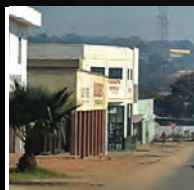


NEW WORLD



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UNA-UK

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UNA-UK is the UK's leading source of independent analysis on the United Nations and a grassroots movement campaigning for a safer, fairer and more sustainable world.



*A member of the South Sudan delegation dances after the flag of South Sudan was raised outside the UN in New York in a ceremony on 14 July 2011, the day the General Assembly voted to admit South Sudan as a UN member state.
© Stan Honda/AFP/Getty Images*

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From the Editor

This issue of *New World* is dedicated to peace and security. Even from the safety of the UNA-UK office, it feels as though the world has become more unstable since the last issue was published in April. As I write, the UK Parliament – recalled from recess for an emergency session – is debating the looting and violence, largely by children and young people, that broke out in several cities in England in August.

The criminal behaviour on the streets of London was a stark contrast to what I saw at the UN High Level Meeting on Youth a few weeks earlier (page 25). Young people from poor communities in Haiti, Brazil and elsewhere spoke eloquently about the challenges they face and what they were doing to address them. But some issues seemed to resonate in both situations: inequality, a lack of social mobility, and exclusion, actual or perceived, from a global economic system that aggregates wealth in the hands of a few.

Shocking as the riots were, the references to ‘war zones’ in the UK media were misplaced. They undermine the plight of those for whom armed conflict is a daily reality. Our cover feature (page 16) puts the spotlight on some of the most vulnerable among them – children, with Marie Staunton, Chief Executive of Plan UK, focussing on ‘girls in the shadow of war’ (page 18). On page 10, Alain Le Roy, outgoing head of UN peacekeeping, speaks about the successes and challenges of those who risk their lives for peace in other countries. One comparative success story is the birth of South Sudan (page 7), which celebrated its independence on 9 July. But violence continues to blight the world’s newest state, and the UN Security Council has created two new peacekeeping missions for the country.

On the border of this fragile state: a crisis termed the worst humanitarian disaster in a generation (page 6). With media attention elsewhere, aid has been slow in reaching the 12.4 million people affected by drought in the Horn of Africa. More than a third of the Somali population is facing hunger – with some 1,500 fleeing to Kenya’s Dadaab refugee camp every day. Kenya itself has 3.7 million people in need. The situation in Somalia has been further complicated by the ongoing strife with insurgents, notably Al-Shabaab. The militant group has been impeding the delivery of aid and has reportedly prevented civilians from leaving the areas under its control.

This was the fate suffered by over 300,000 civilians caught up in the final months of Sri Lanka’s civil war. On page 9, Edward Mortimer of the Sri Lanka Campaign argues that an international investigation into what happened is essential. And in a piece submitted to *New World* on the condition of anonymity, our Blantyre-based contributor asks whether recent violence in Malawi signals a return to autocracy (page 8).

As announced in the last issue of *New World*, the magazine is undergoing a transformation. See page 4 for details of how to give us feedback on the content, design and name of UNA-UK’s flagship magazine.

Natalie Samarasinghe, Editor

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UNODC in Afghanistan

—Paloma Aguilar

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—Madelyn Eads-Dorsey

Remembering Dag Hammarskjöld

—Frank Field

Turn off the taps

—Peter Greaves

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—Neena Lama

Bahrain: the forgotten kingdom

—Madiha Raza

A whole new world

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Women in armed conflict

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Get children climate ready

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Do something

No women,
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competition:
Where will the UN
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Send us your feedback on New World

UNA-UK is currently in the process of redesigning *New World* magazine in order to:

- Widen its readership and attract new members to UNA-UK
- Increase its potential to stimulate thought and debate about the UN and its work
- Enhance its value as an information and campaigning tool

As part of this process, UNA-UK is exploring changing the name of the magazine, which has been called “New World” since 1958. Alongside the possibility of retaining the current name, we are considering the following options: Resolution; UN Advocate; and Unify.

Over the past six months, UNA-UK has been canvassing the views of members and the public on the content and design of the magazine, as well as the proposed changes. We would still very much like to hear your thoughts. If you haven’t done so already, we would be very grateful if you took the time to complete our short survey by visiting: www.una.org.uk/new_world

The survey will be open until 16 September 2011.

Please contact the Editor on samarasinghe@una.org.uk or 020 7766 3451 if you have any questions.

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The deadline for submission of material for the next issue of *New World* is noon on 3 September 2011

The next issue will cover the period 1 October to 31 December 2011

All submissions should be typed and sent by email where possible to samarasinghe@una.org.uk. Photos should ideally be 300 dpi resolution

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Cover image: A child stands in one of the many destroyed buildings in the town of Kuito, Angola on 3 March 2000. About two million people were displaced by the country’s civil conflict. © Ami Vitale/Alamy



In brief

Birth of a nation

South Sudan became the world's newest state on 9 July 2011, following a largely peaceful independence referendum earlier this year which was monitored by the UN. The vote was part of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in 2005 by the Sudanese government and Sudan People's Liberation Movement to end 21 years of civil war. But border clashes continue in the disputed Abyei and Southern Kordofan areas. Two new UN peacekeeping missions have been created in the region. (See pages 7, 12 and 13)

Bid for UN membership

Palestinian leaders plan to submit an application for UN membership this September. To be admitted, states need the backing of at least nine of the 15 members of the UN Security Council, which recommends applications to the General Assembly. However, the Council's five permanent members hold a right of veto and the US has already signalled it will not support the bid. Approval by the 193-member Assembly requires a two-thirds majority. At present, Palestinian leaders believe they have roughly 120 votes.



© UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

LDCs – a good investment

The Fourth UN Conference on Least Developed Countries (LDCs) concluded on 13 May with a commitment to halve the number of LDCs within a decade. The conference included an innovative private-sector track that allowed country and business representatives to discuss investment opportunities. LDCs have a combined population of 880 million people, 75% of whom live on less than \$2 a day. However, these countries recorded growth levels of 4% during the financial crisis and contain a significant proportion of the world's strategic resources.

More violence in DRC

Fresh reports of mass rape and killings in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) emerged in July. The Security Council condemned violence by the Lord's Resistance Army, which, according to the UN, has carried out 53 attacks in the DRC, killing 26 civilians. Congolese armed forces, meanwhile, are said to have raped at least 121 women in June. Last year, the UN published a report on the most serious abuses committed in the DRC between 1993 and 2003, noting that many could constitute crimes against humanity. In response, the DRC government has proposed creating a specialised court, with Congolese and international personnel, to address these allegations.

Ban reappointed

On 21 June, the UN General Assembly reappointed Ban Ki-moon for a second five-year term as UN Secretary-General, ending on 31 December 2016.

Mr Ban is pictured below addressing the crowds that gathered in Juba for the South Sudan independence celebrations on 9 July.

Hopes for a united Cyprus

On 25 July, the leaders of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities held the first three in a series of intensive UN-supported meetings aimed at reunifying the island. The leaders had previously accepted Ban Ki-moon's offer of an increased UN mediation role. It is hoped renewed talks will result in an agreement by October. In June, the Security Council extended the mandate of the UN peacekeeping force on the island, which has been in place since 1964, for a further six months (see page 12).

Rights Council: progress despite status quo?

The UN General Assembly completed its review of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) on 17 June. The Assembly, to which the Council reports, assessed the working methods and functioning of the HRC five years after it was created. UNA-UK had submitted a number of recommendations on the review to the UK government.

The review shied away from major reforms, proposing instead small technical improvements, such as increasing session time limits. The EU said it was a "missed opportunity" to strengthen the Council, while the US claimed the review maintained a "failed status quo". However, the HRC has been praised for its performance in recent months, notably its robust action on Libya (including recommending the country's suspension from the HRC) and statements on Syria and Yemen.

Cleaning Niger Delta could take 30 years

The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) reported in August that restoring drinking water and repairing ecosystems in Nigeria's Ogoniland region will require an initial investment of about \$1bn and could take three decades. After examining over 200 locations, 4,000 soil and water samples, and 5,000 medical records, UNEP identified more serious pollution than had previously been anticipated.

UNEP head Achim Steiner said he hoped the findings would help remedy the "multiple health and sustainable development issues" facing the one million people in the region, and serve as a "blueprint for how the oil industry and public regulatory authorities might operate more responsibly in Africa". The study was funded by Shell in line with the polluter pays principle. >>



Arab awakening:

BAHRAIN

- Hundreds of thousands of people have participated in the opposition protests that began in February.
- The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has condemned the “shocking” and widespread use of force against civilians: beatings, torture and, notably, attacks on medical staff.

EGYPT

- Ousted President Hosni Mubarak and his sons are standing trial in Cairo, accused of corruption and ordering the killing of pro-democracy protestors. They deny all charges.
- Demonstrations have restarted, as many people in Egypt have become increasingly concerned about the pace of change and the interim government’s will to bring members of the former regime to trial.

LIBYA

- UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has again urged all sides to engage in a political process, lamenting the lack of progress on this front.
- In June, the UN Human Rights Council released a report detailing systematic attacks on civilians by government forces. The International Criminal Court has issued an arrest warrant for Muammar Al-Qadhafi.

SYRIA

- On 3 August, the UN Security Council issued a statement that condemned the use of force against civilians – an estimated 1,700 people have been killed since March.
- Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Co-operation Council have withdrawn their ambassadors from Damascus. Saudi Arabia has seen protests in Riyadh against the Syrian regime.

YEMEN

- On 9 August, the Security Council voiced concern over the deteriorating situation. The UN reported an increase in the number of Yemenis needing aid, with some 75,000 displaced to date.
- President Saleh has been discharged from hospital in Saudi Arabia, where he was treated after an attack in June. A spokesman said he plans to return to Yemen.

>> Horn of Africa crisis

The deteriorating situation in the Horn of Africa is possibly the worst humanitarian crisis in a generation. About 12.4 million people in Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti are in desperate need of assistance. A combination of drought, crop failures and soaring food and fuel prices has precipitated this emergency in a region racked by instability, past famine and serious development challenges.

The UN, which has been tracking developments on the ground for months, expects the number of people affected to rise to about 15 million and is concerned that famine could spread to other countries, including Uganda. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported in May that the drought was not likely to abate until early 2012.

In August, famine was declared in three new areas of Somalia, where more than one third of the population has been affected. Hunger and increased instability have prompted a mass exodus to camps in Kenya and Ethiopia. The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) says that between 1,300 and 1,500 Somalis a day have been arriving at Kenya’s Dadaab camp. Both Ethiopia and Kenya are themselves facing massive problems, with 4.8 million and 3.7 million people respectively in need.

