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# KINGSTON PEACE NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF KINGSTON PEACE COUNCIL /  
CAMPAIGN FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

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## Government declares war on the right to protest

*Civil liberties under assault in a bid to silence peaceful dissent*

The Labour Government's shameful assault on civil liberties and the right to protest continues unabated.

The first stage of a Bill to restrict trials by jury has now been passed, the principal justification from Justice Secretary David Lammy being that the measure was needed to tackle the serious backlog in cases waiting to be heard.

One way to tackle the backlog might be to stop arresting people in support of a law that has already been judged to be illegal! At a London protest in April 500 people were arrested for displaying signs opposing genocide and in support of the proscribed organisation Palestine Action yet in mid-February three senior High Court judges had ruled the proscription to be unlawful.

Rather than accept this with good grace Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood has appealed against the judgement so the police, having originally decided not to arrest anyone else, reversed their

decision (under Home Office pressure?) and have begun arresting people again. This brings the total number of people arrested under this proscription but yet to be tried to some 3000.

Another matter before Parliament

*Continued on Page 2*

*Stop the War's Chris Nineham (below, left) and the PSC's Ben Jamal who were found guilty at Westminster Magistrate's Court following a peaceful protest at a London march in support of Palestine.*



## Guns, not bread

Global military spending in 2025 was \$2.9 trillion. One-third of the total was accounted for by the US, 12% by China and 6.6% by Russia. The figures have been collated by the Global Campaign on Military Spending (GCOMS). Meanwhile \$93 billion was spent on eradicating world hunger!

**In This Issue:** Page 2 See no evil, hear no evil ... Page 3 Preserving Palestinian memory Page 4 A plea for peace from inside Iran Page 5 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty under review Page 6 Scottish firm link to Iran schoolgirls massacre/No baloney from Maloni Page 7 Is Trump's Board a breach of the peace?/Sentence of death Page 8 Diary Dates

## Government declares war on the right to protest

*Continued from Page 1*

is an amendment to the Crime and Policing Bill to give the police the power to ban repeat protests, taking into account the “cumulative effect” of protests in the same area. This is clearly aimed to stopping the continuing, massively supported, demonstrations against the War in Gaza and the selling of arms to Israel. This measure has already been comprehensively opposed by representatives of the Anglican, Muslim, Hindu, Jewish, Buddhist and Free Church religions. Meanwhile, the government has added a further amendment to the Crime and Policing Bill that would designate those who take part in direct action in support of protest as Extreme Protest Groups making fundraising for those groups a criminal offence. This has all the signs of a fallback position by a government that fears it will lose the appeal against the High Court decision outlined above.

### **A dark day**

And then there’s the guilty verdict handed down against PSC Director Ben Jamal and Stop the War’s Chris Nineham who were arrested at a peaceful protest in support of Palestine. Former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, who attended the protest, said he and others followed police instructions. “We held an entirely peaceful demonstration in support of Palestinian people... we ended the demonstration by laying down flowers ... to mourn the deaths of Palestinian children,” he wrote on social media. “Today’s verdict is a dark day for civil liberties in this country and is a disgraceful assault on the right to protest,” he added. “This case is part of a wider attempt to intimidate the Palestinian solidarity movement into silence. They will never succeed.” Labour MP John McDonnell said: “I hope this judgement is appealed as it stands as an assault on our civil liberties.”

Jamal and Nineham intend to lodge an appeal.

‘An eye for an eye only ends up making the whole world blind’

**Mahatma Gandhi**

## See no evil, hear no evil ...

In a major policy speech in April Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper emphasised how important it was to respect and support international law and this would be one of the linchpins of the Foreign Office under her leadership.

Speaking at the Mansion House, Cooper said: “It might be tempting to think that international law and the role of international frameworks are out of date, and that in championing them, we somehow cherish rules over national interests. Well, I reject that view, because we’re not just defending the status quo.

“The role that rules-based frameworks play is vital, and respect for the rule of law is a core British value that supports our national interest, underpins our economic stability, makes us a reliable place for international investment, while the whole world spins around us and underpins our security and prosperity.

