

September - October 2025

KINGSTON PEACE NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF KINGSTON PEACE COUNCIL /
CAMPAIGN FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

<http://kpc.gn.apc.org> www.facebook.com/kingstonpeace



Hiroshima/Nagasaki 80th anniversary commemorations

On Wednesday 6th August we held our usual commemorations of the dropping of atomic bombs on two cities in Japan, Hiroshima (6th August) and Nagasaki (9th August).

At midday we held a vigil near the Bentall Centre, holding placards and distributing flyers.

In the evening we held a ceremony in Canbury Gardens, attended by Mayor of Kingston, Councillor Noel Hadjimichael, and Deputy Mayor, Councillor Sue Ansari.

Phil Cooper made a moving speech, after which the Mayor spoke and Hilary read a letter of support sent by Sir Ed Davey.

Following a minute's silence for the victims of all wars, those present strewed white flowers onto the Thames as a gesture in remembrance of the souls of the departed.

See page 2 for further details and an extract from the declaration made by the Mayor of Hiroshima.



DSEI (Defence and Security Equipment International) 2025

The huge DSEI arms fair will take place once again at the ExCeL Centre in East London from Tuesday 9 September to Friday 12 September.

On Wed 10 September, from 8am to 4pm, we shall be supporting Movement for the Abolition of War (MAW), standing at the northern end of Whitehall near the Department for Business & Trade, with leaflets, placards and banners, to raise public awareness of the arms fair and make the link with the government department which supports and promotes it. An important part of our message this year will be *No Arms for Genocide*.

We are making an early start in order to 'catch' some of the workers arriving at their offices. **If you can help, please let Hilary know, saying roughly how long you can stay:**

hilarymevans@btinternet.com

See page 5 for details of other DSEI events

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Hiroshima 80th anniversary commemorations

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The midday vigil in the town centre

Highlights of Phil Cooper's speech

In eight decades no other nuclear weapons have been used although the world has come close, either by design or by accident and miscalculation, to using them on a number of occasions. But, as we get farther away from their actual use, the threat does not diminish, it grows greater and part of the problem is that the memory of their use and the actual understanding of their destructive power grows weaker.

The current holder of the Nobel Peace Prize is Nihon Hidankyo. The group was founded in 1956 by survivors of the atomic bombings, the people known as Hibakusha. Nihon Hidankyo was awarded the Prize for its efforts to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons and for its work in sharing the horrific experiences of the Hibakusha – the people able to use actual witness testimony to demonstrate the devastating consequences of using such weapons which is so much more powerful than the sheer statistics of those killed by their use.

In the past four years almost one hundred countries have signed a Treaty that declares the use of nuclear weapons illegal but that continues to be ignored by the countries that possess them.

In Ukraine nuclear-armed NATO continues to provide the means to attack nuclear-armed Russia. Earlier this year two nuclear-armed nations, India and Pakistan, nearly went to war with one another.

The air-dropped nuclear bombs that will be fitted to the American fighter bombers that Britain is now going to buy will have a yield of anything up to 340 kilotons, that's 23 times more powerful than the Hiroshima bomb, yet these are said to be 'battlefield' nuclear weapons for 'localised' use.

Today, we remember the estimated 226,000 people who died as a result of the two atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. That's equivalent to every woman, man and child living today in the Borough of Kingston upon Thames plus those in Teddington, Hampton and Molesey.

Sir Ed Davey's letter

Sir Ed Davey, MP for Kingston & Surbiton and Leader of the Lib Dems, thanked us for organising the event, saying he wished he could have joined us in remembrance. He said the anniversary is a stark reminder of the devastating power of nuclear weapons and the moral responsibility we all have to make sure such tragedies are never repeated. He remains committed to supporting efforts for international peace through closer collaboration with our allies, in Europe and beyond, and a safer, more just world in which nuclear weapons have no place.