UN agencies have mobilised a mass relief operation, combining an immediate infusion of emergency aid with longer-term interventions. The World Food Programme has provided food to nearly eight million people in the past five weeks and UNHCR is airlifting plastic sheeting, sleeping mats, jerry cans and kitchen utensils to Somalia’s capital, Mogadishu.

The Refugee Agency is also working with the UN Children’s Fund to conduct screening and measles vaccinations for tens of thousands of children. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization, meanwhile, is planning steps, such as seed distribution, irrigation and food storage, to boost agricultural recovery.

However, huge challenges remain. The UN World Health Organization has warned of the high risk of disease in the refugee camps, where acute malnutrition, diarrhoea and respiratory tract infections are leading causes of mortality. The camps have also seen a surge in sexual violence perpetrated by armed groups and security forces as well as refugees themselves.

Humanitarian access in Somalia has been severely impeded by ongoing instability. The militant group Al-Shabaab, which controls swathes of territory, imposed a ban on foreign aid agencies in 2009 and has reportedly prevented civilians fleeing the area in search of help. Al-Shabaab has now left Mogadishu, easing the situation somewhat.

Most troubling though, is the acute shortfall in funding. In a year where unrest in the Middle East has put further strain on the UN’s aid agencies, donors have responded sluggishly to this crisis. With political and media attention elsewhere, just 46% of the UN’s initial appeal has been funded, and the organisation has since been forced to raise the appeal by \$1.4bn to cope with the deteriorating situation. UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Baroness Amos has urged governments, the private sector and individuals to pull together, warning that “the situation is far too serious to be treated as ‘business as usual’”. ■

Malawi – return to autocracy?

Last month saw the worst riots and violence in Malawi since the early 1990s, when protestors took to the streets to call for multi-party democracy and an end to the 30-year reign of then-President Hastings Kamuzu Banda.

In recent months, tensions have resurfaced in the country, which is generally considered to be one of Africa's most stable states. Chronic shortages of fuel, electricity and foreign exchange, poor governance, worsening human rights abuses and a crackdown on academic and political freedoms culminated in demonstrations that were held on 20 July 2011.

President Bingu wa Mutharika's Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) government initially tried to ban the protests but having failed, it resorted to other tactics. The day before the protests, DPP vehicles laden with thugs brandishing knives were dispatched to the streets of Blantyre, Malawi's financial and commercial centre, in an attempt to frighten people into staying away. Such intimidation is reminiscent of Banda, who unleashed his ruthless paramilitary youth organisation, the Young Pioneers, on the population.

On the day itself, security forces attempted to disperse protestors almost immediately despite receiving prior notice of the demonstrations and the routes to be taken in major cities. This quickly led to violence. The crackdown, first by the police and later the army, was brutal, particularly in the capital, Lilongwe, and in Blantyre, Mzuzu and Zomba. Two days of rioting left 19 people dead and scores more injured. Non-state media were shut down and city centres were left deserted.

After the second day of violence, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon issued a statement voicing concern. His words were echoed by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Condemning the government's "excessive use of force", OHCHR stated that it had received



A Malawian soldier patrols the deserted streets of Lilongwe on 21 July 2011. © Stringer/AFP/Getty Images

reports of mass arrests, harassment of journalists and death threats against protest organisers. It called for "prompt, impartial and transparent investigations into these allegations of grave human rights violations".

“Expecting calm to return the next day, I went into central Blantyre and was on Victoria Avenue when tear gas and shots were fired, and truckloads of soldiers deployed”

Not able to leave my compound, I watched events on the Chileka Road in Blantyre from afar while hundreds of people fled the tear gas and live bullets fired by the police. Gunshots rang out long into the night from surrounding townships as security forces tried in vain to prevent looting and further violence. Tyres and barricades were set alight at strategic junctions all over town and were still smouldering the following morning.

Expecting calm to return the next day, I went into central Blantyre and was on Victoria Avenue when tear gas and shots were fired and truckloads of soldiers deployed mid-morning. I had to run a few blocks and walk home. The second day of riots was much more severe in Lilongwe and Mzuzu.

The president spoke to the nation on both days but failed to address the protestors' grievances in his rambling speeches. He vowed to "smoke out" those who had organised the protests or otherwise opposed him, threatening

to arrest the vice president and to "deal with" opposition leader John Tembo. His refusal to acknowledge concerns, let alone provide solutions, has led to the planning of further protests.

Mutharika, who was re-elected in 2009 with an overwhelming majority, has seen a dramatic change of fortune in his second term. He has compounded frustrations arising from the worsening economic situation by pushing through a number of controversial laws and initiatives, including wasting money on changing the country's flag, purchasing a new presidential jet (at a cost of \$22m) and fleet of Mercedes (costing \$4.8m), and travelling with an excessively large entourage on foreign and domestic trips. In one of the poorest countries in the world, where over half of the population lives below the poverty line, such expenditure is hard to justify.

A further indication that Malawi is facing a return to autocratic rule was the expulsion in April 2011 of the British ambassador. The UK subsequently withdrew financial support to the Mutharika regime and a number of other donors, notably the US, have suspended grants following July's crackdown.

President Mutharika's term is not due to end until 2014. Before the protests, most people seemed content to sit it out, but July's events suggest that this is no longer the case. If the economic situation fails to improve and further crackdowns occur, there is a real possibility that Malawi, the once-stable 'warm heart of Africa', could see protests on the scale of those in Egypt and Tunisia. ■

This article was contributed by an NGO worker based in Blantyre, Malawi, who asked New World to publish it anonymously



South Sudan: developing independently



Michael
Brophy

On 9 July 2011, after over two decades of civil war, the Republic of South Sudan became the 193rd UN member state. Celebrations took place across the new republic, from farming communities in Equatoria to livestock herders in Upper Nile, as well as diaspora communities around the world. People spoke emotionally about their pride in living to see independence and at long last having their own identity.

But from what position will this new republic start? Its independence has come at a high human price, and recent instability in Abyei and Southern Kordofan has again strained relations with the North. The day before independence was declared, the UN Security Council established a peacekeeping mission for South Sudan. Earlier this year, it also created an interim security force in Abyei to monitor flashpoints between the North and South (see pages 12 and 13).

South Sudan begins life as one of the world's poorest and least-developed countries. The UN Population Fund (UNFPA) reports that South Sudan has the highest rate of pregnancy-related deaths: over 2,000 women die for every 100,000 births. The equivalent figure in the UK is 11 per 100,000, while in north Sudan it is 638.

South Sudan also has one of the weakest education systems. The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) estimates that more than 80% of women and 60% of men are illiterate, and despite major efforts to increase enrolment, over 50% of primary school-age children are still not in school. The figure rises to 63%

for girls, who, according to UNFPA, are more likely to die in childbirth than they are to finish primary school.

What South Sudan does have is the goodwill of almost every other country in the world, and commitments from major international donors, including UN agencies, the European Union and the World Bank; and from bilateral donors such as the US, UK, Norway and Japan. But, as donor representatives in the South Sudanese capital Juba admit, commitments are not always acted on.



Man celebrates South Sudan's independence
© UN Photo/Paul Banks

“According to the UN, girls in South Sudan are more likely to die in childbirth than they are to finish primary school”

For example, of the \$91.9m committed to the education system in 2005, just \$7.7m had been allocated two years later. A recent evaluation by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development of the Multi-Donor Trust Fund – which has managed a significant proportion of aid funding to South Sudan – noted its slowness in disbursement and a lack of results. This is due in part to the fiduciary rules and regulations applied by the Fund. These were meant to guard against corruption but have proved too strict to work in a fragile state. So one question that donors must address now is how to be more flexible in distributing funds while avoiding their misuse.

In the longer term, South Sudan has the potential to be less dependent on

aid than most developing countries, especially those in Africa: it has the benefits (some would say curse) of oil. Sudan's proven reserves have been estimated at 5bn barrels, most of which are located in what is now South Sudan, although the borders are still subject to dispute.

In 2007, 95% of the then-Government of South Sudan's (GOSS) revenues came from oil and petroleum. Between 2005 and independence, there were arrangements under which 75% of the oil wealth originating in the South was to be shared equally with the North. However, these arrangements did not take account of oil from the North, and there were repeated complaints that the South's oil was not being shared equally.

In the 1970s, Western companies such as Chevron, Total and Royal Dutch Shell pioneered the development of oil exploration in Sudan. Most pulled out in the 1980s. Over the past 10 to 15 years, they have been largely replaced by oil corporations from Asia, such as the China National Petroleum Corporation, India's Oil and Natural Gas Corporation and Malaysia's Petronas.

These companies are generally viewed by Southerners as having supported north Sudan during the civil war and although their governments have made approaches to the GOSS since 2004, there is likely to be a review of agreements. Will the South Sudanese government turn to Western or remain with Eastern corporations? And will these decisions be based on the balance between Western aid and Eastern trade?

Whichever direction it turns, one major problem South Sudan will face is that almost all of the oil and petroleum infrastructure, refineries, pipelines and export terminals are located in the North. To develop its own is likely to come at the expense of investing in health and education. South Sudan's success, therefore, remains heavily dependent on good relations with the North, and the choices it makes on whether to turn East, West or perhaps both ways. ■

Michael Brophy is Director of the Africa Educational Trust. For more information, visit www.africaeducationaltrust.org

Why Sri Lanka matters to international peace and security



Edward Mortimer

“More than 300,000 people became the victims of the reckless disregard for international norms by the warring parties. Indeed, the conduct of the war by them represented a grave assault on the entire regime of international law designed to protect individual dignity.” In April 2011, a panel of experts convened by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon published this damning indictment of the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

The report, which focussed on events leading up to the end of the country’s long-running civil war in May 2009, accused both parties of committing human rights violations, including war crimes and crimes against humanity. It called for an international investigation, noting that as many as 40,000 civilians could have been killed in the final weeks of fighting, and that the majority of them died at the hands of the Sri Lankan army.

The GoSL has vehemently rejected the report. Its version of events is one of triumph over terrorism – a humanitarian operation that rescued Tamils from a ruthless terrorist group consistently criticised by the UN and NGOs for employing suicide bombers, child soldiers, torture and extortion. But even

hardline GoSL supporters are now beginning to realise that war crimes allegations are damaging it and need to be addressed. The government’s domestic commission of inquiry is flawed and toothless. Meanwhile, continuing abuses in the country make talk of reconciliation sound increasingly hollow.

An independent investigation of allegations is acutely needed, above all by the people of Sri Lanka themselves. Without it, there can be no justice for the wronged; no healing for the victims; and, in a country marred by decades of propaganda and censorship, no objective account of what really happened in 2009. All are essential for long-term peace.

