NON-VIOLENT RESISTANCE NETWORK NEWSLETTER

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Editor: David Polden, Flat 1B, 347 Archway Road, London N6 5AA

Tel. 07539-321 118; e-mail: davidtrpolden1@gmail.com

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UK OPPOSITION TO GAZA WAR GROWS



Results of Israel "defending" itself!

Only towards the end of Starmer's premiership did any serious criticism of Israel for its war on Gaza emerge from the British government. The mantra was for long to defend the UK's refusal to stop arms being sent to Gaza by arguing that Israel had a right to "defend" itself. This in spite of many such weapons being actually used to help bring about genocide in Gaza. Later there was a change in rhetoric and some action taken to limit arms sales to Israel, with export licences for a few weapons to Israel being revoked. This seemed more a sop to try to appease increasing public opposition to the war in Gaza than a serious attempt to stop UK's support for it. Similar token gestures were taken in early 2024 to ban *just two* people living in Israeli settlements in the West Bank from entering the UK for organising attacks on Palestinian people and property there, and in June 2025 to ban just two far-right Israeli Ministers for "repeated incitements against Palestinian communities".

After Andy Burnham became PM the Labour Government went further. Foreign Minister Ed Miliband accused the Israeli government of turning a blind eye to "ethnic cleansing" in the West Bank and announced a series of sweeping sanctions on trade with illegal Israeli settlements, banning the import of all goods produced in West Bank settlements and export licences for "materials...contributing to the occupation or settlement expansion, and banning UK companies and individuals that support, finance or profit from helping building in illegal settlements". He also announced agreement with the International Criminal Court's (ICC) findings that Israel's occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem was unlawful. Burnham addressing the UN General Assembly in September 2026 said that Britain "will not stand by as suffering in Gaza and the West Bank continues". By doing what however he did not spell out. He also said, "we stand with Israel in the face of the ongoing threats - including from Iran – against Israel and Jewish people around the world…" Moreover the government continues to refuse to acknowledge

that Israel's attack on Gaza constitutes genocide, which if it did it would mean it would have to stop arms being sent to Israel under the Genocide Convention to which the UK is a signatory.

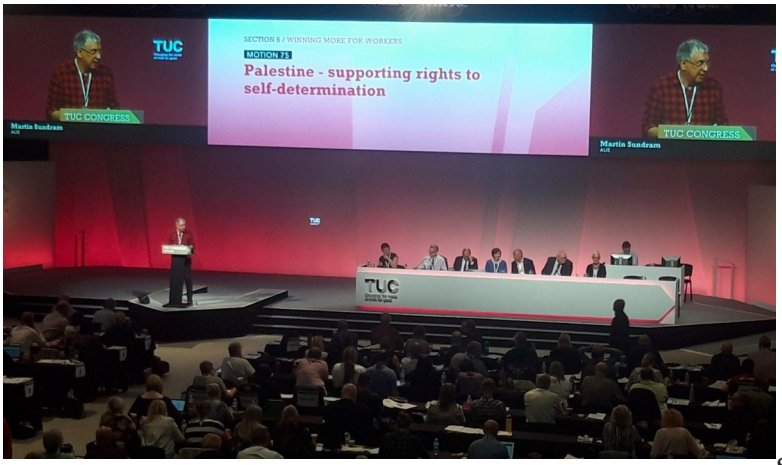
These are still largely token measures – how to distinguish goods from the West Bank labelled Israeli from ones from Israel itself, or exports sent to Israel and transferred to the West Bank from ones that won't be? No suggestion yet of any more effective measures such as a two-way arms embargo or an economic boycott. In his UN speech Burnham explicitly rejected an economic boycott as it would "punish the Israeli people"!

Nevertheless Israel reacted strongly to the trade sanctions, announcing that it would close UK's consulate in Jerusalem, expel UK representatives on the US-led Gaza coordination mission and end British training of Palestinian Authority forces in the West Bank. It also barred 11 MPs from entering Israel, including all five sitting Green MPs, as well as Corbyn, McDonnell and Sultana. Fahad Ansari, a lawyer, was also banned. An Israeli Government document recommends barring entry to people associated with prominent British charities, human rights and advocacy groups, including *Oxfam, Save the Children, Medical Aid for Palestinians, Palestine Solidarity Campaign, Islamic Relief Worldwide* and *Friends of Al-Aqsa*.

