March - April 2026

KINGSTON PEACE NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF KINGSTON PEACE COUNCIL / CAMPAIGN FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

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

US-Israeli strikes on Iran

Members of KPC/CND were among the tens of thousands who marched to the US Embassy in London on Saturday 7 March.

Meanwhile we distributed leaflets from our Kingston stall, informing passing shoppers of our views. See our full statement on our website.

We echo the words of US Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez:

"Violence begets violence. We learned this lesson in Iraq. We learned this lesson in Afghanistan. And we are about to learn it in Iran. Bombs have yet to create enduring democracies in the region and this will be no different.

This war is unlawful. It is unnecessary. And it will be catastrophic".

What the media won't tell you

It has emerged that plans for the United States and Israel to launch an unprovoked war against Iran were agreed in late December last year. Although, once hostilities began, senior US figures seemed unable to agree on the reason for going to war, the decision was made on 29 December and the 'peace negotiations' ongoing between US and Iranian representatives throughout February were a complete deception mounted by the Americans.

This information has been revealed, not in any mainstream US or British media, but in a variety of podcasts featuring a range of extremely knowledge-able commentators, themselves former CIA operatives, US military men and ambassadors.

One such is Charles Freeman, former US Ambassador to Saudi Arabia and a former US Assistant Secretary of Defense.

/continued on page 2

In this Issue:- **Page 2** What the media won't tell you contd.; Nuclear Deterrence: A Personal Moral Decision **Page 3** Kingston Peace Council/CND AGM; Appeal for KPN Editor **Page 4** New Addition to List of Nuclear Near Catastrophes; Lakenheath Alliance for Peace Camp **Page 5** CND demonstration at RAF Marham **Page 6** PSC AGM; PSC Statement on the Israel-US attack on Iran **Page 7** Residents in Masafer Yatta are on the Brink; Elbit loses **Page 8** Diary Dates

What the media won't tell you

/continued from page 1

Charles Freeman claimed that the original date for the attack on Iran was set at 20 February, but this was discovered by Russian intelligence and passed to Iran. So the date was pushed back by just over a week but Iran was by this time pre-warned.

The original reason advanced by Trump for launching the war was that Iran was close to building a nuclear weapon, even though the previous military action by America and Israel in June 2025 was supposed to have "obliterated" Iran's nuclear programme.

Also, said Mr Freeman, the Iranian Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, killed in the opening hours of the latest war, was a vociferous opponent against Iran having a nuclear weapon and had previously issued fatwas against it.

Mr Freeman also had interesting observations on the protests that proceeded the latest US and Israeli attack.

Firstly, the US Treasury had set up measures to destroy the Iranian currency, leading to widespread protests; then some 50,000 Starlink sets (receivers to link to Elon Musk's Starlink satellite communications system) were smuggled into the country to permit propaganda and information about planned protests to spread; agents provocateurs from other countries (guess who) then fanned the flames of these protests.

Mr Freeman concluded: "I was told when I was US ambassador to tell the Saudis that Iran was two years away from making a bomb. That was in 1991. We have these continuous warnings about things that the intelligence agencies say are not factually true but are 'politically' true."

Nuclear Deterrence: A Personal Moral Decision

You Decide Community Interest Company was founded in response to a profound moral question of our time.

Today, nuclear weapons remain central to global security strategies, yet the ethical implications of these weapons are rarely discussed outside strategic policy circles. The Nuclear Morality Flowchart was developed to change that by encouraging individuals and communities to reflect on the moral consequences of nuclear deterrence.

Our core conviction is simple: nuclear deterrence is not only a matter of national policy - it is a personal moral decision.

Recent events make this reflection increasingly urgent. Military tensions involving the United States, Israel and Iran have been framed partly as efforts to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons. Yet the situation raises an uncomfortable question: why are nuclear weapons unacceptable for some states, yet considered acceptable for others who already possess them?

At the same time, the war between Russia and Ukraine has led to renewed coordination among European powers such as France and Germany, discussing new deterrence frameworks and nuclear coordination efforts, highlighting how the logic of deterrence continues to expand rather than diminish. These developments raise fundamental ethical questions. Can nuclear weapons ever be justified under principles of just war when their effects would devastate civilian populations? Does nuclear deterrence truly prevent conflict, or does it simply postpone catastrophe while increasing the risks of escalation? The Nuclear Morality Flowchart invites individuals to examine these questions through multiple perspectives, including moral responsibility, self-defence, international stability and the risks of escalation.