For those of us outside Sri Lanka, there is also much at stake. Mr Ban’s panel made the deeply worrying statement that the “entire regime of international law designed to protect individual dignity” has been weakened by the GoSL’s actions and perceived impunity. The government’s scorched-earth tactics, the panel said, have “emboldened some to believe that these rules may now be disregarded in the cause of fighting terrorism”.

“The entire regime of international law designed to protect individual dignity has been weakened by the Government of Sri Lanka’s actions and perceived impunity”

A month after the war ended, the Sri Lankan President visited Burma, reportedly to advise the generals there on how to defeat their own insurgents. Turkish politicians have compared the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) to the LTTE and suggested that the GoSL’s actions could be a model for Turkey. And earlier this year, the GoSL held a military seminar on its victory, with participants including representatives not only of repressive regimes in other developing countries but also of the US armed forces.

The appeal of a ‘Sri Lanka model’, which includes impunity for both recent war crimes and current abuses, makes the country a threat to international peace and security. It should therefore attract the attention of the UN Security Council. Failure to address this threat will only expose, once again, the weakness of the international system.

Echoing reports on the UN’s performance in Rwanda and Srebrenica, Mr Ban’s Sri Lanka panel called on him to review the UN’s own actions during and after the conflict. The UN has been criticised, inter alia, for not raising the alarm in autumn 2008, when it and other aid organisations were asked to leave the conflict zone, and for appearing to legitimise the GoSL’s post-war conduct.

The rest of the international community did even worse. Just after the war, the states on the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) adopted a resolution congratulating Sri Lanka on its conduct. Countries including South Africa, Brazil, India and Pakistan voted for it. Contrast this with the HRC’s action on Libya earlier this year.

At last, though, the tide appears to be turning. In recent weeks, the US has issued two warnings to the GoSL and a Congressional Committee has recommended suspending aid to Sri Lanka. The US reportedly plans to raise the situation at the HRC. Politicians in countries such as the UK and India have also hardened their rhetoric. But there is still a long way to go.

Mr Ban says he needs authorisation from an intergovernmental body such as the HRC or the Security Council to set up an investigation. Yet, so far, neither body has even formally considered his panel’s report. Nor has he officially asked them to do so.

Chinese and Russian support for the GoSL is perceived to be a major stumbling block. However, we should remember that, in 2005, China allowed the Security Council to refer war crimes in Darfur to the International Criminal Court, despite the two countries’ significant oil and economic ties, and this February, both China and Russia voted to do the same with Libya. And even if those two countries do remain firm, that should not excuse others’ failure to speak out.

The international community failed to protect Sri Lanka’s civilians in 2009. The least it can do now is insist on an international investigation. ■

Edward Mortimer is Senior Vice-President and Chief Programme Officer at the Salzburg Global Seminar and chair of the Sri Lanka Campaign for Peace and Justice. From 1998 to 2006 he served as chief speechwriter and then director of communications to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. For more information, visit www.srilankacampaign.org



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Interview

On 26 May 2011, Alain Le Roy, the outgoing UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, visited the UK to participate in an event to mark the International Day of UN Peacekeepers, jointly organised by UNA Westminster branch, UNA-UK and the Royal United Services Institute (see page 23). Prior to the event, *New World* secured an interview with Mr Le Roy in which he calls on the UK to do more to support missions and reveals the one thing that would immediately improve the effectiveness of peacekeeping.



Alain Le Roy visits the UN mission in Côte d'Ivoire in December 2010. © UN Photo/Basile Zoma

UN peacekeepers play a vital role in protecting civilians all over the world. But with 100,000 personnel spread over five continents and a budget of less than \$8bn, is peacekeeping largely symbolic?

Oh no no. If you compare this figure to the cost of the war in Afghanistan – over \$100bn a year, and to global military spending – more than \$1 trillion a year, it seems very limited, and even so, UN member states appear to find it difficult to fund. But our budget is certainly enough to allow us to make a difference.

There are actually 120,000 peacekeepers worldwide – in addition to military and police, we have some 20,000 civilian officers because tasks like protecting human rights, assisting with reintegration and organising elections are increasingly part of our multidimensional operations. We are in 14 countries and in all of them we play a crucial role. Think of Sudan,

Haiti, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) – our presence is extremely important for the protection of hundreds of thousands of people every day.

Shortly after you took up your post in 2008, you said in an interview that peacekeeping may have reached its limits, echoing the seminal report produced in 2000 by Lakhdar Brahimi in the wake of events in Rwanda, Somalia and Bosnia. Is this report still relevant?

Absolutely. The Brahimi report remains *the* report on peacekeeping and we have used it as a basis for our current reflections. It sets out clearly what remain the three fundamental principles of peacekeeping: consent of the main parties, impartiality, and the use of force only in self-defence. But the Brahimi report was issued in 2000, when we had just 25,000 peacekeepers. Today we have 120,000 peacekeepers

deployed in much more complex situations. Our missions are multi-faceted and have higher civilian components, so there is a need to revisit our strategies.

Our New Horizon initiative, launched in 2009, aims to assess the major policy and strategy dilemmas facing UN peacekeeping. We have produced a paper with reflections from my department (peacekeeping operations) and from the department of field support, and this document is on the table everywhere, in the Security Council, General Assembly committees, and so on. All the key themes raised – protecting civilians, peacebuilding, field support – are being discussed and we have been able to reach more consensual decisions in this way. The process is not complete but we have started it and are regularly producing progress reports.

You mentioned the 'use of force only in self-defence'. Earlier this year, in Côte d'Ivoire, the UN was criticised for being too robust. Do you think it overstepped its mark?

Actually, Côte d'Ivoire is an example of the Brahimi report in action – the international community wanted to avoid the failures of the 1990s. We did not want another Srebrenica. So despite being harassed and shot at on many occasions, the mission did not for a single minute consider leaving. We stood firm and acted in complete conformity with the mandate adopted by the UN Security Council on 13 March, which permitted the targeting of heavy weapons to prevent them being used on civilians. This is what we did, and when I briefed the Council, everyone recognised that we acted within our mandate. Yes, it was robust, but I was very pleased to hear Navi Pillay, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court say that our

actions had helped to prevent a situation like we had in 1994 in Rwanda.

In contrast to Côte d'Ivoire, the UN is sometimes accused of doing too little in the DRC. Is the mission there making a difference or is it more of a 'mission impossible'?

Of course, the situation is still very serious in the DRC. People are being killed and women raped despite our presence. But if we were to leave, those numbers would be multiplied by 10 or even 100. There are just 18,000 UN peacekeepers in the DRC, Africa's third largest country. The Kivu regions alone have populations of some 10 million. So just like a local police force is unable to prevent all crimes, we too cannot protect everyone.

That said, every death, every rape is a failure and we try to draw lessons from that. We now have 96 bases in eastern DRC to be as close as possible to the women at risk. We provide the communities with means of communication to contact the bases for any emergency, and we regularly send joint protection teams that include human rights and child protection officers. We have developed strategies that do not exist anywhere in the world; we are the pioneers in protecting civilians in this environment. While we don't succeed 100%, everybody who has been to the DRC realises how important our presence is.

In 2005, world leaders accepted their 'responsibility to protect' (R2P) civilians whose state is unwilling or unable to do so. Do you believe there is a corresponding personal responsibility for UN peacekeepers on the ground, even if their mandate limits what they can do?

The Brahimi report puts it very clearly: when a civilian is under threat, we must not stand by and do nothing. Peacekeeping mandates have not to date mentioned 'R2P' (although it was mentioned for the first time in a Security Council resolution on Libya earlier this year), rather, they refer to the protection of civilians under imminent threat. This is the mandate we get for most missions and this is what we are trying to do every day.

Which of the current peacekeeping missions do you think will become more challenging this year?

We are speaking on 26 May and at this time I would say Sudan. The violence in Abyei (see page 7) is absolutely unacceptable and especially worrying as we are preparing for a new mission starting on 9

July in South Sudan. That area will require a lot of our attention in the coming months. Equally, our mission in Lebanon will need careful monitoring given that nobody knows how the situation in the wider Middle East will unfold.

You are in London to mark the International Day of UN Peacekeepers. Is there something particular you have been calling on the UK to do?

Yes, four things. First, to continue the great political support we get from the UK in the Security Council. The UK is always supportive of our operations and currently the third biggest funder of UN peacekeeping. Second, we hope that the UK might be willing to increase its participation in terms of troops. At present the UK has fewer than 300 troops serving in missions. In 1995, it was 10,000. I fully understand that the UK is overstretched in Afghanistan and elsewhere, but perhaps it could consider raising its peacekeeping deployment to, say, a thousand.

"If you compare our \$7.6bn budget to global military spending – over \$1 trillion a year, it seems very limited. But it is enough to make a difference"

Third, if this is not possible, the UK could still help us to enhance our capabilities. This could take the form of training – other states, like the US and France train, equip and sometimes even airlift peacekeeping troops from other countries, or helping us to get the equipment we need. We have a serious lack of military helicopters and, though I know the UK is also experiencing similar shortfalls, it might be able to help persuade others, notably the European Union (EU), to contribute.

And fourth, the UK could help enormously by sharing its expertise in rapid deployment capability. It would be really useful, for instance, if the UK could work within the EU framework on the EU 'battle groups' which could provide the rapid reaction capability that we lack at present.

What is the one thing that would make UN peacekeeping more effective?

Very easy: we need more military helicopters. When we were in Darfur,

we had to protect about two million internally displaced people. The DRC, as I said earlier, is a huge terrain. What we urgently need is transport capability – helicopters in particular – and this is what we lack the most.

What would you say to members of the British public who, given the current economic situation, might not think that support for UN peacekeeping is important?

I would say to them: imagine what the world would be like without peacekeeping. Think of Sudan, where we were able recently to preside over a largely peaceful independence referendum. Think of the DRC, where some four million have died – can we afford to stand by? The UK rightly took the decision to preserve its development aid spending in the interests of creating a more stable world. Peacekeeping is a key element of this – our presence in the DRC, South Sudan and elsewhere is contributing to increased stability without which UK national interest could well be threatened. US President Obama has said that UN peacekeepers are in those areas where countries like the US and UK cannot be, helping to create a more peaceful and secure world for us all.

What would you most like to have achieved by the end of your term in August 2011?

Two things: first, to ensure that UN peacekeeping remains an effective tool at the disposal of the international community. What we do is unique – we alone have a combination of military and civilian officers from around the world and we alone have the legitimacy to save civilians and protect countries from relapsing into conflict.

Second, I would like to see us continue to protect civilians at risk. We are not perfect but compared to the 1990s, I believe that UN peacekeeping has dramatically improved. We want to be even more effective for our stakeholders, which include some of the world's most vulnerable people.

And lastly, why is it important for us to have a day dedicated to UN peacekeepers?