On September 17, in a six-page letter, over 130 UK lawyers, former judges and legal academics, welcomed the ban on trade with Israeli settlements, but added that the actions "fall far short" of Britain's obligations under the 2024 ICC ruling that Israel's occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem is illegal. They call on the government to impose more rigorous measures "to ensure that no part of the UK's economic relationship with Israel sustains its illegal occupation. These include extending sanctions to insurance, accountancy and digital infrastructure, and imposing a full arms embargo on Israel."

In contrast to UK's measures, Spain has embargoed arms to Israel since 2023 and also, unlike the UK, refuses the US use of its territory for military purposes. Its Prime Minister told the UN General Assembly on September 23 2026 of Spain's "unequivocal" condemnation of "genocide that Netanyahu is still perpetrating in Gaza", as well as calling for the veto powers of the permanent members on the UN Security Council, which allows the US to veto any sanctions proposed against Israel, to be abolished.

There are other signs of opposition to the war in Gaza growing in the UK.



TUC Congress 2026 where trade unions voted unanimously to support BDS against Israel

On September 16 at Trade Union Congress (TUC), delegates, representing five million UK workers, voted, unanimously, to officially endorse the Palestinian-led movement for boycotts, divestments and sanctions (BDS). This is a direct challenge to Ed Miliband's announcement at the Labour Conference the previous week that he "wholeheartedly opposes the BDS movement". The TUC also voted to support the next workplace and student day of action, which has been called for Thursday 26th November.

Seven days later, the UK Royal College of Nursing announced the ending of its relationship with the Israeli drugs firm Teva UK. This followed sustained campaigning by *Nurses for Palestine* and *UK Healthcare Petitions to the Royal Colleges.*

Meanwhile large public demonstrations and civil disobedience calling for the end of Israel's genocidal war on Gaza and for the UK government to stop arms sales to Israel and for an economic boycott on Israel till the war ends continue.

It's true the very large and frequent London marches and rallies, the largest one in November 2024 estimated as 300.000-strong, as well as many other similar actions all over the country, have become less frequent through an understandable fall off due to exhaustion. The most recent one in London on October 10th, after a relatively long gap, was claimed by the organisers as a quarter of a million strong.

There has also been much opposition to the war in schools and colleges with school strikes, camps, occupations and boycotts and other actions. There have also been sit-ins at major railway stations.

On the direct action front, the Defend *Our Juries* group (DOJ) continues to organise opposition to the proscription of *Palestine Action* (PA) for its campaign destroying equipment and weapons at factories supplying arms to Israel. The latest action was on September 27 outside the Labour Party Conference in Liverpool when 230 more people held up "I oppose genocide - I support Palestine Action" signs. Of these, 161 were arrested on suspicion of "supporting a terrorist organisation". That makes at least 3,182 arrests for such actions since the campaign began in August 2025.

Trials of those charged have been delayed and delayed as legal opposition to the proscription has continued. The latest postponement is due to an appeal to the Supreme Court challenging an Appeal Court rejecting a High Court judgement that the Act proscribing PA was unlawful. The Supreme Court hearing is scheduled for November 4-5; with its decision to be issued later. Meanwhile a case management hearing for all those charged is postponed to January 19 2027 which the thousands charged have been told they *don't* have to attend!; if the appeal fails then presumably trials will start.

DOJ argues, in response to the proscription of PA as a terrorist organisation, that "Destroying the tools used to kill children is not terrorism; it is effective resistance to crimes against humanity. The proscription of Palestine Action is a huge attack on our democratic right to protest, especially in the midst of a genocide which our government is participating in." The next sign-holding demonstration DOJ is organising is at 1pm on October 31 in central London (venue to be announced)

In the August/September edition of NVRN I reported on the second trial of the first five of the "Filton 25" in which four people who were all charged with aggravated burglary, violent disorder and criminal damage at the Israeli arms company's Filton factory, Bristol, on Hiroshima Day 2024. At their first trial in February 2026 the jury had found them all not guilty of the burglary and disorder charges, but failed to reach a verdict on the criminal damage charge. They were retried at on the criminal damage charge at Woolwich Crown Court starting April 13 in a trial lasting eight weeks. This time the jury found them all guilty and, on June 12, the judge announced the sentences he was imposing. These ranged from four years and eight months to five years for criminal damage, with one of the defendants sentenced to an extra three years for grievous bodily harm to a police sergeant, even though the jury had found it unintentional. The judge said he had increased all the sentences because there had been a terrorist connection to the defendants' actions, even though no evidence for this had been presented in court. An appeal was launched on 3rd September against the ruling of a terrorist connection.