Rather than promoting ideology or political campaigns, the initiative seeks to create space for thoughtful reflection and dialogue as we are called to be Peacemakers. Through education, workshops and community engagement, *You Decide* encourages people to confront the ethical dimensions of nuclear policy.

In a world where nuclear weapons continue to shape international politics, the responsibility to reflect on their consequences does not rest solely with governments.

It rests with all of us. Because ultimately, nuclear deterrence is not just policy.

It is a personal moral decision. **You decide.**

Jude Madubuike
Director and Project Leader
You Decide Community Interest Company
4 March 2026

See https://nuclearmorality.com/

Kingston Peace Council/CND AGM, 10 February

KPC's AGM was held at the Druid's Head, in Kingston Marketplace.

Treasurer's Report:

Our income in 2025 was lower than the previous year when we had a large donation, and also we attended fewer fairs. Expenditure was also down. The scheme KPC supported for refugee families in Kingston has now closed because of the difficulty of finding suitable accommodation in the area, and we made fewer donations due to the poorer financial situation.

Maggie and Rosemary were thanked for all their hard work raising the money for good causes and campaigning.

Review of activities Feb 2025 – Jan 2026:

Hilary reviewed KPC's activities in the preceding year. We may be a small group but we've spent a lot of time protesting, commemorating, raising awareness and informing, and in the process collaborating with like-minded colleagues in a wide range of other organisations dedicated to the promotion of peace.

KPC/CND business meetings, open to all members, have been held online, every month throughout the year. Exceptionally, our August meeting was an informal in-person one, held in a local pub, at which we were pleased to welcome Daniel, the London Region CND worker, who came to meet us and explain his role and how he could support us.

The regular Saturday stall has been maintained on the first and third Saturdays of every month at the gates of All Saints' Church, Kingston, overlooking the market. This gives us a valuable opportunity to publicise our messages, distribute literature and engage with the passing public. As always, we are grateful to the Revd. Joe Moffatt for his continuing support in allowing us to use this venue and to store our table and literature case in the church.

We were deeply saddened by the deaths during the year of two devoted and supportive members: former KPC/CND Chair Michael Ayris and Monica Cano Villaverde.

Our concerns and activities this year have continued to be dominated by the ongoing genocide in Gaza and the West Bank, by the return of American nuclear weapons to Britain and by the all-round depressing news of increasing militarism and military spending and the outrageous flouting of international law.

We have participated in the many marches and rallies in central London protesting against the atrocities being perpetrated in Palestine and our government's shameful complicity. We have actively supported, too, the many local actions organised by Richmond & Kingston Palestine Solidarity Campaign.

We continue to support Martin Birdseye and his colleague Jude in their efforts to publicise and widen the use of the Nuclear Morality Flowchart, now registered as a Community Interest Company 'You Decide'. *(See article on page 2).*

Hilary continued by elaborating on the many activities in which the Group has been involved during the last year. Six editions of ***Kingston Peace News*** have been produced, containing a wide range of information and reports on all aspects of peace campaigning, together with thoughtful and thought-provoking articles. A full newsletter archive can be found on our website www.kpc.gn.apc.org

Election of Officers and other key positions:

Gill Hurle was confirmed as Treasurer/Membership Secretary and other members were happy to continue playing their very important roles, with the exception of Rosemary who wishes to stand down as one of the three newsletter editors (*see below*). The roles of Chair and Secretary remain unfilled so the work continues to be shared.

Actions and priorities in the coming year:

The meeting concluded after a discussion of plans for future events and campaigning.

Calling all readers!

Would you be able to help with editing Kingston Peace News? We currently have three members who take turns to produce our newsletter, one of whom is Rosemary, who has been carrying out this task for nearly 20 years. She does so much for our Group, but would now like to stand back. If you feel able to have a go at this, with some help, please contact Gill (see details on back page).

New Addition to List of Nuclear Near Catastrophes

By David Swanson, World BEYOND War, 23 February 2026

There are many lists of nuclear close calls. We have a new one to add.