Each time I visit a mission I am struck by the extraordinary dedication and courage of our staff and officers who risk their lives to protect others. Commemorations are one small way in which we can pay tribute to them. I encourage everyone, the media and those who are eager to criticise us, to visit our peacekeepers and see for themselves the fantastic job that they are doing. ■

PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS

“When there is a crisis they say, ‘Sorry, we are overstretched in Afghanistan and cannot go’. In crises of great strategic importance, NATO and the US go. For all other kinds of crises, they are happy to have UN peacekeepers go, and then we are scapegoated because we cannot protect 100% of civilians”

Alain Le Roy in an interview with Bloomberg News on 4 August 2011



1

UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO)

In Western Sahara since April 1991

- Troops*: 227 (including 8 female)
- Civilians: 278
- Fatalities: 15
- Approved budget (2011–2012): \$63.2m

2

UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH)

In Haiti since June 2004

- Troops: 12,261 (including 478 female)
- Civilians: 2,132
- Fatalities: 164
- Approved budget (2011–2012): \$810.3m

3

UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO)

In Democratic Republic of the Congo since June 2010

- Troops: 18,970 (including 445 female)
- Civilians: 4,424
- Fatalities: 26
- Approved budget (2011–2012): \$1.4bn

4

African Union-UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID)

In Darfur since July 2007

- Troops: 22,947 (including 1,126 female)
- Civilians: 4,458
- Fatalities: 90
- Approved budget (2011–2012): \$1.7bn

5

UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF)

In Syria since June 1974

- Troops: 1,043 (including 43 female)
- Civilians: 145
- Fatalities: 43
- Approved budget (2011–2012): \$49.6m

6

UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP)

In Cyprus since March 1964

- Troops: 924 (including 68 female)
- Civilians: 50
- Fatalities: 181
- Approved budget (2011–2012): \$57.4m, including voluntary contributions of one third from Cyprus and \$6.5 million from Greece

7

UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)

In Lebanon since March 1978

- Troops: 12,148 (including 603 female)
- Civilians: 1,002
- Fatalities: 293
- Approved budget (2011–2012): \$542.8m

8

UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA)

In Abyei, the disputed area that straddles northern and southern Sudan, since June 2011

- Troops: up to 4,250 authorised
- Civilians: ‘appropriate civilian support’ authorised
- Fatalities: 4
- Approved budget (until December 2011): not yet established

9

UN Operation in Côte d’Ivoire (UNOCI)

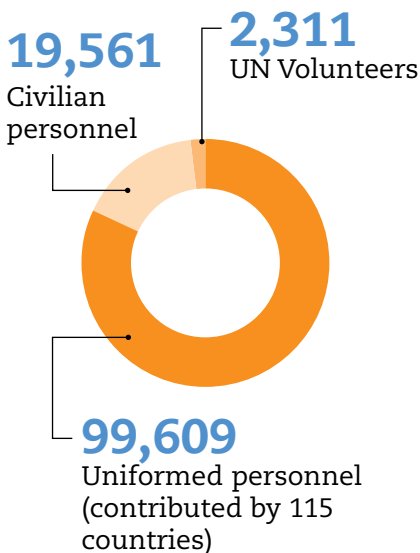
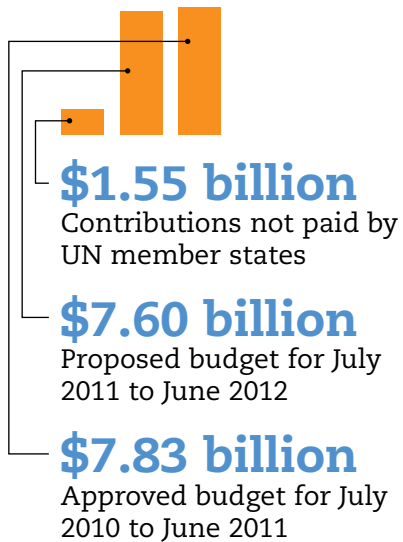
In Côte d’Ivoire since April 2004

- Troops: 10,052 (including 137 female)
- Civilians: 1,324
- Fatalities: 77
- Approved budget (2011–2012): \$485.8m

* All troop figures include police and military observers, where applicable.
Source: UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations, www.un.org/en/peacekeeping, July 2011

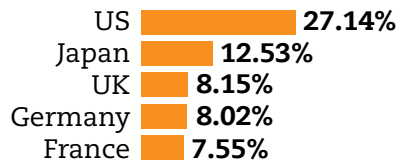


PEACEKEEPING IN NUMBERS

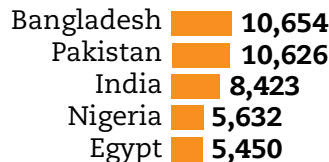


2,918
Total fatalities since 1948

TOP FIVE BUDGET CONTRIBUTORS



TOP FIVE TROOP CONTRIBUTORS



10
UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)

In Kosovo since June 1999

- Troops: 14 (including one female)
- Civilians: 404
- Fatalities: 54
- Approved budget (2011–2012): \$44.9m

11
UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

In Liberia since September 2003

- Troops: 9,237 (including 392 female)
- Civilians: 1,694
- Fatalities: 160
- Approved budget (2011–2012): \$540.9m

12
UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan
Created on 8 July 2011, a day before the UN Mission in the Sudan ended its mandate following completion of the interim period set up during the signing of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement

- Troops: up to 7,000 authorised
- Civilians: up to 900 civilian police authorised
- Fatalities: n/a
- Approved budget (2011–2012): not yet established

13
UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT)
In Timor-Leste since August 2006

- Troops: 1,241 (including 76 female)
- Civilians: 1,450
- Fatalities: 10
- Approved budget (2011–2012): \$196.7m

14
UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP)
In India and Pakistan since January 1949

- Troops: 42 (including 3 female)
- Civilians: 77
- Fatalities: 11
- Funds (2010–2011): \$16.1m

15
UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO)
In Middle East since May 1948

- Troops: 151 (including 10 female)
- Civilians: 223
- Fatalities: 50
- Funds (2010–2011): \$60.7m



No women, no peace

Women are affected by conflict in many ways, including sexual violence, displacement, torture and death. But their needs, experiences and perspectives are often ignored. Only one in 40 signatories to peace agreements is female and just 16% of peace agreements make any specific reference to women. This is not a coincidence: when women's voices are not heard, their needs are ignored.

In this photo, a Palestinian woman joins Israeli female peace activists in releasing balloons across Israel's separation barrier above the settlement of Givat Ze'ev on the outskirts of Jerusalem. Robert Serry, UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, has stressed the importance of female participation in formal peace negotiations as well as activism, which he says plays an essential role in giving a platform to new voices and demonstrating that peace has a legitimate and representative constituency.

"No women, no peace" calls for the meaningful participation of women in peace processes and for women's rights to be taken seriously. The campaign is run by the Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS) coalition, of which UNA-UK is a member. Over the next few months, GAPS will focus on Afghanistan. Ten years after military intervention began, GAPS is asking the UK to ensure that women and women's rights are central to discussions around transition, and not traded away in search of peace. GAPS needs activists around the UK to take action and show the government that people hold them to the promises they made to Afghan women.

Do something

- Send an e-card to your MP via the GAPS website asking them to write to the Foreign Secretary, to ensure leadership, coordination, investment and accountability around women's rights in conflict
- Host or attend a GAPS No women, no peace workshop in August and September
- Join GAPS in London on 7 October to call for women's rights and participation in the Afghan transition
- Sign up to the GAPS newsletter and follow GAPS on Facebook and Twitter

For more details, visit: www.nowomennopeace.org

Do something update

Show your support for UN Women: from April to June 2011 UNA-UK asked its supporters to call on the UK government to prioritise funding for the new UN Women agency. We would like to thank all of our members and supporters who took action for UN Women via our website. We are now able to inform you that the Department for International Development (DFID) has announced a funding commitment of £10m a year for two years. To read the letter we received from DFID and find out more, visit www.una.org.uk/dosomething

Children and armed conflict

The UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) estimates that, over the past decade, conflicts around the world have displaced 20 million children, left six million permanently disabled or seriously injured, and over two million dead.

Children suffer disproportionately during armed conflict. The break-up of families can leave them homeless or without means to support themselves. Many are suddenly thrust into the role of primary breadwinner or caregiver for younger siblings or elderly relatives. Often, their schooling will have been interrupted, as will their access to basic necessities such as healthcare. Children are also at great risk of sexual violence, increasingly recognised as both a consequence and a weapon of war. A report by the African Union’s predecessor body on the 1994 genocide concluded that nearly every female in Rwanda over the age of 12 who survived had been raped. And even after the cessation of hostilities, children are still under threat. An estimated 8,000 to 10,000 are killed or maimed by landmines every year.

“We have lost a part of our life, and it will never come back” – these words, from an 18-year-old who witnessed the civil war in Burundi, ring especially true for child soldiers. It is difficult to know exactly how many minors are directly involved in conflicts in this way: numbers fluctuate due to ever-changing conflict scenarios; governments and non-state actors often try to conceal their use; and once they turn 18, their status changes and they disappear from the record. While it is not possible to give a global figure for the number of child

soldiers at any one time, estimates are in the hundreds of thousands.

Many do not want to fight. They are forcibly recruited, kidnapped or pressured with threats against them or their families.