“It’s in Britain’s interests to be a dependable power, a country that keeps its word, a stable base for investment and a partner of choice.”

### **Shut down**

Britain’s “dependability” in this regard should be judged by the fact that the unit of the Foreign Office responsible for tracking potential breaches of international law, including specifically those by Israel in Gaza, has now been shut down, ostensibly to save money. The decision, reports *The Guardian*, means funding for the Conflict and Security Monitoring Project run by the Centre for Information Resilience (CIR) will end. The centre had been doing a range of work for the Foreign Office. It is the only programme in the UK that collects, verifies and analyses human rights and conflict incidents in Israel and the occupied territories. As a result, the department will lose access to a database of 26,000 verified incidents. Kate Fallon, for the Campaign Against Arms Trade, commented: “...the civil service is under pressure to give the government the answers that they want. Nowhere is this more clear than on ensuring arms sales to ‘allies’ continue, despite the risks of war crimes.”

# Preserving Palestinian memory

The Palestinian will to survive has proved so strong that it has frustrated the “incremental genocide” that has been underway, orchestrated by Israeli Zionists, since 1948.

“We are at the threshold of the final stage of the Palestinian fight against Zionism,” said architect Antoine Raffoul, addressing a meeting hosted by the Richmond and Kingston Palestine Solidarity Campaign. And he added: “I think Zionism is imploding.”

He told his audience, gathered at The Exchange Theatre in Twickenham: “We have paid a heavy price.” It had not been only a struggle for survival but also a struggle against being erased from human memory.

And it was this theme that he expanded upon in his talk entitled ‘From Lifta to Gaza. The Reconstruction of Memory’, describing how he had been fighting for over ten years to preserve the existence, and thus the memory, of a small Palestinian settlement – Lifta – not far from Jerusalem, as a beacon of hope, not only for those that had lived there, but also all Palestinians.

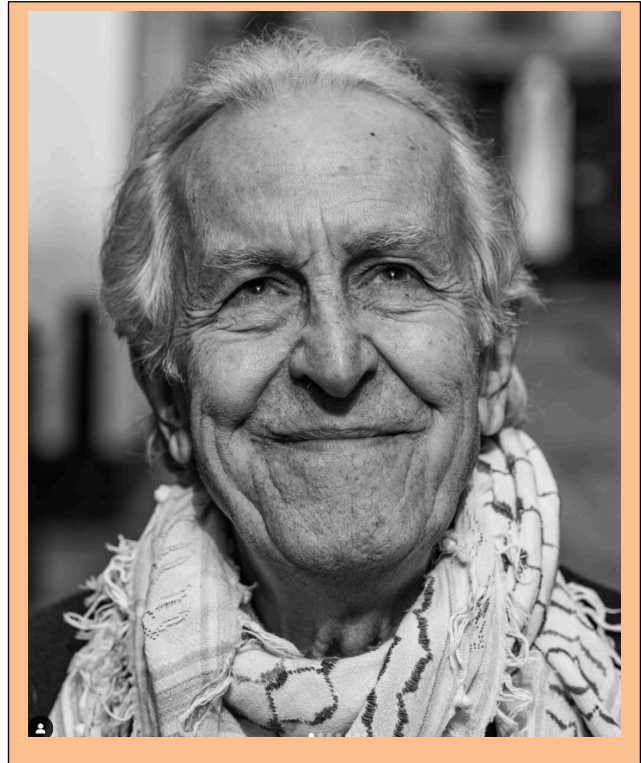
Raffoul was born in Nazareth and was expelled with his family from Palestine in 1948. He studied and worked as an architect in the USA before moving to England in 1971. A lifelong campaigner for Palestinian rights, he discovered the beautiful and ancient hilltop village of Lifta that overlooks a fertile valley close to Jerusalem and began campaigning against plans by the Israeli authorities to have new homes, hotels and shops built there.

Having founded an organisation, The 1948 Lest We Forget Group, he campaigned successfully against the redevelopment plan which was thrown out by a district court. (A success reported by an Al Jazeera documentary in 2013).