The Mayor of Kingston floats flowers on the Thames

Hiroshima Mayor's Peace Declaration

Mayor Kazumi Matsui made a speech at a ceremony in Hiroshima on 6th August. He mentioned that one Hibakusha leader frequently reminded younger audiences, "Building a peaceful world without nuclear weapons will demand our never-give-up spirit. We have to talk and keep talking to people who hold opposing views." Today, conveying the ardent pleas for peace derived from Hibakusha experiences is more crucial than ever.

Michael Ayris

Michael Ayris (1936?-2025), Chair of KPC/CND from 1996 to 1999, died at the end of May. He had been in hospital for a while, and was surrounded by his wife Janet and members of his family at the end.

Michael was a twin and he and his brother were the closest of friends. They had an adventurous youth travelling widely in Europe on their Lambretta.

Michael was a long-time peace activist. In the 1980s, when Cruise missiles were deployed at Greenham Common, he was part of Cruisewatch, driving around the countryside following Cruise missile convoys which had been detected carrying out exercises on Salisbury Plain.

In later years he continued to be very supportive of KPC, attending major meetings and the annual commemoration of the bombing of Hiroshima. He and Janet could always be relied on to put in long hours at fundraising events: jumble sales, garage sales and stalls at local fairs. Even after Michael had had periods of serious illness, he never complained and he and Janet would be there, helping out.

Michael was also a fine artist and in retirement made a significant contribution to the development of the Landmark Arts Centre at Teddington. Receiving cards from him was a delight as he had an attractive distinctive hand, that of a calligrapher.

Michael was a very thoughtful person, philosophical, a seeker after "Truth". For some years he attended Kingston Quaker Meeting but later his constant search for deeper meaning led him to the Humanists. He was warm, kind and friendly to all, and all that he did was always in a spirit of love. His family meant a great deal to him but he was not inward looking: he always took an interest in the lives of his friends and acquaintances and their families. The daughter of one KPC member recalls Michael, in his kindly way, asking her what she was going to study at University. When she replied "History and Politics", Michael responded "That's a good combination. History is about how we've got ourselves into this mess and Politics is about how we get out of it". That little anecdote illustrates a lot about Michael.

Hilary Evans

US Nuclear Weapons return to USAF Lakenheath

Evidence is clear that US nuclear weapons have arrived in Britain – at the Lakenheath NATO base in Suffolk. These deadly weapons make us all a target. And they increase the risk of Britain being dragged into Trump's reckless wars.

As part of the actions to condemn Trump's State Visit, CND and LAP (Lakenheath Alliance for Peace, of which KPC is a member) are moving the 20th September National demonstration which was to be at RAF Marham (a significant Royal Air Force base for the F-35 Lightning stealth fighter jet) to USAF Lakenheath, to say loud and clear that neither Trump nor his nuclear bombs are welcome here!

Assemble at the Main Gate at 1pm.

A coach is available from London, organised by national CND. Please arrive at Embankment station at 9:45am for a 10am departure, estimated to arrive back in London around 6pm. Book at: www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/1620603120559

LAP is also organising a Peace not War educational/mobilising tour in England and Wales, leading up to the 20th September demonstration, with a few more talks following in October.

Vigils continue at the Main Gate of USAF Lakenheath between 12noon and 2pm on the last Saturday of every month.

See <https://lakenheathallianceforpeace.org.uk/>

Category A nuclear incident reported at Faslane naval base this year

*Reported on the Independent website
Friday 15 August 2025*

Officially known as HMNB Clyde, Faslane in Argyll and Bute is home to the Royal Navy's flotilla of nuclear submarines. A "category A" nuclear safety incident occurred at Faslane naval

base earlier this year, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) has confirmed.

Category A incidents are where there is judged to have been "actual or high potential for radioactive release to the environment". The MoD said it is

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Demonstration outside RAF High Wycombe

On Saturday 16 August KPC members joined a demonstration organised by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign outside the headquarters of the British RAF at High Wycombe, Bucks. This is where the orders are given for Britain's shameful military collaboration with Israel. Since October 2023, the RAF has flown hundreds of surveillance flights over the Gaza Strip, sharing intelligence collected with Israel to be used in its genocide.