Six grave violations against children in conflict

The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict has placed a particular focus on ending impunity for these violations, classified as war crimes:

- Killing and/or maiming children
- Recruitment and/or use of children as soldiers
- Attacks against schools and/or hospitals
- Denial of humanitarian access for children
- Abduction of children
- Rape and grave sexual abuse of children

“Each house has to turn over one child. If you don’t agree, we will take a child anyway”

Selvamani, a former child soldier from Sri Lanka, describes what the LTTE told her parents (Human Rights Watch, *Living in Fear*, 2004)

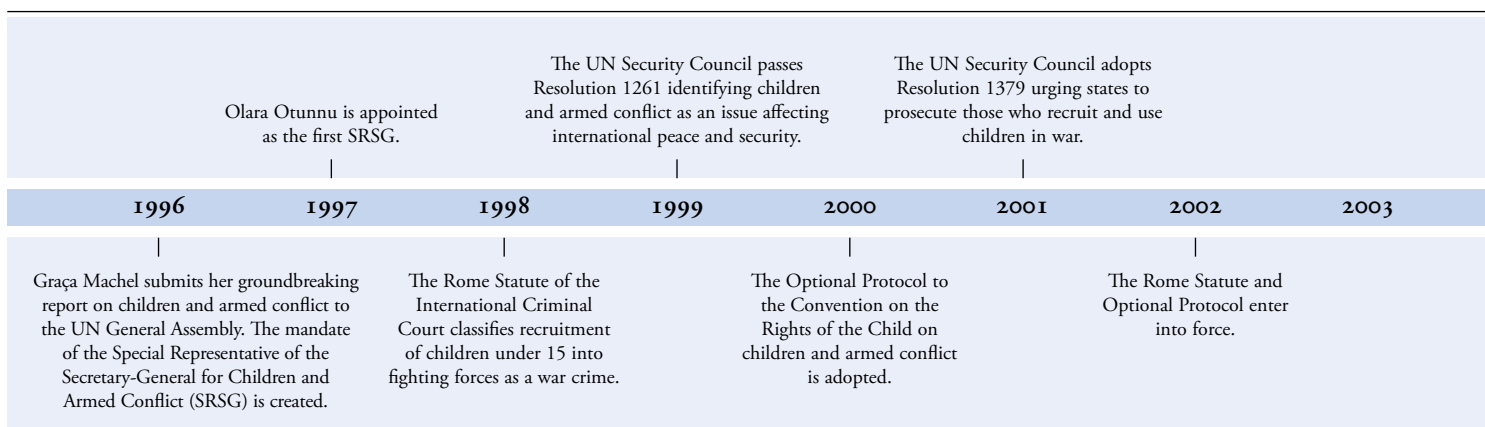
But others choose to become soldiers. They may want to fight for a cause, gain respect, increase their status or simply feel safer by carrying a weapon. Some even have the support of their families, who believe that their children will be given regular meals, free clothing, wages, medical care and, in some cases, education.

Not all those classified as child soldiers are fighters. Some are used as guards, scouts, messengers, cooks, cleaners and, most worryingly, as slaves – sexual or otherwise – to adult soldiers. Children as young as five have been found in these roles.

Armed groups such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka, and Lord’s Resistance Army in Uganda are infamous for their use of child soldiers. Others are less well-known, including separatists in Thailand, Maoists in India, and groups in Burma and the Philippines.

Since the World Summit for Children in 1990, the UN has sought to draw attention to the plight of children affected by armed conflict and to take steps to protect their rights. In 1996, it asked women’s and children’s rights advocate Graça Machel to undertake a study on the impact of armed conflict on the young. Her groundbreaking report revealed the scale of the problem – about one billion children live in territories affected by conflict – and shifted the perspective from one of children as bystanders to one of children as targets or active participants.

The report prompted a decision by the UN General Assembly to create the post of Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (SRSG). The SRSG’s office has been instrumental in monitoring the use of child soldiers, naming and shaming offending parties, identifying new strategies to protect children, supporting rehabilitation of child combatants, and raising political and public awareness and support.





One key objective for the SRSG is to encourage states to implement the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict. Adopted in 2000, the Protocol is an ‘add-on’ agreement to the convention which sets the minimum age for conscription and direct participation in hostilities at 18 and calls on states to initiate reintegration programmes for former child soldiers. To date, 142 UN member states have ratified this treaty, while 51 have not.

“Child soldiers are ideal because they don’t complain, they don’t expect to be paid, and if you tell them to kill, they kill”

Senior officer in the Chadian National Army (Human Rights Watch, *Child Soldiers Global Report 2008*)

To mark the 10-year anniversary of the Protocol in 2010, Radhika Coomaraswamy, the current SRSG, launched “Zero under 18”, a two-year campaign aimed at securing the universal ratification of the Protocol.

The campaign, which is run in partnership with UNICEF and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, will call on all states to ratify the Protocol and, if they are already party to it, to assist others to do so. Universal ratification will clearly demonstrate a moral consensus on the need to eliminate the use and recruitment of children in war. ■



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ZERO UNDER 18

UNA-UK will be supporting the “Zero under 18” campaign over the next few months. We will be working with our members in the UK and sister UN Associations around the world to:

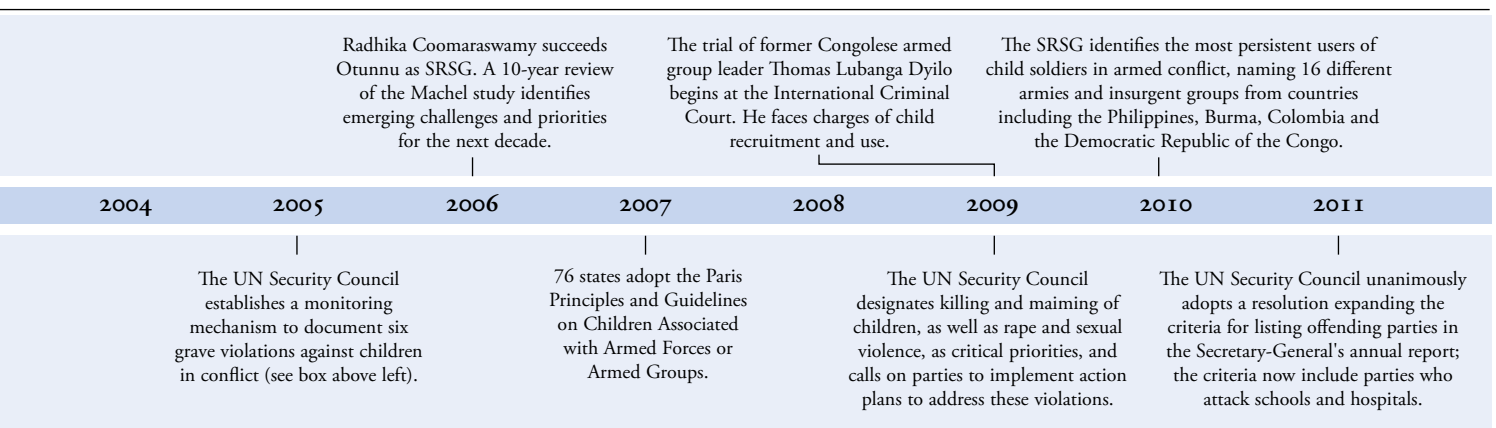
- Lobby for universal ratification by 12 February 2012 (the tenth anniversary of the Protocol entering into force)*
- Encourage all states to raise the age of voluntary recruitment to a minimum of 18 years
- Raise awareness of states parties’ obligation to criminalise recruitment and use of child soldiers
- Assert that child soldiers have the right to assistance for their physical and psychological recovery and reintegration
- Promote the adoption and effective implementation of relevant national legislation

*Those outside the Protocol include: Cameroon, Estonia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Haiti, Indonesia, Liberia, Malaysia, Pakistan and Somalia. The UK has ratified the treaty but it has submitted a qualifying declaration that states it will “take all feasible measures” to ensure that soldiers aged under 18 do not take part in direct hostilities unless there is a genuine military need.

Visit zerounder18.org for more information

“Two months ago, my 14-year-old cousin got an ID card showing he is 18 and he joined the Republican Guards ... Last week, I saw him carrying a gun”

Hamid al-Ghurbani, a high school teacher in Sana’a, Yemen (IRIN news, 20 July 2011)



Girls in the shadow of war



Marie Staunton

There are an estimated 100,000 girl soldiers in the world today. Over the last two decades, girls have been part of government, militia or armed paramilitary forces in 55 countries, 38 of which were actively involved in armed conflict.

The violence girls experience in wartime is not purely a result of armed conflict – it also happens in peacetime and can spill into post-conflict situations. For these girls, war is not over when the last bullet is fired.

Female soldiers are often left out of demobilisation programmes. Some return home with babies fathered by soldiers from the losing side and are rejected by their communities. Others are at risk from demobilised soldiers roaming the countryside while police and security services are not yet in place.

“To discriminate against girls is not only morally indefensible, it is also economically, politically and socially unsupportable”

Graça Machel, author of the landmark UN study on the impact of armed conflict on children

Some 200 million girls live in countries that are at risk of, or emerging from an armed conflict. Plan, a global children's charity, has devoted one of its annual series of reports on *The State of the World's Girls* to examining what happens to girls before, during and after war.

Girls in the Shadow of War found that, as the shadow of war looms, girls may be married off or sent away from home for protection. During some conflicts, rape is

Eight-point action plan for girls in conflict

1. Strengthen the skills and capacities of girls and youth organisations before, during and after conflict, and ensure that girls have a say in all decisions that affect them
2. Ensure that girls have a voice in peace processes and in truth and reconciliation commissions, where appropriate
3. Reform legislation so that laws are in place to protect girls and promote their rights
4. Ensure enforcement by re-establishing the rule of law, training police and investing in a functional and appropriate legal system that protects girls' rights
5. Promote girls' education in conflict, post-conflict and fragile states, and release funds to ensure a quality education for every child
6. Prioritise the particular health needs of adolescent girls and young women
7. Enforce the code of conduct for UN personnel serving in conflict and

used as a weapon of war and, after the end of hostilities, the specific needs of girls are too often overlooked.

The State of the World's Girls series highlights how the rights of girls to survive, to be protected and to reach their full potential continue to be ignored. Each report focusses on a different issue, citing case studies of successful policies and practices, and offering an opportunity to hear the voices of the girls themselves. One such girl is Janet.

I met Janet, a former child soldier in Sierra Leone, just after the end of that country's long civil war. Five years later, I introduced her to a packed meeting at the UK parliament. She told MPs that, aged seven, she had survived the killing of her parents by rebel soldiers and had no choice but to join the soldiers as a baggage carrier. At the age of 12 she was taken as a 'wife' by the rebel commander. She was 15 when peace came to the country. She had no protector, no property and no education or skills.

Then, Janet found a safe house for former girl soldiers that had been started by teachers from the Federation of African Women with the support of local Plan

post-conflict zones so they protect, and do not exploit, girls and young women

8. Ensure that youth employment programmes, particularly in post-conflict states, focus on young women, especially young mothers, as well as young men, and ensure that girls have access to appropriate skills training and the means to earn a living

Get involved

GET BRIEFED – You can download the *Girls in the Shadow of War* report at www.plan-uk.org/resources

GET LOBBYING – Ask your MP and Secretary of State for International Development Andrew Mitchell what the UK is doing through its development budget to support the education and protection of girls in conflict-affected and fragile states

GET ACTIVE – Join the "Because I am a Girl" campaign at www.becauseiamagirl.org

GET GOING – For more ideas on how to support this campaign, find UNA-UK and Plan on Facebook

staff, and she was given a scholarship to attend secondary school. Now Janet was campaigning for governments throughout the world to fulfil their duty to protect girls like her and enable them to realise their potential.