## Stands empty

He discovered that there had been a settlement on the site at Lifta dating back some 4,000 years. A census from just before the 1948 nakba recorded that some 2930 people lived there but it was ethnically cleansed by the Israeli authorities and the buildings stand empty to this day.

Raffoul, having helped prevent the wholesale demolition and redevelopment, approached UNESCO to preserve the village pointing out its unique mode of construction using dry local stone, its connection to the nearby valley and its historical recognition as a gate to Jerusalem.



*Antoine Raffoul “The people are the land.”*

The village has since been placed on a UNESCO tentative list and the work goes on calling for complete protection.

But Lifta is more than a single entity, Raffoul explained. It is a symbol for so much more. In 2013, together with colleague Dr Salman Abu Sitta, he inaugurated the annual Architectural Competition for Destroyed Palestinian Villages. The event is held in London.

## Masterplan

The 2023 competition included entries from Gaza and since then Raffoul has begun working on a conceptual masterplan for the reconstruction of the destroyed Gaza.

Having been evicted from their homes in Lifta local people return weekly on Fridays to pray and continue to do so even though the time they are allowed to be there has been drastically reduced by the Israeli authorities.

But the fact that they remained determined to go back, however, restricted, underlined their determination as Palestinians for the right to return. “The purpose of rebuilding Lifta, and Gaza, is that the people are the land,” said Raffoul. “It is linking the sense of place and belonging, hope, resistance, and memory.”

# A plea for peace from inside Iran

Reproduced here is a message from Dr Shahriar Khateri, of the Tehran Peace Museum, issued on 31 March 2026, on behalf of the Peace Museum team.

*As a young man, Dr Khateri survived a gas attack in the Iran-Iraq War in the 1980s by a stroke of luck because of a sudden change in the wind direction. Others were not so lucky. He decided to become a medical doctor so as to help survivors who had been affected by the gas attacks, suffering life-long injuries and disabilities. He not only established an Iranian NGO for the medical assistance of survivors, but also took the initiative for creating a museum dedicated to the campaign for the abolition of chemical warfare, and all weapons of mass destruction.*

**Here is Dr Khateri's message:**

“Dear colleagues, friends, members of the International Network of Museums for Peace (INMP)

It has now been more than a month since the onset of this unlawful and unprovoked war against Iran. During this period, hundreds of innocent civilians have been killed and thousands more injured. The scale and nature of the violence demand urgent and sustained international attention.

Civilian infrastructure—including schools, medical centres, residential areas, public service facilities, and sites of cultural heritage—has been systematically and deliberately targeted, day and night. At the same time, leaders of the aggressor countries continue to issue threats to destroy Iran's infrastructure, including power plants and the oil industry. Despite the severity of these actions, selective media coverage and contemporary forms of censorship have significantly limited global awareness and understanding of the realities on the ground.

Equally concerning is the silence and inaction of the international community and major global institutions. Organisations that once symbolised collective security and justice now appear increasingly marginalised and ineffective — arguably to an unprecedented degree since their establishment.



This erosion of institutional credibility raises fundamental questions about the effectiveness of international law and global governance mechanisms. It is particularly disheartening that frameworks intended to prevent war crimes—such as international law, the Geneva Conventions, and International Humanitarian Law—as well as institutions such as the United Nations Security Council and the International Committee of the Red Cross, are widely perceived as failing to uphold their mandates.

## **Undermining foundations**

The apparent impunity with which aggression is carried out risks undermining the very foundations of the international order. In addition, it is important to emphasise the principle of consistency in the application of international norms. Just as the Russian invasion of Ukraine was widely condemned by governments, institutions, and civil society across the world, acts of aggression elsewhere must be met with the same clarity and resolve. Failure to do so risks reinforcing perceptions of hypocrisy and double standards in the international system, undermining trust in global governance and the universality of international law.

Furthermore, more than four decades of unilateral sanctions imposed by the United States have significantly shaped Iranian society. Rather than weakening the country, these sustained pressures have

contributed to a high degree of resilience and self-reliance among the Iranian people. The assumption that external military intervention would lead to a rapid internal collapse is therefore a delusion, deeply flawed and fails to account for the social, political, and historical realities of the country.