Hundreds of demonstrators gathered along the barbed wire fence holding banners that said 'end British military collaboration with Israel' and '61,000+ killed, 600 RAF spy flights' and chanting 'RAF shame on you'.

They highlighted that this is where commands are issued to provide military assistance to Israel – according to *Middle East Eye* this included a spy plane in the air over Gaza, when Israel murdered the journalist, Anas al-Sharif, and his colleagues, in a 'targeted' attack.



Training British soldiers

Item in Middle East Eye, 21 August 2025

The UK is reportedly poised to sign a £2bn (\$2.69bn) contract with Israel's largest arms manufacturer that would see it train 60,000 British soldiers a year. Elbit Systems provides around 85 percent of Israel's drones and land-based military equipment, and has played a major role in supplying Israel with weaponry for its genocide in Gaza.

Private Eye reported this week that the company's British arm, Elbit Systems UK, is close to winning a major contract that would make it a "strategic partner" of Britain's Ministry of Defence (MoD).

Elbit is reportedly bidding against Raytheon for the Army Collective Training Service contract, after the MoD reduced the bidders to two in February. If Elbit wins the contract it will work with the MoD to transform military training "through digitalisation, simulation, a different relationship with industry, and by changing how and where the military trains".

Last month a report by Francesca Albanese, the United Nations special rapporteur for Palestine, said that "for Israeli companies such as Elbit Systems... the ongoing genocide has been a profitable venture".

Since 2023, Elbit's UK arm has run the MoD's Project Vulcan, a £57m contract of simulation-based training for tank crews. The new deal, if it goes through, would be a significant step up in the relationship.

Last September, the government suspended 30 out of 350 arms export licences to Israel after a review found there was a clear risk that British-made weapons could be used in violation of international humanitarian law. Licences for parts for F-35 fighter jets, which are directly used in Gaza, were among those exempted from the embargo.

Private Eye said that it asked the MoD if it would be appropriate to "give a company so involved in the Gaza war such a major contract", but the MoD did not respond.

DSEI Arms Fair

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DSEI – one of the world’s largest arms fairs – returns to London in September 2025. Thousands of exhibitors and buyers will gather to make deals over equipment that causes untold death and destruction worldwide. In this time of heightened global tension and atrocious wars, business is booming for the arms industry. But this is not what will keep us, or anyone, safe. This is where war and repression starts, and this is where we can stop it.

The following themed days have been set.

‘Set up’ week – 1st-7th September – east entrance to Excel, next to Premier Inn Docklands

Monday 1st – Setting up the Peace Camp; Pilgrimage to DSEI sets off from Oxford

Tuesday 2nd – Setting up the Peace Camp, banner making

Wednesday 3rd – Rethinking security: police, borders and prisons

Thursday 4th – No ecocide, no genocide

Friday 5th – Think global, act local-international struggles and solidarity

Saturday 6th – Festival of resistance; music, performance, creativity

Sunday 7th – Festival of resistance; Workers against the arms trade

Nuclear incident at Faslane

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unable to release further detail about the event for security reasons, but stressed it posed “no risk to the public and did not result in any radiological impact to the environment”. Defence Secretary John Healey described it as being of “low safety significance”.

Figures made public through a response to a written Parliamentary question in May show the incident was one of 28 “nuclear site events” recorded at the facility between 1st January and 22nd April, 2025. Of the other 27 incidents, two were graded category B, seven as category C, 13 as category D and 5 as “below scale”. Last year there were 119 incidents recorded at the base.