Girls in the Shadow of War highlights many positive stories from individuals such as Janet. It also showcases enlightened policies by governments: Liberia, for example, has used the opportunity of post-conflict renewal to introduce anti-rape legislation, to reform inheritance laws in favour of women and girls and to invest in girls' education. Such policies will not only transform girls' experiences during conflict and in peacetime, but will also encourage the wider benefits of harnessing girls' potential in terms of development and post-conflict reconciliation. ■

Marie Staunton is Chief Executive of Plan UK. Plan is a global children's charity that works with children in the world's poorest countries to help them build a better future. To find out more, visit www.plan-uk.org

THE UN & THE UK

This section of the magazine features coverage of UNA-UK's work with government and Parliament. Further information, news and views can be found online at www.una.org.uk

UN guidelines aim to make development more inclusive

On 16 May, UNA-UK and the International Disability and Development Consortium held the UK launch of new UN guidelines aimed at making development inclusive for disabled people.

More than 120 people attended the launch at the Royal Commonwealth Society, representing NGOs, donors, media and government. They heard from speakers including Tanya Barron of Leonard Cheshire Disability, Chapal Khasnabis of the World Health Organization (the chief editor of the guidelines), Dr Mary Wickenden of University College London, and Gertrude Feofame of Sightsavers. Ms Feofame (pictured right, at the podium) presented a case study from Ghana on the urgent need for the guidelines to be incorporated into international development procedures.

Prior to the event, UNA-UK hosted a roundtable discussion with 25 leading disability and development practitioners, chaired by international development expert Sir Richard Jolly. The roundtable produced a set of recommendations, including a plan of action for mainstreaming disability across the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Earlier this year, UNA-UK ran an appeal for funds relating to its work on disability and development. We are grateful to the many members who gave generously. Without them, this work would not have been possible.

A full report of the event, including the recommendations that emerged, is available at www.una.org.uk.

UK foreign policy survey

International affairs think-tank Chatham House has published the results of a survey that explored how people in Britain feel about their country's place in the world. Key findings included:

- When asked for their view of the UN, 47% of the British public say



Gertrude Feofame speaks at the UNA-UK/IDDC launch event – Making Development Inclusive – on 16 May 2011. Top table from left to right: Tanya Barron, Sir Richard Jolly and Chapal Khasnabis. © UNA-UK/Marcus Dawes

they feel positive about it, compared with 22% who feel negative. A fifth of those surveyed scored the UN a five on a scale of one to 10.

- Out of a list of 10 items, the public's lowest priority was dealing with international crises. Nearly half of those asked agreed that "Britain should not involve itself at all in uprisings" such as those in the Middle East.
- The four greatest threats to the UK were perceived to be international terrorism, interruptions to energy supplies, organised crime and global financial instability.
- On climate change, 34% of the public believe that the UK should take tough measures to reduce emissions, whatever other countries do. But 31% are "not convinced" that climate change is a serious threat and believe the UK should not take action that has an impact on living standards.
- More than half of the public (57%) feel that the UK is spending too much on aid, and that much aid is wasted. Around a quarter (24%) think the amount is "about right" and 7% that it is too little.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock, UNA-UK's Chairman, was invited to comment on the findings. He noted that those surveyed wanted the UK to remain a great power, retain its UN Security Council seat and maintain substantial armed forces, but showed little sign that they

were prepared to make the necessary sacrifices. He called for fresh thinking to address these challenges. Read more at www.chathamhouse.org.uk

Greenstock on Israel-Palestine

In an open letter published on 10 June, 24 former heads of government, ministers and peace negotiators, including UNA-UK Chairman Sir Jeremy Greenstock, called on the European Union and United States to recalibrate their policies on Israel-Palestine in preparation for the Palestinian parliamentary and presidential elections planned for May 2012.

Stating that the recent agreement signed between Fatah and Hamas is "a fruit of the Arab Spring", signatories urged policymakers on both sides of the Atlantic to engage constructively with the transitional government; this includes treating recognition of Israel as a goal rather than a precondition of involvement in the process aimed at creating a lasting peace settlement.

In his response to the letter, UK Foreign Secretary William Hague expressed hope that the announcement of reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas will advance the peace process, and said that "negotiations should be guided by clear parameters, such as those set out by [US] President Obama on 19 May, including an agreement on borders based on 1967 lines".

UN APPG: have the MDGs made a difference?

The UN All-Party Parliamentary Group held a meeting in the House of Lords on 17 May to evaluate the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) framework and discuss how the international community might address poverty in a strategic manner after 2015 – the target date for achieving the goals.

Noting that the MDGs have helped to reinforce the message that development is not just about economic growth, Professor David Hulme of the Brookings World Poverty Institute suggested that future initiatives should focus less on quantitative targets. He cited the emphasis on school enrolment figures, rather than quality of education as an example.

Caroline Hurford of the UN World Food Programme focussed her remarks on MDG1 (on hunger), stressing the key role of this goal in the achievement of all others. Alison Marshall of UNICEF UK made a persuasive case for a rights-based approach to development and cautioned against using data averages to measure progress. Referring to a map of Brazil, she demonstrated that, while national data indicated the country was on track to meet MDG2 (on primary education), progress was patchy at the local level.

In his presentation, UNA-UK Executive Director Phil Mulligan drew attention to the exclusion of certain groups and issues from the MDG framework, the lack of national ownership of the goals and the emphasis on aid over partnerships. He called on aid agencies, governments and civil society to begin work now on a more inclusive framework.

Hannay to chair UN APPG

At the annual general meeting of the UN APPG on 15 June, Lord Hannay of Chiswick, a crossbench peer and former Chair of UNA-UK, was elected to serve as the group's Chair. Other officers elected were: Baroness Coussins (Vice-Chair, crossbench), Baroness Kinnock (Vice-Chair, Labour) and Mark Lancaster MP (Vice-Chair and contact point, Conservative). Outgoing Chair Sir Peter Bottomley MP will remain a member.

The group is planning a series of events for 2011–12, and has decided to make the majority of these open to the public. For more information, contact Ben Donaldson, UNA-UK Communications and Campaigns Officer, on 020 7766 3448 or donaldson@una.org.uk. ■

A WMD-free Zone* in the Middle East?



Jo Adamson

I recently attended a course on negotiation at Oxford University's Saïd Business School and came across an interesting term that all good negotiators should apparently master: ZOPA, which is an acronym for the Zone of Possible Agreement. Our tutors taught us that negotiations succeed best when you try to expand the ZOPA between you and the other parties, instead of trying to grab as much of the pie for yourself so that you win and they lose.

This got me thinking about another zone – the proposed Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons as well as other weapons of mass destruction, on which I worked at the May 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference (RevCon) in New York.

One person at the RevCon who had clearly mastered the concept of ZOPA was Alison Kelly, the Irish diplomat who crafted the consensus for an international conference in 2012 on how to take forward the Middle East zone proposal.

I tried to analyse what had enabled us to find our ZOPA. My unscientific results are that we succeeded because we had:

- **A trusted diplomat** (Kelly) to help us to identify common ground, push us to give a bit more and then translate it into UN-speak to seal the deal;
- **Good leadership** of the delegations involved, which meant a willingness to take the risks needed to build trust with the other parties. This ultimately produced an atmosphere where people wanted to, and believed they could, create something together; and
- **Coffee.** In international diplomacy coffee is not just a drink but a negotiating venue. The RevCon deal was crafted over vats of coffee and at

receptions, as well as more formal but equally caffeine-fuelled meetings.

For me, the most important elements were trust and belief. The former because we had to overcome years of suspicion and recrimination since the resolution on the Middle East zone was first adopted in 1995. And the latter because multilateral diplomacy is like the theatre, especially the bit about the actors and audience suspending their disbelief. In our case, it was that heady mix of trust and belief in ourselves that carried the day.

We are now planning for the 2012 conference and the UK has a special role to play in shaping the preparations. The RevCon's final outcome document asks us – together with the US, Russia and the UN Secretary-General – to appoint a facilitator and find a host for the conference. We have been working behind the scenes to do just that, and are making progress.

“We, and other international players, must take care not to put ourselves in a position where it appears that we want success more than the regional players themselves”

I hope to remain involved in the work on this conference because I believe we can, collectively, make the Middle East zone a reality. However, we, and other international players, must take care not to put ourselves in a position where it appears that we want success more than the regional players themselves. We will help. But in the end it will fall to them to create the atmosphere that will allow them to find their optimal ZOPA. ■

*The term of art is “Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons as well as other weapons of mass destruction”. The formula used here is for the sake of brevity.

Jo Adamson is UK Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. She writes here in a personal capacity



Send your letters to:

Natalie Samarasinghe, UNA-UK,
3 Whitehall Court, London SW1A 2EL
email: samarasinghe@una.org.uk

Dear Editor

It was a surprise to note that in his two-page article ("Top Level Group of UK Parliamentarians for Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation", *New World*, Spring 2011), Lord Browne failed to mention two relevant issues.

First, nothing was said about the renewal of Trident and how that could fit with the "good faith" negotiations on nuclear disarmament called for by the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the International Court of Justice advisory opinion of 1996.

Second, there was no mention of British opposition to beginning multilateral negotiations on disarmament on the basis of the existing draft nuclear weapons convention lodged with the UN. Over 140 non-nuclear-weapon states support this, but of the five major nuclear powers, only China showed some willingness to move in that direction.

While warmly welcoming his new initiative, I urge Lord Browne and his colleagues to spend some time re-reading the Final Document of the 1978 UN Special Session on Disarmament. Over 30 years old it may be, but it is as significant now as it was then. Its call for public education on disarmament issues, ignored by successive governments and many NGOs, is even more relevant now.

Perhaps this is an issue that UNA-UK could take up. The public here and elsewhere has been led to believe for years that nuclear weapons are the final guarantee of national security. It will take some effort to get them to realise that nuclear weapons guarantee nothing except ever-increasing and expensive insecurity.

Bruce Kent

Vice President, Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
London

Note from the Editor: public education on the dangers of nuclear weapons, the need for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and the mismatch between modern

threats and existing security doctrines is a key part of UNA-UK's "Towards Zero" programme. In 2011–12 we will be increasing our public engagement activities by working with our local branches and university groups. Contact our Peace & Security Programme Coordinator, James Kearney, for more details on kearney@una.org.uk or 020 7766 3446

Dear Editor

As the new Chair of the UNA Women's Advisory Council, I would like to say how wonderful it was to see a whole edition of *New World* dedicated to gender issues (Summer 2011).

I would also like to invite all interested UNA members and women's organisations to connect with the Women's Advisory Council – we meet three times a year, usually in London, and keep a watching brief for UNA-UK on a host of issues related to gender equality and women's empowerment.

For more information, please call me on 0121 449 6032, or write to me at gillianbrig@gmail.com or Flat 2, 23 Augusta Road, Moseley, B13 8AE.

Gillian Briggs

Chair, UNA Women's Advisory Council
Birmingham

Dear Editor

Recent events in the Middle East should be a wake-up call to the UN: it must take much firmer actions against brutal and dictatorial regimes such as those in Libya and Syria.