On a personal level, most members of the Tehran Peace Museum and their families remain in Tehran, as do many citizens despite the constant threat of bombardment and airstrikes. First responders continue to provide rescue and medical care to victims around the clock. The Iranian people remain deeply committed to their homeland and resolute in defending its sovereignty against external aggression and fragmentation.

### **Profound human cost**

There is widespread concern that the current trajectory could mirror the destabilisation seen in countries such as Libya and Syria, with far-reaching consequences for regional and global stability. The human cost of this conflict is profound. These tragedies are not isolated incidents but part of a broader pattern of civilian casualties, including the devastating loss of young students in targeted schools and universities. The reported tragedy at Minab elementary school, where 170 children were killed, stands as just one heartbreaking example.

While there is broad recognition that this constitutes an illegal act of aggression against

a sovereign state, critical questions remain unanswered:

- Who will take responsibility for stopping it?
- What is the role and responsibility of civil society?

In this context, the role of peace movements, anti-war organisations, scholars, and activists is more vital than ever. Raising awareness, spreading verified information, challenging misinformation and war propaganda, and mobilising public opinion are essential steps toward accountability and justice. The expectation from those enduring the consequences of this conflict is clear: the global community must do more.

We call upon INMP members and other concerned individuals to engage actively, leveraging their platforms, expertise, and networks to ensure that this crisis receives the attention, scrutiny, and response it demands. Sustained, coordinated, and evidence-based action is critical—not only to address the current situation but also to uphold the integrity of international norms and to prevent further loss of innocent lives.

**Now is the time for voices to rise. Your role has never been more critical. Speak out. Raise awareness. Demand accountability. We cannot endure this alone!”**

*Shahriar Khateri / Mona Badamchizaedh  
On behalf of the Tehran Peace Museum team*

## **Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty under review**

Representatives from most of the 190-plus member countries of the United Nations are currently meeting in New York to review the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty.

The NPT review process began on April 27 and will continue till May 22 when a communiqué will be issued. But commentators are not hopeful that there will be positive results. Disagreements raised before the review got underway included Russia’s War on Ukraine including Russia’s intention to site nuclear weapons in Belarus, China’s expansion of its nuclear forces, failure of the five major nuclear-armed powers to hold disarmament negotiations, President Trump’s threat, firstly, to resume nuclear testing and, secondly, to obliterate Iranian civilization, and the UK’s decision to expand its nuclear arsenal by purchasing American F-35 aircraft with the nuclear bombs that go with them.

Meanwhile, Trump’s on-off threat to leave NATO has encouraged other member countries, especially France, to talk about expanding the European nuclear “umbrella”.

President of the Review conference, Vietnam’s UN ambassador Do Hung Viet, admitted that the NPT was facing a lot of strain “but it is still extremely important that we work to rebuild the credibility that the NPT has.”

## Scottish firm link to Iran schoolgirls massacre

On 28 February, a girls' primary school in southern Iran, the Shajareh Tayyebah school in Minab, was hit by a missile, killing 168 people, mostly children.

Videos analysed by investigative website *Bellingcat* revealed that a US Tomahawk missile was used to hit another building inside the same compound, adding to evidence indicating the US was responsible for the school strike minutes earlier. Neither Israel nor Iran is known to possess Tomahawk missiles. The revelation raised serious questions about whether UK-made components were used in the attack.

This is because a factory owned by US arms firm Raytheon in Glenrothes, Scotland, has won several contracts to produce components for Tomahawk missile systems over recent years.

Most recently, in December 2025, the Pentagon announced Glenrothes would have a 2.9 percent stake in making 350 Tomahawks.

A defence industry website said this arrangement reflected the missiles' "longstanding transatlantic supply chain".

Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT) spokesperson Sam Perlo-Freeman told website *Declassified*: "The UK arms industry is deeply entwined with the US. This is true of the F-35 aircraft that has played such a devastating role in Israel's genocide in Gaza, and is now playing a crucial role in the illegal US-Israeli war on Iran.

"And it is true of the Tomahawk missiles, which appear to have been used to commit this horrific massacre of schoolgirls in Iran."