In her written answer, UK defence procurement minister Maria Eagle said nuclear site event

DSEI: 9th-12th September – west entrance to Excel and DLR entrances (Custom House, Prince Regent)

Monday 8th – No theme/activities (rest day) – Evening vigil; Peace Pilgrimage Arrives; Quakers Merchants of Death Tour

Tuesday 9th – No Faith in War; “The Big One” Shut Down DSEI! (Opening day of the DSEI 2025 arms fair)

Wednesday 10th – No Pride in War (**but see P1 for KPC action**)

Thursday 11th – Migrant Justice

Friday 12th – Feminist Justice (Last day of the DSEI 2025 Arms Fair – Arms dealers head home)

Getting There and Away

By rail the Docklands Light Railway (DLR):

From 1st to 7th Sept, the nearest station is Prince Regent DLR – the Peace Camp is expected to be near there.

From 8th Sept to 12th Sept, the focus will shift to the area around the Royal Victoria DLR station.

The arms trade touches a huge range of issues and struggles.

More info: <https://stopthearmsfair.org.uk/> or email resistDSEI@protonmail.com

reports were raised to “foster a robust safety culture that learns from experience, whether that is of equipment failures, human error, procedural failings, documentation shortcomings or near-misses”.

A Ministry of Defence spokesperson said: “We place the upmost importance on handling radioactive substances safely and securely. Nuclear site event reports demonstrate our robust safety culture and commitment to learn from experience. The incidents posed no risk to the public and did not result in any radiological impact to the environment. It is factually incorrect to suggest otherwise. Our Government backs our nuclear deterrent as the ultimate guarantor of our national security.”

Meeting with Sir Ed Davey

As mentioned in our last newsletter, following the presentation of a letter, signed by local residents, to his constituency office, Sir Ed agreed to a meeting to discuss the contents. The meeting took place on Thursday 28 August, attended by Paul Tippell and four others, including KPC's Rosemary Addington and Martin Lake.

Paul Tippell reports:

We found it a very positive meeting, with Sir Ed agreeing with us on much of what we asked for. We have established a channel of communication with his staff and policy advisors and are following the meeting with further correspondence.

We were glad to see Sir Ed and his front bench team taking some very positive steps in public and in Parliament - see below. But we are disappointed that Labour MPs don't seem to support Lib Dem actions in Parliament.

Trump's Role in Ending Israeli Military Operations in Gaza and Ending the Aid Blockade

Sir Ed stressed the importance of Starmer putting pressure on Trump to demand that Israel stops military action and ends its blockade.

Sanctions on Israel

We asked Sir Ed if he would call upon the Government to introduce sanctions against Israel. These would include a full range of economic sanctions including trade embargoes and financial controls.

Sir Ed said he had always called for a block on all imports from the occupied territories.

He was - as he has committed to be in the past - keen to promote sanctions on individuals, particularly Netanyahu, also Israeli Ministers and Members of the Knesset who support continuing the blockade and military action.

Sir Ed did say that they would push for a complete suspension of the 2030 Roadmap for a closer UK-Israel partnership – note that the Government have merely paused joint negotiations on it.

He also said he would push for the suspension of the UK-Israel Trade and Partnership agreement.

Sir Ed said he was willing to work with European partners to promote his agenda for change in relations with Gaza/Israel – in fact he cited various instances of doing this already.

Arms Supplies to Israel

Sir Ed, as we know, has publicly stated his support for a full suspension of all arms exports to Israel. We raised the issue of the F-35 carve out, whereby parts go into the global supply chain which is controlled by the US. It is a complex issue and there are no easy solutions because the whole logistics operation is controlled by a massive software system called ALIS. We said that one way the UK could deal with this would be to stop flights of parts from UK 'hubs' and also ban overflights of transshipments using UK airfields. Sir Ed asked us to supply more information on this; we have sent a detailed follow-up letter.

War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity

We asked Sir Ed if he agreed that Israel is responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza. He mentioned that the International Court of Justice should make the final judgement but reiterated that the Court had found it plausible that Israel's acts could amount to genocide.