These regimes have shown a flagrant disregard for any civilised behaviour. The US and EU have put measures in place to make it known to the leaders concerned that their actions will not be tolerated. It is now time for the UN Security Council to follow suit, especially on Syria.

A number of steps other than military intervention are at the Council's disposal:

sanctions, arms embargoes, asset freezes, International Criminal Court referrals and recommendations to the General Assembly that an offending state should have its UN membership suspended for serious violations of the UN Charter (invoking Chapter II Articles 4, 5 and 6). This should be done with a warning that failure to comply could lead to expulsion.

I have proposed to UNA-UK that we advocate, where appropriate, the above steps and apply pressure where possible on relevant actors. Actions speak louder than words and, where lives are at stake, condemnation is simply not enough.

David J Thomas

Porthcawl

Dear Editor

The last issue of *New World* (Summer 2011) mentions that there has not yet been a female UN Secretary-General. Has a woman ever served as Executive Director of UNA-UK?!

AMJ Walker

London





UNA-UK members voting at the 2011 Policy Conference © UNA-UK/Benedict Parsons

Policy Conference 2011

On 18 June, some 130 members gathered in Cardiff for UNA-UK's 65th Policy Conference, held in the beautiful setting of the Temple of Peace – the home of UNA Wales.

UNA branches submitted over 40 policy motions on issues for discussion at the event, ranging from the "Arab awakening" to ecocide. Peace and security matters were considered in plenary, along with issues related to international and sustainable development. Human rights and UN reform were discussed in concurrent policy commissions. During the conference, members also submitted urgency motions on developments such as a proposed Palestinian bid for UN membership. (See page 5)

With skilful chairing by Kate Grady and Andrew Boakes, Conference Chair and Vice-Chair respectively, participants debated, amended and adopted the majority of the motions. The outcome document is being finalised by the conference organising committee and will be available shortly.

One of the most enjoyable events took place the day before the conference, when nearly 90 members joined UNA-UK staff, interns and Board members for a buffet dinner and the ever-popular UN quiz, as well as two workshops.

This conference was the first to be held since Sir Jeremy Greenstock and Phil Mulligan took up their posts as Chairman and Executive Director of UNA-UK, and they presented a draft of the organisation's new strategic plan. The policy content of the plan was debated and formally adopted by the conference, while other elements – on membership, fundraising, governance and policymaking – were also discussed.

The draft plan has since been revised and now includes proposals to retain regular policy conferences and improve their format (in consultation with Andrew Boakes, who was elected by members to chair the next policy conference). The UNA-UK Board is currently seeking feedback on the revised plan (see below).

We need your feedback on UNA-UK's draft strategic plan

All paid-up members of UNA-UK should have received an email or letter inviting them to provide feedback on our draft strategic plan. The plan has been developed by the UNA-UK Board over the past nine months in consultation with UNA members, branches, regions and nations. It was refined following UNA-UK's 2011 Policy Conference, which formally endorsed the plan's policy content.

We would now appreciate your help in finalising the plan. The latest draft is available from www.una.org.uk/strategicplan, along with two documents that summarise how it was developed, what it contains and how it fits in with UNA-UK's policymaking processes.

Hard copies of all three documents are available on request from Hayley Richardson, UNA-UK Administrative Assistant. She can be contacted on 020 7766 3454, richardson@una.org.uk or 3 Whitehall Court, London SW1A 2EL

We would be grateful if you could send your feedback to Hayley on the contact details listed above no later than 5pm on 6 September 2011.

A final draft of the plan, incorporating revisions based on the feedback received, will be made available to UNA-UK members ahead of a General Meeting of UNA-UK, at which it is to be submitted for formal adoption.

Impressions of Policy Conference

Tessa Darley is a student who was funded to attend Policy Conference through the Algar Reed Bursary administered by UNA Southern Counties. She sent us this report.

The UNA-UK Policy Conference was centred on 40 plus motions, debated on the floor by members of UNA branches from around the UK. It was interesting to see how motions were passed, and to hear the different opinions of UNA members – some of whom felt that the time limit for speaking wasn't long enough!

Issues addressed included the Middle East uprisings and a Nuclear Weapons Convention. The motion on Sri Lanka was discussed with particular passion. Sri Lanka has been in turmoil for quite some time, with nearly 30 years of civil war ending brutally in May 2009. Both the Sri Lankan army and the rebels have been accused of human rights abuses and of killing an estimated 40,000 people during the final months of the war (see page 9).

The Sri Lankan government reportedly denied access to organisations such as the UN and Red Cross that were trying to reach those trapped by fighting. More than 300,000 people were displaced and housed in camps with poor conditions. UNA-UK passed a motion calling on the UK government to push for an independent investigation into allegations of war crimes by both sides, and to ensure that ethnic minorities' rights are respected and rehabilitation efforts are sustainable.

This motion was debated during the session on human rights and humanitarian action – the section of the conference that most interested me. Hearing speakers voice their personal experiences was thought-provoking. For example, one member spoke of her friend being involved in human trafficking during a discussion on the rise in trafficking during sporting events.

Witnessing how passionate UNA members are fuelled my enthusiasm for one day becoming a diplomat.

UN peacekeeping: identifying challenges and remembering the fallen

On 26 May, UNA Westminster branch organised its annual commemoration of the International Day of UN Peacekeepers, in partnership with UNA-UK and the Royal United Services Institute. Initiated by the branch in 2004, this is the only yearly event in the UK dedicated to UN peacekeepers. It has become a fixture in the London diplomatic calendar and one of the UK's most authoritative reviews of UN peacekeeping.

Alain Le Roy, outgoing UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping (see pages 10–11), delivered the keynote speech. He urged participants to remember that UN peacekeepers were undertaking life-saving work every day with relatively meagre resources, comparing his annual budget of \$7.6bn for 14 missions across the world with the \$116bn spent every year in Afghanistan. Mr Le Roy, who was appointed in 2008, praised the UK for its political and



Wreath-laying procession makes its way up Whitehall on 26 May 2011. © UNA-UK/Benedict Parsons

financial support for UN peacekeeping but expressed hope that it would do more, especially in terms of providing expertise and training. Other sessions focussed on peacebuilding, and on piracy in Somalia.

As in previous years, the event included a ceremony at the Cenotaph to remember those who have died

whilst serving as peacekeepers. Mr Le Roy joined diplomatic and military representatives from around the world, war widows and students in a wreath-laying procession led by the Colour Guard of the UN Veterans Association. The Band of the Life Guards performed the *Last Post* and the *Reveille*.



Michael Swindlehurst, Chair of UNA Saffron Walden, pictured next to Treasurer John Read, presents a copy of *New World to Town Mayor and Mayoress Councilor Cliff and Valerie Treadwell*. The branch always runs a stall at this biennial fair for voluntary organisations to attract new members. © Francis Deutsch/UNA Saffron Walden

Inspire: who can better inspire others to join UNA-UK than you, our members?

UNA-UK's newest outreach initiative is seeking inspiration. We want to feature stories, photos and videos of the inspirational UNA-UK members who are working hard to engage their local communities in the work of the UN and UNA-UK. Some of this work is public – the Peacekeepers Day conference featured above, organised by the indefatigable Chair of UNA Westminster, David Wardrop, is a great example. Others work behind the scenes, like Benedict Parsons, who has been taking pictures at UNA-UK events such as these for years.

Please send your stories to Natalie Samarasinghe at UNA-UK, 3 Whitehall Court, London SW1A 2EL or samarasinghe@una.org.uk.

More outreach grants

UNA-UK is delighted to announce that it has again maintained a fund to help branches, regions and nations organise activities around the UK.

This year's grants will be awarded only for events and activities focussed around UNA-UK's peace and security policy agenda; in particular, nuclear non-proliferation and multilateral disarmament; UN peacekeeping, peacebuilding and conflict resolution; and emerging security threats such as cyber-security and security challenges arising from climate change and resource scarcity.

You can apply for grants of between £100 and £400 for events that will be held between 1 September 2011 and 30 June 2012. Applications must be received by 31 March 2012.

Full details are available from Carol Hodson, Deputy Director (Finance & Governance), on hodson@una.org.uk or 020 7766 3455.

UNA Youth: the new, improved UNYSA



Tyna Vayalikkollattu
UNA Youth President



Cristina Pecheanu
UNA Youth Vice-President



Misha Franklin
UNA Youth Secretary

2010-11 was, as ever, an incredibly busy year for the UN Youth & Students Association (UNYSA). In November 2010, we successfully launched our Millennium Development Goals campaign with speakers from the UN World Food Programme, UN Regional Information Centre and UN Environment Programme, and over 350 students and young people. In March 2011, we held our inaugural 'Model UNA-UK' event to contribute proposals to UNA-UK's policy conference (see page 22), and in June 2011, we focussed on girls' development at our annual conference.

We have also worked with UNA-UK to enhance young people's participation in global decision-making, by making recommendations to the UN Security Council's first-ever interactive youth debate and by sending a youth delegate

to the UN High Level Meeting on Youth in July 2011 (see page 25).

This past academic year has also seen UNYSA rebranded as UNA Youth – a name that makes us more recognisable to current and potential members, and links us more clearly to UNA-UK and to the worldwide network of UN Associations. We have also reduced the number of positions on our national youth council to three to ensure that it works more effectively for our members, and have created a written constitution that was adopted at our annual conference in June.

With a new name and council in place, and renewed aspiration to equip future leaders with the skills, resources and networks to fulfil their endeavours, UNA Youth will focus on careers as its core campaign for 2011/12. We are thrilled to be launching our brand new freshers' fair competition, "**Where will the UN**

take you?', this September (see page 25). The competition will offer UNA Youth members at university the chance to gain firsthand experience of the UN, to develop their skills, and to access careers advice from a range of experts. Visit www.una.org.uk/freshers to find out more.

We will also be looking at wider issues to do with youth empowerment and unemployment. Last month, UNA-UK sent a UNA Youth member to New York to lobby for the inclusion of young people in national decision-making and development plans (see page 25). Our third exciting project for the year is a national Model UN team that will support the thousands of students in the UK who take part in MUNs each year.

We hope that these initiatives, alongside greater participation by our UNA Youth members, will help to ensure that our voices are heard in the UK and beyond.

Youth AGM: girls' education and campaign film competition

Our 2011 Annual Conference, held at Regent's College London, celebrated the UN International Year of Youth. Marie Staunton, Chief Executive of Plan UK, delivered an inspiring keynote speech on the pivotal role of girls' education in furthering development, prosperity and security (see page 18 for her article on girls in conflict). Her speech was followed by a presentation by Elin Martinez and Saira O'Maille of Save the Children, who provided students with practical tips on how to construct and run a campaign.