Asked whether it will review and potentially suspend export of the components, a UK government spokesperson trotted out exactly the same form of words used whenever UK complicity in such matters is discovered: The spokesperson said: "We operate one of the most robust export control regimes in the world and keep export licences under continual and careful review."

Raytheon was asked to comment.

## No baloney from Maloni!

She may be at the head of an extremely right-wing government but Italian PM Giorgia Maloni has adopted a tough stance towards Israel that puts Britain's Keir Starmer in the shade.

In mid-April Maloni announced that her country would be suspending a five-yearly arms agreement with Israel. Italy is the third largest supplier of arms to Netanyahu's government after the US and Germany. The long-standing arms agreement is usually renewed automatically. Maloni's announcement that arms sales to Israel would be halted followed a diplomatic row after IDF forces fired on Italian troops in Lebanon. But Italy has also banned US military aircraft bound for Iran from using an airbase on Sicily after widespread local opposition and a failure by the US authorities to seek permission through the proper channels.

Elsewhere, both France and Spain refused the US permission to use its bases and overfly their countries *en route* to Iran. So what's Britain's position?

### Refused to say

When the US/Israeli attack on Iran started on February 28 Keir Starmer said Britain was not involved in the action but refused to say whether he supported the strikes. One day later he told Parliament that he had granted permission for the US to use British bases to strike Iran "for specific and limited defensive purposes." Despite this assurance dozens of American B52 and B1 heavy bombers began arriving at RAF Fairford in Gloucestershire, were observed being loaded with 2000lb bombs and leaving for repeated assaults on Iranian targets. "Limited defensive purposes"? Heavy bombers are offensive, not defensive weapons Sir Keir!!

**STOP PRESS:** The defeat of Victor Orban in Hungary's General Election opens the possibility that the EU may reconsider issuing a package of sanctions against violent Israeli settlers on the West Bank. The measure only failed previously because it was vetoed by Orban's Hungary.

# Is Trump's Board a breach of the peace?

Having failed to win the Nobel Peace Prize Donald Trump has instead decided to copyright the word Peace. That's the verdict of Congressman Jamie Raskin, senior Democrat on the US House of Representatives Judiciary Committee.

The comment was made during a committee hearing in which Raskin demolished the testimony of the head of America's patent office John Squires. Why, Raskin asked, did the US Patent and Trademark Office file the applications for the name and logo of Donald Trump's so-called Board of Peace? Surely it was for the Patent Office to merely determine filings made by companies or individuals, not to do so itself.

"The filings (for the Board of Peace) do not identify the individuals or entities the (Office) is acting on behalf of, leaving the organisation's true ownership and governance unclear," he said.

He went on: "Government ownership of trademarks must be treated with care, because the registration of a trademark would allow the government to penalize those who attempt to use it. Individuals who seek to satirize the term 'Board of Peace' might be less likely to do so after learning of this application, out of fear of legal action from the government.

"Trademarks exist to protect consumers and businesses. They do not exist to silence objectors to a governmental administration and they should not be used to stifle free political expression."

He wondered whether attempts would be made to restrict or control the use of the word Peace in future.

## A privatised UN

Writing in the international newsletter *The Conversation*, Stefan Wolff from the University of Birmingham described The Board of Peace as a "privatised UN with one shareholder, the US President" who has been named chairman for life. Membership of the Board is by invitation from the chairman. Invitees could join for free for three years then buy themselves a permanent seat at the organisation for \$1billion a time.

Back to Representative Raskin again: he characterised the Board as an organisation where Trump has "virtually unlimited control

over the Board of Peace and its finances. It appears to operate as an unregulated international entity with little or no meaningful oversight. The lack of external governance raises serious concerns about potential personal enrichment by granting President Trump unilateral control over billions of dollars in foreign pledges along with a proposed \$10billion in US taxpayer funds – despite Congress never appropriating any funding for the entity."