On the fourth day of a peace delegation to Venezuela I visited a site in Caracas, where, very early in the morning on 3 January, two powerful missiles several feet apart, slammed into the top of a hill, beneath a tall tele-communications tower, which was 270 meters from a nuclear reactor and nuclear storage facility. The tower is largely gone. Debris flew for great distances - many times the distance from the reactor. The Earth shook. Buildings a great distance away were damaged and glass windows broken. A building adjacent to the nuclear reactor had rooms most significantly damaged. Electricity was cut off to a wide area, including to the nuclear reactor.

The missiles were reportedly fired from perhaps a kilometer away by an F-35 - an airplane with its own long list of horrors and disasters.

Any use of force whatsoever on any target at all is excessive when attacking someone's country with violence, but it's likely that much less force than two massive missiles could have sufficed for the crime of depriving people of electricity and communications. It's also possible that something could have gone slightly wrong, resulting in a need to evacuate millions of men, women, children, and infants.

The site of this nearly nuclear attack was the Venezuelan Institute of Scientific Research, a non-military facility. The nuclear reactor is for medical purposes, and nuclear materials are returned to this site from hospitals for storage.

The attack put a halt to research at the institute, and, according to people who had worked there for 30 years, was the first crime of any kind committed on the campus.

Workers were able to use generators and then to restore some power to the reactor in four days and full power in ten days. There is talk of rebuilding the tower. There has also been a proposal to build a memorial on the site.

Does this bode well for the crime (*threatened at the time of writing*) of attacking Iran? Will care be taken to avoid nuclear disasters, or in fact will such care be strictly avoided? Or if Trump loses interest in Iran, could worse be in store for Venezuela?

Lakenheath Alliance for Peace (LAP) Camp

The peace camp is 1-6 April at RAF Lakenheath. The event will include workshops and training sessions at the main gate during the day, and in the local village hall. There will be banner making and art workshops, music and singing, NVDA training, and more.
Overnight camping will be in a field at the back of a village hall about 20 minutes drive away. Cost of camping is £5 – £20 per tent / campervan per night according to what you can pay. You have a choice of:

- taking your own tent and equipment
- taking bedding and sleeping on the floor in the big marquee
- sleeping in a campervan
- making your own arrangements.

You can book a spot by emailing:
info@lakenheathallianceforpeace.org.com

All meals will be vegan with gluten-free options, paid for by donation.

For more information see https://lakenheathallianceforpeace.org.uk/international-peace-camp-2026/

And a piece of good news - all charges against those arrested at the Lakenheath Big Blockade in April last year have been dropped!

CND demonstration at RAF Marham

On Saturday 28 February members of KPC/CND took part in a demonstration at RAF Marham in Norfolk, organised by CND.

The base has already been a vital transport hub for the supply of F-35 parts to Israel.

But speaking at the recent Munich Security Conference, Keir Starmer set out an 'ambition' to increase spending to 3% of GDP five years earlier than the 2035 timescale. Part of this expenditure is the plan to buy nuclear-capable F-35A fighter jets, to be based at RAF Marham and tasked with carrying US B61-12 nuclear bombs under NATO command. This gives the Royal Air Force a nuclear role for the first time since 1998 and ties us closer to the catastrophic foreign policy of Donald Trump.

Only that morning we heard that the US had once again illegally attacked Iran, but the protest sent a strong message to the government to halt the purchase of nuclear-capable jets and end Britain's military alliance with the dangerous Trump administration.

Palestine Solidarity Campaign AGM, 14 February 2026

Louise Regan opened the AGM by talking about the increase in PSC membership, and therefore income, which has enabled an increase in staff. Costs have also increased of course, particularly because of the number of marches organised. PSC is considering investing some of its income.

Ben Soffa talked about the above increases, (PSC is now the biggest protest movement since the suffragettes), and also the success of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) Movement in persuading the Co-op to no longer stock any Israeli products. There is still a lot of work to do though, in particular related to Barclays Bank and local government pension schemes.

Ryvka Barnard (PSC Deputy Director) talked about the Government's widespread attack on the right to protest, for example, the Proscription of Palestine Action and the upcoming Crime and Policing Bill.

The first guest speaker was Jeremy Corbyn, who gave an inspiring and rousing speech comparing the situation in Palestine to that of South Africa under apartheid, but even worse.