After the speeches, participants were invited to come up with a concept for UNA-UK's first youth campaign of the new academic year. Submissions were recorded and the best one will be selected by a panel of judges and turned into a short campaign film. The final part of the event featured remarks by the newly-elected 2011-12 Youth Council and a discussion on the new constitution which gives UNYSA a new name: UNA Youth.



Marie Staunton, Chief Executive of Plan UK, delivers the keynote speech at the UNA Youth annual conference on 25 June 2011 at Regent's College London. © UNA-UK/Natalie Samarasinghe

Representing UNA-UK in New York



Mitali Nikore

UN meeting on youth

Last month, I travelled to New York to represent UNA-UK at the UN High Level Meeting on Youth on 25–26 July, joining national youth delegates and young people from over a 100 civil society organisations.

In the General Assembly chamber, we listened to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's inspiring opening speech. He asked us whether we thought the international community was doing enough to address the needs of young people – he received a resounding 'no' in reply – before stressing the crucial role of youth in delivering development goals and the importance of providing young people with genuine decision-making power. Afterwards I attended two panel discussions on youth development.

The second day was devoted to states making recommendations on employment, health and literacy. The Namibian Minister suggested that a specialised UN agency for youth affairs be created to deal with such issues. The Official Outcome Document of the meeting (available from social.un.org/youthyear) was adopted during the closing session. As so often, it was actually the side events that were the most vibrant. Highlights included a speech by an 18-year-old girl from Haiti, who said that among the many hardships facing Haiti, climate change was the most dangerous, and a fascinating panel of young female human rights activists.

Overall, the conference was successful in drawing attention to youth affairs and providing a platform for youth groups from around the world to exchange ideas. UNA Youth hopes to build on this work by helping to equip young people to become informed and effective advocates for their own future.

Why support UN Women?

Gender discrimination is a universal phenomenon. In certain cultures it is subtle, in others unapologetic. It manifests itself in several ways that disproportionately affect women, such as sexual violence, illiteracy and political underrepresentation. The last issue of *New World* focussed on gender inequality and launched UNA-UK's campaign to support the UN's new agency for women's empowerment.

During my trip to New York in July, I was able to visit the offices of UN Women and find out more about its work. But why should we support this agency when so many local and national organisations are working for the same cause?

The creation of UN Women was rightly hailed as an historic UN reform. It signified that, for the first time, states were prepared to grant resources and prominence to women's empowerment – in itself a great step forward – and to recognise that women are instrumental in bringing development to their communities. By consolidating the four previously distinct UN bodies working on gender issues into a single agency, the UN's work will be more efficient, effective and visible.

Six months after its official launch, UN Women is present in 80 countries and running several campaigns, such as "Say no" on ending violence against women. It has published a major report (*In Pursuit of Justice* on gender bias in the world's legal systems) and is looking at the gender dimensions of issues including HIV/AIDS and climate change. UN Women combines work at the national level with governments and NGOs with international advocacy and standard-setting. Under the leadership of former Chilean President Michelle Bachelet, it is fast becoming *the* voice for women's issues within and outside the UN system.

UNA-UK has consistently pushed for states to give UN Women the resources it needs to fulfil its broad mandate. In June, three months after UNA-UK launched its "Support UN Women" campaign, the UK announced a commitment of £10m per year for two years, making it the agency's second largest donor. While this is a welcome vote of confidence, it is clear that expectations are high for UN Women and that funding is predicated on it delivering results, not just in health and education but also, more challengingly,

Freshers' fairs 2011: win a trip to New York, an iPad2 and get insider UN careers tips

We're raising our game for this year's freshers' fairs with our exciting new competition: "Where will the UN take you?" You (and everyone who comes to your freshers' stand) will get the chance to find out by signing up to our monthly 'UN-insider' careers tips and ... the opportunity to win an iPad2 and a trip to the UN headquarters in New York.

We'll be sending all UNA Youth university branches everything they need to make their freshers' stands look amazing, so make sure that we have the right details for your branch. If you haven't got a UNA Youth branch at your university or are worried that you might miss out, go to www.una.org.uk/freshers to enter online. Better still, set up a branch – for information on all of the above, contact UNA-UK on membership@una.org.uk

in changing social attitudes. It will be important for donors to remain conscious of the agency's modest resources. UN Women receives just 1.4% of its \$500m budget from the UN's core funding. It needs to raise the rest from voluntary contributions by states.

So I believe we should support UN Women because amongst those working for gender equality it alone has the credibility, legitimacy and reach of the UN. It can support grassroots initiatives and advise governments. It can undertake pioneering research on policy-making and become a voice for millions of unheard women.

But in order for UN Women to realise its potential, we must put our faith – and funds – in this agency.

Mitali Nikore was a member of the 2010–11 UNA Youth Council, on which she served as Model UN and Education Officer. She was UNA-UK's youth delegate to the UN High Level Meeting on Youth on 25–26 July 2011. A full version of her report is available at www.una.org.uk/youth

THE YOUNG PROFESSIONALS NETWORK INTERVIEW

WHO: Zoya Phan,
Burma Campaign UK
YPN MEMBER SINCE: 2011



Zoya at the 2007 Global Day of Action in solidarity with Burma pro-democracy protests, London. © Burma Campaign UK

How would you describe the situation in Burma?

Burma is ruled by one of the world's most brutal dictatorships, which systematically kills, tortures and imprisons civilians, including, in particular, ethnic minorities. The country is incredibly diverse, with eight major ethnic groups and over 130 minorities. The Burmese Army has deliberately targeted them, raping, looting and burning villages. As an ethnic Karen, I have twice been forced to flee my homeland because of such attacks.

What are the most pressing issues in Burma that need to be addressed?

First, systematic human rights violations, such as extra-judicial killings, forced relocations, extortion and land confiscation. Second, denial of aid by the regime. Levels of poverty and disease in Burma equal those in the worst conflict zones in Africa. Third, the appalling treatment of ethnic minorities. In eastern Burma, more than 3,600 villages have been destroyed, hundreds of thousands forced into slave labour, and rape used as a weapon of war. Despite calling for ethnic leaders to be included in political talks, the UN has made no serious attempts to facilitate this.

Has the release of democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi after 15 years in detention made a difference?

Aung San Suu Kyi's release gives hope to the people. But it doesn't signify

democratic change as it was not part of a political process. The regime released her simply because it wanted to get positive publicity after the blatant rigging of last year's elections.

There are still some 2,100 political prisoners in the country, including MPs, ethnic and student leaders, monks, journalists and artists, and attacks against civilians in ethnic areas continue. The humanitarian situation remains dire.

“People lived in hope that the situation in Burma would improve so that they could return. It hasn't.”

How did you end up in the UK?

When I was 14, I fled after my village was attacked by the Burmese Army. I ended up in a refugee camp in Thailand that was more like a prison camp – we weren't allowed to go out and were completely dependent on aid.

People lived in hope that the situation in Burma would improve so that they could return. It hasn't.

I was very lucky. I got a scholarship to study in the UK and, in 2005, began working with the Burma Campaign UK. My dream is that, one day, everyone in Burma will live in peace, security and freedom.

Tell us about the Burma Campaign UK.

We work with many organisations to raise awareness of, and push for stronger international action on the situation in Burma. I've had the opportunity to lobby celebrities and governments across Europe, including two British prime ministers, to ask them to take stronger action. We are grateful that Burma continues to be high on the international agenda, and are particularly thankful to the UK, which remains one of the most supportive governments and aid donors.

Your mother was a guerilla soldier, your father an activist. What would you have been had you remained in Burma?

When I was little, I wanted to become a teacher. The dictatorship holds onto power by denying education, especially to ethnic minorities, so young people don't have the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

Both my parents were very active in resistance work and they inspired me to work for human rights and democracy. Ultimately, I would like to go home. But

as long as the regime is in power and the international community fails to act, I won't be able to.

Are there lessons for Burma from the “Arab awakening”?

The difference between Burma and, say, Tunisia and Egypt, is that, in Burma, soldiers open fire on protestors. If protests are to be used, we need to persuade ordinary soldiers not to shoot. It is also frustrating to see that NATO is helping those who took up arms in Libya, but when ethnic people do so in Burma, they get criticised and even blamed for the violence.

Burma was under British rule until 1948. Do you think the UK has a special role to play today?

I think all countries have a responsibility to promote human rights and democracy everywhere in the world. But Burma's ethnic minorities do feel let down by the British. We fought with them against the Japanese in World War Two and were promised autonomy, but the British government abandoned us at the time of independence and more than a million ethnic people have now died at the hands of the regime. I think Britain has a special responsibility because of this betrayal.

What action should the UN take on Burma?

In my opinion, the UN has been ineffective in dealing with Burma. Although it has accused the dictatorship of breaking the Geneva Conventions, there hasn't been an investigation into these crimes. The UN should set up a commission of inquiry into war crimes and crimes against humanity in Burma. It should also apply stronger pressure on the regime to begin negotiations with Aung San Suu Kyi and ethnic political leaders on the release of all political prisoners and a nationwide ceasefire.

What is your message to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon?

Learn from 20 years of mistakes: softly softly doesn't work.

Zoya Phan is a member of UNA-UK's Young Professionals Network – a network of people in their 20s and 30s with a passion – personal or professional – for the work of the UN. To join the Network and to read the full version of Zoya's interview, visit una.org.uk/ypn

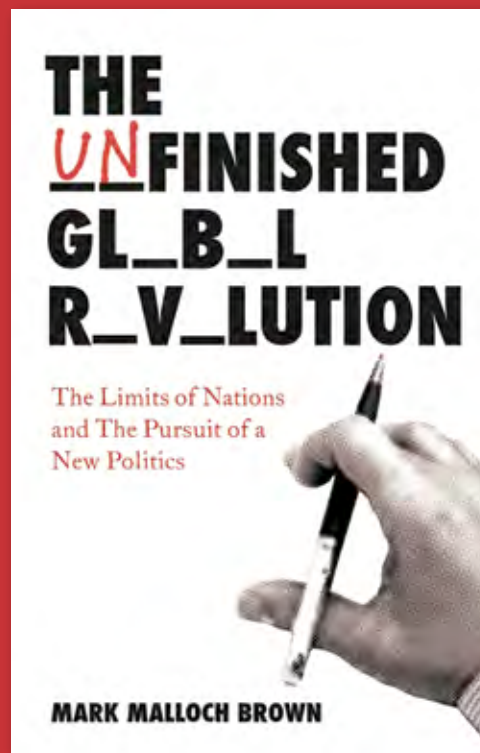
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Freshers' fairs 2011

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See page 25 for further details



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