Seven of the defendants in the 2nd Filton trial outside the Old Bailey

Since then there have been two more trials of the Filton 25. In the first of these, eight defendants were charged with criminal damage and violent disorder. After an eight-week trial the jury failed to reach a verdict on 14 of the 15 charges, finding one defendant not guilty of violent disorder and one anonymous defendant (under 18?) found guilty of criminal damage. The jury took 37 hours to reach their verdicts. There's no decision yet announced as to whether there will be a retrial on the criminal damage charge.

The third Filton trial started on September 25, in which six defendants were tried on charges of criminal damage and violent disorder. The defendants had each spent up to 18 months on remand in prison before trial with three of them going on hunger strike for between between 51 and 66 days, with one of them hospitalised as a result. The three ended their strike on January 15 after some demands were met, including, it was reported, cancellation of an Elbit Ministry of Defence contract, disclosure of some Elbit export licence documents, release of previously withheld books and mail sent to the strikers, some transfers to other prisons and meetings with prison healthcare teams and the *Joint Extremism Unit*. On February 20th another of their demands was

met, with all the Elbit 15 prisoners on remand released on bail. This trial has not yet concluded

In late 2025, after proscription of PA, a new direct action group, *People Against Genocide,* was set up. It has organised actions against Elbit and collaborators including against *DSV logistics* in April 2026, scaling scaling razor wire to drill a hole in the roof of Elbit's drone factory in Leicester to disrupt operations, targeting *Ultra I & C* in Gloucester which supplies components to military and defence contractors in May 2026, staging a blockade of *UAV Engines* in Staffs in June 2026 and on August 24 occupying the roof of a building belonging to *Martin-Baker*, which they accused of supplying aircraft ejection-seat components used by the Israeli military.

Two trials recently show the need for jury trials, which the current government want to stop for all but the most serious crimes. (It was reported on October 5 that the government had decided to drop the proposal to end all jury trials for defendants likely to receive sentences shorter than three years. However the historical right for defendants to *choose* a jury trial in many cases is still to be removed; only the magistrate presiding in their they first appearance in the Magistrates' Court will be able to direct there to be a jury trial in the cases brought before him/her.

In the second, Sarah Cotte was arrested absurdly in a violent dawn raid by counter-terror police and charged with a terrorism offence months after she had made a speech about the rights of Palestinians outside her university, SOAS. This was after a complaint by *UK Lawyers for Israel*. She suffered two trials. At the first there was a hung jury and a retrial was ordered. At the retrial on September 18 2026 at the Old Bailey Central Criminal Court the jury unanimously acquitted her.

The second involved 39-year old Dutch citizen Olax Outis, He was arrested on February 27 2026 after climbing a ladder beside the Sir Winston Churchill statue in Parliament Square in a red boiler suit emblazoned with "I support Palestine Action" (naughty man!) and squirting washable red paint on it and painting slogans including "Free Palestine" and "Churchill, Zionist War Criminal". He was arrested for causing £7000 of damage to the statue (an expensive jet wash!) but police missed a trick in not charging him for supporting a terrorist organisation because of the words on his boiler suit. Olax was held for seven weeks on remand in three London prisons before being released on home curfew at the end of April 2026 in yet another set of oppressive bail conditions against a pro-Palestine activist. Olax told the jury at his trial on September 14 that he hadn't done anything wrong as he was sending a message to Parliament and disputed the washable paint he'd used had damaged the statue. The jury, dear souls, unanimously acquitted him after a 4-day trial.



Winston Churchill Statue finds itself supporting Palestine

In Scotland, seven people have been indicted to Glasgow High Court for allegedly damaging Trump's Turnberry golf course. They are charged with "malicious damage aggravated by a terrorism connection" (for digging up grass, painting buildings, and, most heinous of all marking one of the sacred greens "GAZA NOT FOR SALE"). It's not clear how one can terrorise a golf course, however badly one treats it, but at least in Scotland, unlike in England, one has to *prove* a terrorism connection in court.