Culture and Sport

Two speakers itemised the progress made in banning Israel from sporting and cultural events. Some artists/writers/publishers and art organisations are not working in Israel or allowing their work to go to, or be performed in, Israel, including 5,000 film workers. Six countries, I believe, have refused to have anything to do with Eurovision, as Israel is a participant. Some artists have also refused to work at Sadler's Wells or the Donmar Warehouse, as Barclays Bank is involved in their sponsorship. There is also a proposal to ban Israel from FIFA and UEFA.
(*and see below**)

Various upcoming demonstrations, parliamentary lobbies, embassy protests etc. were referenced, in particular the 'Together' march on 28 March and the Westminster Magistrates' court protest on 23 February, where Ben Jamal and Chris Nineham would be appearing at the start of their trial.**

*N.B. See *The Guardian*, 17 February:
www.theguardian.com/culture/2026/feb/17/
Current and former participants of the Berlinale, including Javier Bardem, Tilda Swinton and Adam McKay have signed an open letter condemning the festival's silence on Gaza.

** *After an initial delay, and then four days into the trial, the case was adjourned for seven days to enable the prosecution to consider the defence's legal arguments to have the case thrown out. If the Judge rejects this it is likely to recommence on 16 March.*

Carol Clisby

PSC Statement on the Israel-US attack on Iran

Posted on 4 March 2026

Israel and the US are wreaking havoc across Iran with their indiscriminate bombing, including the destruction of schools and medical facilities. Palestinians know all too well the horror of being targeted in this way and the twisted hypocrisy of Western governments who speak about international law and human rights whilst trampling all over them.

The British government's claims to be supporting 'defensive' action are outrageous—it has continued to arm and supply Israel throughout the genocide in Gaza, also falsely claiming that was for 'defence'. The demand to Stop Arming Israel remains urgent.

Under the cover of the chaos it is creating, Israel has re-closed all crossings into the Gaza Strip, after having barely opened them anyway. Food providers in Gaza predict that they will run out of food this week, after having only been able to bring in meagre supplies - not even enough to meet basic needs. This is another extension of the genocide. Meanwhile in the West Bank, Israel has continued to accelerate its attacks on Palestinians and land grabs, counting on Western governments to rally behind its offensive attacks across the region and to continue ignoring its regime of apartheid.

The government wants us to forget the Palestinian people. Mainstream media hopes we will become confused or distracted. Weapons companies are excitedly waiting for new peaks in their profits. We have a responsibility to stand firm in the face of these escalating and unspeakable crimes.

Residents in Masafer Yatta are on the Brink

More news from the Villages Group in the West Bank, written by Asi Shoham on Thurs 5 March.

Ali had conversations with residents from Halawa and Al-Markaz (two villages located in the inner and most remote part of Masafer Yatta). They might no longer be able to stay in their villages, even in the short-run.

1. **Water** – Recently, the settlers closed the only pipe that brings water to the area and later cut it. The settlers damage water tanks and pour out water from the tanks located in the area. Because of the winter and the rains, a small amount of water remains in the cisterns, but this won't last very long.
2. **Daily harassment** – Settlers enter the villages every day with herds of sheep and camels. They harass Palestinians violently, enter their homes, eat and drink their food, let their herds eat the food belonging to Palestinians' sheep, and impose an atmosphere of terror. Appeals to the police and the army do not help, and in the end it's the Palestinians who are arrested.
3. **Freedom of movement** -- Settlers, often with the assistance of the army, prevent the free movement of Palestinians and activists by blocking roads, chasing and harassing them, and invoking the area's designation as a firing zone.
4. **Planned pogroms** – From time to time (at least once a week, each time in a different location), large groups of settlers arrive by car at one of the villages where they perpetrate severe violence. They kill and steal sheep, injure people, burn and destroy property, and act with complete impunity.
5. **Grazing** – A sweeping (though not entirely official) ban on grazing outside the villages has effectively been imposed. Palestinians who do take their flocks out to graze are exposed to the risk of violence, the theft of their livestock, and arrest.
6. **Arbitrary arrests** – Palestinians are arbitrarily arrested on a daily basis. Incidents of settler violence often end with the arrest of the victim. The police and the army operate in accordance with settlers' claims, tending to believe them automatically, even when video footage clearly shows the exact opposite. In almost all cases, Palestinians are released several hours or two days later, after enduring beatings, humiliation, and sometimes having to pay money for their release. This quick release indicates their lack of guilt and suggests that the arrests are primarily intended to instil fear and repression.