We mentioned that many human rights organisations have said Israel is committing genocide against Palestinians in Gaza. We said that in the Commons, Edward Leigh had accused Israel of genocide. We suggested that he might wish to quote from the human rights organisations. We said we would send a list with quotes.

Cross-Party Alliance on Gaza and the Occupied Territories

We asked Sir Ed if he would consider actively working with other parliamentarians, that are not Lib Dems, to build a formidable cross-party alliance to create a powerful voice for Gaza - one that demands that the Government acts more boldly and bravely in taking meaningful punitive steps against Israel. He was responsive to this suggestion and said this type of collaboration was already happening to some degree. He suggested that it was important that backbenchers take the lead on this.

Note: All Lib Dem MPs have signed an EDM, <https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/64205> asking that any legal advice held or provided by the Attorney General relating to whether there have been breaches of international law in the Israel-Gaza war should be 'laid before the House'.

Famine and ethnic cleansing

On 7 August Israel announced its plans to invade and expel all Palestinians from Gaza City in a matter of days. On 22 August, the IPC*, a UN-backed organisation, officially declared that there is famine in Gaza. Reacting to this, Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP) issued this report:

Gaza City invasion

Since the announcement on 7 August the Israeli military has intensified bombardment across the city, demolishing entire neighbourhoods – forcing the closure of lifesaving health services and triggering a new wave of mass forced displacement. **Without international intervention, Israel will intensify its ethnic cleansing in northern Gaza.**

Liz Allcock, Medical Aid for Palestinians, Head of Humanitarian Protection, South Gaza, said:

“People throughout Gaza are in a perpetual state of terror whilst living under constant bombardment, killing, injuries, and deplorable living conditions. And now we are seeing a new Israeli military threat playing out in real time to invade Gaza City and forcibly displace its residents, stripping people of the last remaining remnants of anything resembling hope...”

“For many in north Gaza the choice is absolutely agonising, to stay and risk annihilation, or flee to total uncertainty. Every day about a thousand people, many of whom will have been forcibly displaced up to 15 times, are making the horrific decision to leave yet again and head south...”

“For many who have lost everything, they are forced to move south with nothing but the clothes on their back. There really is no safe option, either staying in Gaza City or heading to the south. People are living in huge uncertainty and also in fear they will be driven into exile.”

Israel’s invasion risks forcing the eleven partially-functioning hospitals in the city out of service – including Patient’s Friends Benevolent Society Hospital (PFBS) and Al Sahaba Hospital, where MAP established the only neonatal intensive care units in northern Gaza.

After repeated forced displacement, starvation and bombardment, Palestinians are being squeezed into overcrowded areas, and Israel’s systemic dismantling of the healthcare system has left those living and sheltering there with extremely limited access to health care. The intensified occupation of Gaza City is accelerating Israel’s annihilation of healthcare

services in its genocide. We are already seeing an increase in patients at our Solidarity Polyclinic as people are forced to flee from the north.

What MAP is doing:

- we are securing guest houses for our staff who are at risk of forced displacement from the north to the south
- we are planning and working towards increasing our mental health, water, and health services in the south, which is where people are being forcibly displaced to
- we continue to provide vital supplies and medical care across Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon
- we are calling on world leaders, including those in the UK, to enforce an immediate and permanent ceasefire, and pressure Israel to lift its total blockade of Gaza
- we, along with 100 other organisations, have made a joint statement calling for an end to Israel’s weaponisation of aid

We continue to call on the UK government to:

- suspend all arms transfers to Israel
- take legal, diplomatic, and economic action to hold all perpetrators accountable
- do everything in its power to end Israel’s unlawful occupation

Famine

This famine is a tool of Israel’s genocide. It has been caused not only by the systemic blocking of aid and closing the borders, but by making it harder for INGOs and humanitarian organisations to continue their life-saving work.

