membership subscription overdue? See the code at the top of the address label on this newsletter – the year followed by the month when your membership expires, eg 202401 means your sub was due at the end of January 2024. Or, if you pay by standing order, please check that you are paying the correct amount. See panel above for rates and Treasurer's address (cheques to Kingston Peace Council/CND). If you would like to receive your copy of Kingston Peace News by email, please contact Gill at gill@gillhurlle.plus.com

Dates for your Diary

Sats 1&15 June and 6&20 July 11am-1pm or 2pm KPC stall in Kingston Market Place. If you are able to help, please contact Angie on 020 8399 5537 or angecooper47@hotmail.com

Sun 2 June 11:30am for 12 noon Meet the Survivors: Stories from Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Friends House, 173 Euston Rd, London NW1 2BJ. Members of the Peace Boat travel around the world to share their stories and this is your opportunity to hear directly from those affected by the nuclear bombings. Their stories will be followed by family-friendly workshops including art workshops, Japanese crane folding and a performance by dramatist Michael Mears. Book: www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/904730502287

Thur 6 June 2-6.30pm Peace with Justice – how to get there, hybrid conference at Bush House, 30 Aldwych, London WC2B 4BG and online. Organised by The Balfour Project with KCL History Dept. Book at: <https://billetto.co.uk/e/975920> The conference will be followed by a reception for all speakers and attendees.

Fri 7 June 6.30 for 7-9.30pm Mental Health for Activists Workshop, Meadowside, TW1 2JQ. An outdoor workshop with Palestinian activist and psychotherapist Mustafa Jayyousi. Organised by Richmond and Kingston PSC. Book: www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/910769816037 (space is limited). Bring a picnic, including blanket, snacks, water, and any personal items for comfort.

Sat 8 June 11am-4pm 'Not the Ham Fair' garage sale at Maggie's, rear of 289 Lower Ham Road, Kingston KT2 5DJ. See page 5.

Tues 11 June and 9 July 8pm KPC/CND meeting via Zoom. For joining instructions contact Gill, gill@gillhurlle.plus.com

Wed 19 June 6.30-8pm Faith Talks: Foreign Conflicts – how do we respond to the changing face of war? All Saints Kingston, KT1 1JP. Debate with a Speaker (Lord Alderdice), host and panellists with the option for the audience to pose questions to the panel or a specific person. Book (free): <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/all-saints-church-kingston/e-zmlbza>

Tues 9 July 6 – 8pm Wars, Militarism and Arms Trade – How Peace Activists Can Make a Difference? Uniting for Peace Online Conference. Chair, Rita Payne, President Emeritus, Commonwealth Journalist Association. Speakers: Vijay Mehta, Chair, Uniting for Peace; Alfred de Zayas, Lawyer, Writer, UN, Human Rights and International Law Expert; Andrew Feinstein, Former Politician, Executive Director of Shadow World Investigations; Taylor O'Connor, Conflict Researcher, Education Specialist, Peace Building Practitioner; Rosa Brooks, Law Professor, Journalist, Author, Foreign Policy Expert [TBC].
To register: <https://warsandmilitarism.eventbrite.co.uk>

Tues 6 Aug Commemoration of bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. As in the last two years, we shall hold a vigil, with placards, at noon in Kingston town centre and an evening riverside ceremony in Canbury Gardens. More details in the next newsletter.

Sat 14 Sept 10.30am-4pm Alternatives to War in a time of crisis, Sands Film Studios, 82, St Marychurch Street, Rotherhithe, SE16 4HZ and online. Day conference organised by Movement for the Abolition of War. See <https://abolishwar.net/Alternatives-to-war/>

Starting 21(?) Sept International week of action to raise awareness of contribution of military emissions to the climate crisis in the run-up to COP29. Further details when more is known.