## Totally silent

There are 27 member nations in the Board of Peace, including all the Gulf States caught up in the war with Iran because they host military bases from which US forces have attacked the Islamic Republic. Several of those states have already promised to cough up their billion dollar membership fee but the Board has remained totally silent and unengaged on the subject of securing peace in the current Middle East conflict, as indeed it has in terms of securing peace in the Ukraine-Russia War. So, with no involvement in the two major global conflicts currently underway, exactly what is the Board doing? Well, it is supposed to have a role in 'rebuilding' Gaza but this seems to be only focussed on real estate development.

Another notable founding member of Trump's Board of Peace is Tony Blair, along with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Trump's Middle East envoy and property magnate Steve Witkoff, and Trump's son-in-law and would be developer of Gaza's waterfront Jared Kushner!!!!

## Sentence of death

The Israeli Knesset has passed into law a death sentence for terror-related crimes that only applies to Palestinian citizens, not Israeli Jews. Israel's conviction rate of Palestinians by military courts is 99.74%. Conviction rate of Israeli settlers accused of attacks on Palestinians is 1.8%.

Israel is the first state in history to legislate a death sentence that applies only to one ethnic group.

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## Help with the stall

Our regular KPC stall in  
Kingston Market Place is  
held on the first and third  
Saturday of each month. If  
you wish to join us to help  
hand out leaflets to passers-  
by please let us know.  
Contact Angie Cooper on  
0208 399 5537 or email:  
[angecooper47@hotmail.com](mailto:angecooper47@hotmail.com)

## Dates for your Diary

### Friday 15<sup>th</sup> May

International Conscientious Objectors Day. Every year on May 15th conscientious objectors, both past and present, are remembered. Around the world many people are imprisoned or forced to flee their home countries for refusing to join the armed forces. On this day we stand in solidarity with them, as well as celebrating the memory of those throughout history who have resisted conscription. The National Ceremony will take place at the CO's memorial stone, Tavistock Square, London WC1H. 1-2pm. Speeches by Emma Sangster from Forces Watch and Michael Elstub from Veterans for Peace. Organised by the Peace Pledge Union. <https://www.ppu.org.uk/events>

### Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May

NAKBA Anniversary March. Central London. 12 noon. The PSC is calling on everyone who can make it to be in London for this crucial demonstration. The march commemorates the Nakba. For 78 years, Palestinians have been subjected to a racist system of oppression including ethnic cleansing, settler-colonialism, apartheid and genocide. The march reaffirms the commitment to the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the refugees' right to return home. At the time of going to press the Metropolitan Police have also approved a march led by far-right activist Tommy Robinson. It is vital that as many as possible turn out for the Nakba march give an overwhelming signal in support of Palestine and against the far right. <https://palestinecampaign.org/events/nakba-78-march-for-palestine-2/>

### Monday 25<sup>th</sup> May

Bank holiday garage sale. Lower Ham Road, rear of 289, Richmond Road KT2 5DJ. Hundreds of books, many plants and a range of bric-a-brac will be for sale. Organised by Maggie in support of funds for KPC.

### Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> June

Rising from the Ashes. A concert in support of PalMusic UK, a charity that celebrates and supports Palestinian musical talent. 7pm. United Reformed Church, 88, Portsmouth Road, Guildford GU2 4BS. Wissam Boustany (flute) and Marc Kawwas (piano). Programme includes work by Younis, Boustany, Shostakovitch and Franck  
<https://www.tickettailor.com/events/palmusicuk/2105143>

### Monday 31<sup>st</sup> August

Carshalton Ecofair. This is KPC's major fund-raising event of the year. We will have a large stall selling books, plants and bric-a-brac. The ethos of this annual event is to fund for charity and to deliver local projects to benefit the environment and people's wellbeing. The Fair also educates and encourages sustainable behaviour. Help needed to run the stall during the day and to transport the stall and items for sale from Ham to Carshalton and return. Contact Maggie [margaret@galdor.co.uk](mailto:margaret@galdor.co.uk)

## STOP PRESS

*The Guardian* reported in late April that access to clean water was now a major issue for those living in Gaza and this was fuelling the spread of preventable disease. The newspaper reported that Israeli forces had killed a water engineer and two drivers who transported water to displaced families.

The most recent attack caused extensive damage to a well in northern Gaza described as "a critical water source."

Criticism of Israel's latest actions from the UK government? None.