We can save lives, but we must act quickly. MAP is continuing, as we always have, to find a way:

- we are providing vitamin and mineral supplements to severely malnourished people through our nutrition program
- we have plans to distribute 8,000 food parcels, including dry foods like pasta, rice, beans and sugar, to hungry Palestinian families
- we continue to deliver life-saving water to people in displacement camps in Gaza

Please, continue to trust us to do everything we can to support Palestinians.

** The IPC (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification) is responsible for monitoring famine globally. It is a global initiative aimed at enhancing food security and nutrition analysis to inform decisions.*

**KINGSTON PEACE
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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 202506 means your sub was due at the end of June 2025. Or, if you pay by standing order (code 300000), please check that you are paying the correct amount. See panel above for rates and Treasurer's address (cheques payable please to Kingston Peace Council/CND). If you would like to receive your copy of Kingston Peace News by email, please contact Gill at gill@gillhurle.plus.com

Dates for your Diary

Mon 1 – Fri 12 Sept **Protests against DSEI arms fair – see pages 1 & 5**

Sat 6 Sept **12 noon National demonstration Stop Starving Gaza, Stop arming Israel, Defend the Right to Protest**, marching from Russell Square to Whitehall to protest at the government's continued collusion but also to show solidarity with the Defend Our Juries protest in Parliament Square.

Sats 6 & 20 Sept, 4 & 18 Oct **11am-1pm or 2pm KPC stall in Kingston Market Place. On 20 Sept we will be commemorating Peace Day, with our usual 'peace tree' on which passers-by can hang paper doves. If you can help on any of these days, please contact Angie on 020 8399 5537 or angeccooper47@hotmail.com**

Tues 9 Sept **2-5.30pm PSC lobby of Parliament for Palestine, Westminster Hall**, to demand MPs implement sanctions against Israel. Note this is a change from the original date planned. If you would like to join Richmond&Kingston PSC members to lobby your MP, email branch@richkingpsc.org.

Tues 9 Sept & 14 Oct **8pm KPC/CND meeting via Zoom. For joining instructions contact Gill, gill@gillhurle.plus.com or Hilary hilarymevans@btinternet.com**

Fri 12 Sept **7.15pm London premiere of "From Ground Zero", Genesis Cinema, Whitechapel, including a Q&A with Director Rashid Masharawi and PSC Director Ben Jamal. Book at www.genescinema.co.uk/event/100618**

Mon 15 & Sun 21 Sept (UN Day of Peace) **Embassies Walk.** London CND will be visiting Embassies who have nuclear weapons and those who are part of NATO. (Israel will not be included as protests are banned at the Embassy so LCND do not want to give them credibility).

Tues 16 Sept **7.15pm "From Ground Zero", Odeon, Kingston (as above)**

Wed 17 Sept **2-7pm, 'Trump not welcome' – national demonstration against Trump's State Visit.** Assemble 2pm at Portland Place, W1A 1AA, rally to follow at 5pm (location TBC) <https://palestinecampaign.org/events>

Sat 20 Sept **Lakenheath demo.** Coach available from London, see page 3

Tues 23 Sept **7pm Talk by human rights monitor**, Richmond Library Annexe, Quadrant Road, Richmond, TW9 1DH. Melanie Nazareth recently spent two and a half months in the occupied West Bank with EAPPI, an international programme which brings people from around the world to the occupied West Bank to serve as human rights monitors, to provide a protective presence from human rights abuses, and to advocate on the basis of international law. She will be talking about what she witnessed and the stories she heard, and this will be followed by an open discussion. Please feel free to bring friends and family. Hosted by **XR Richmond and Kingston**.

Mon 29 Sept **6pm "From Ground Zero", Curzon, Kingston (see above)**

Sat 11 Oct **CND's online AGM and policy conference** There is no fee to attend these events, which are open to all CND members. At the AGM CND's campaigning activities for the year and the budget for the coming year are reviewed. The Policy Conference is where resolutions are debated and decisions made on responses to developments in Britain and the world, and campaigning priorities for the year ahead. To register for conference, see <https://cnduk.org/cnd-conference-2025/>