Elbit loses

A bid by an Israeli arms manufacturer, heavily involved **i**n the Gaza genocide, to win a contract to train the British Army has failed. Elbit Systems, which makes a range of sophisticated military equipment and had boasted about being "very much involved" in the war in Gaza, has been dropped as one of two leading contenders for the training contract.

The reason? Potential embarrassment caused by publication of the Israeli firm's involvement, thanks to satirical magazine *Private Eye*.

Elbit's bid for the contract to help train 60,000 British troops annually for ten years sharing "lessons learned" from the war in Gaza became public when the *Eye* discovered some months ago that the MoD had paid £2million to each of two bidding consortia to help them develop their bids. One consortium was led by US arms firm Raytheon, the other was run by Elbit. The revelation raised alarm and prompted Parliamentary questions. One such query was how could the UK maintain any sort of political pressure or arms embargo on Israel while its leading arms firm was a "strategic partner" of the British Army.

In early March, without any formal announcement the MoD awarded an initial £5.8million contract to Raytheon. It is still unclear why the British Army is apparently incapable of training its own soldiers anymore!

KINGSTON PEACE COUNCIL / CND

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(For further issues, please see page 3)

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 202601 means your sub was due at the end of Jan 2026. 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

Thur 12 Mar **6pm "Our Planet, The People, My Blood" world premiere,** Prince Charles Cinema, 7 Leicester Place, London WC2H 7BY. See https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/1982575541815 From £16.96, but to get 20% off tickets for this screening enter code: ICANSUPPORT.

Sat 14 Mar **11am-5pm Stop the War Conference 'Time to Stop Militarism, War and Islamophobia',** Hamilton House, WC1H 9BD**.** If you are willing to be a KPC delegate, contact Rosemary on 020 8399 2547 or rosemaryadd@aol.com

Sun 15 Mar **1-4 pm Annexation in the West Bank: In conversation with Issa Amro,** Palestine House, 113 High Holborn, WC1V 6JQ. (plus optional iftar 5-8 pm), www.tickettailor.com/events/palestinehouse/2067111

Sun 15 **Mar 7.45 pm Ramzi Hammad and Collective.** The Swiss-Palestinian drummer and composer plays music exploring how migration has influenced jazz today, Purcell Room, Southbank Centre.

Tues 17 Mar **2-5pm Mass lobby of Parliament** to defend our right to protest. Jointly organised by civil society organisations and trade unions. See palestinecampaign.eaction.org.uk/March2026Lobby You must be available to go to Parliament on the day. If you would like to join Richmond&Kingston PSC members to lobby your MP, email branch@richkingpsc.org

Fri 20 Mar **10am-5pm 'How can we control and eliminate weapons of mass destruction over the next decade?', Student & Young Pugwash 'Peace and Technology' Conference,** London Metropolitan University, 166-220 Holloway Rd, London N7 8DB, **or on Zoom**. See https://britishpugwash.org/category/events/

Sats 21 Mar, 4&18 Apr **11am-1pm or 2pm KPC stall in Kingston Market Place. If you can help on any of these days, please contact Angie on 020 8399 5537 or angecooper47@hotmail.com**

Wed 25 Mar **Protest at two arms factories in Hayes supplying Israel: 11am:** Attewell (produces components used in Israel's F-35 fighter jets), Unit 7 Millington Rd, UB3 4AZ (10 mins walk from Hayes & Harlington Stn) **1pm:** CPI TMD Technologies Ltd (has held 4 licenses to export arms to Israel since 2021), Swallowfield Way, UB3 1DQ. palestinecampaign.org/events/

Sat 28 Mar **12-6pm March Together Against the Far Right.** There's a main route and a shorter march. See https://www.togetheralliance.org.uk

Wed 1 to Mon 6 Apr **LAP Peace Camp, RAF Lakenheath.** See page 4

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

Sun 19 Apr **7pm Jazz for Peace on a Spring Day,** Musicians for Peace & Disarmament concert, Lauderdale House, London. Pete Long (sax and clarinet) and Juliet Lewis (oboe and sax) will be joined by Jonny Gee (bass) and Shelley King (vocals), among others. Tickets will be available at the door and on the MPD website https://mpdconcerts.org/events.html

Fri 15 May **International Conscientious Objectors Day event,** Tavistock Square, London, WC1H. See www.ppu.org.uk/

Sat 20 June **12 noon European Peace Conference Against militarism and the drive to war,** Central Hall Westminster. Organised by Stop the War

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