ELSEWHERE

Having covered the opposition to genocidal war on Gaza in the UK extensively I don't have room or energy to do justice to the enormous amount of public opposition elsewhere in the world and indeed to the unwillingness of most goverments in the West, like the UK, to do anything effective to try to stop it.

Two possible rays of light: 1) The Democrats may come out on top in both the House of Representatives and the Senate in the Mid-Term Elections in the US in November, which would certainly limit Trump's

powers to continue causing death and damage. Certainly Trump himself, his war on Iran and support for Israel have become unpopular and this should diminish support for Republican candidates in the election. The Economist reports that in results of polling last updated on September 29, 35% approve of the President, 61% disapprove and only 4% are "not sure". As for the war on Iran a poll of polls found that by October 2 only about one-third of Americans support the war with 58% opposed.

2) A general election taking place in Israel may see Netanyahu's Likud party lose, though the main opposition Yashar Party is little better, also opposing Palestinian statehood and the two-state solution.

In Israel Netanyahu is indeed pretty unpopular: a YouGov poll on July 7th found that 23.7% of Israelis "like" Netanyahu and 39.7% "dislike" him. However, when it comes to support for Israel's war in Gaza, the picture is more mixed. Data analysed by the Arab Center Washington DC in 2026 found that there is widespread support among Jewish Israelis for Israel's military operations, though a significant portion of the public remains deeply dissatisfied with the actual outcomes in Gaza, Lebanon, and Iran, and some 66% express concern regarding Israel's growing international isolation.

SAUDI ARABIA DRAWN INTO THE WAR



Map showing two straits where oil tankers are under attack

The Strait of Hormuz at the entrance to the Persian Gulf continues to be blockaded by Iran and the US, preventing transit through it of almost all the 20% of the world's oil that passed through it before the US and Israeli attack on Iran began in February 2026. This has led to shortages of oil worldwide, the consequent big increases of the price of petrol and diesel (oil prices have risen to more than $100 dollars a barrel and the price of diesel in the UK to over £2 a litre), leading in turn to serious economic damage in many parts of the world.

The Iran-backed Houthi "rebels", in control of much of Yemen, have recently occupied more of Yemen's west coast along the Red Sea, including a port, as well as occupying Perin Island in the middle of the Bab-al-Mandab strait at the entrance to it, all at the expense of the so-called "legitimate government". They have thus increased control of the strait and strengthened their ability to attack shipping going through it. Some 12% of the world's goods normally go through. The Houthis however have given an undertaking to only attack Saudi oil tankers going through. Saudi Arabia has built a 745 mile-long pipeline to the Red Sea to export oil that can no longer be sent through the Straits of Hormuz and Bab-al-Mandab safely. But, on September 11th, Saudi Arabia was forced to temporally close this pipeline after it was damaged by drones fired from Iraq. After this attack Houthis launched heavy ballistic missile attacks on Riyadh and on oil infrastructure. In retaliation Saudi Arabia announced resumption of its war against the Houthis in support of Yemen's "legitimate" government.

SPYCOPS INQUIRY TO BE TRUNCATED?

The *Undercover Policing Inquiry* (known as the *Spycops Inquiry)* was set up in 2015 as an independent, judge-led public inquiry to examine covert operations of undercover police units in England and Wales from 1968 to the present. 139 police infiltrated over 1,000 political groups under false identities. The groups targetted were almost entirely left-wing, including environmentalist and anti-racist ones.

The inquiry has found that many of the undercover police stole the identities of dead children, had sexual relationships with members of the groups under their false identities, quite possibly with the encouragement of senior officers, or at least with a blind eye being turned. Some of those so seduced had children as a result. The women then suffered distress when their police partner in question abruptly disappeared when his period of assignment ended. In spite of all this no officer has yet been charged for wrongdoing committed during the "spycops" operations. The CPS however is reported to be reviewing a file regarding 12 former officers to determine whether they should face charges for misconduct in public office. Internal disciplinary action has been taken against a few individuals.

On September 21 2026 the Inquiry completed hearings regarding undercover activities of the *Special Demonstration/Duties Squad* (SDS) which operated from 1968 to 2008. A report on SDS is due in 2027

There is still another unit that hasn't yet been dealt with by the inquiry - the *National Public Order Intelligence Unit*, covering undercover policing in social movements from 1999-2011. There are survivors of abuse and misconduct by this unit who've waited since 2015 for answers about what was done to them.

However, The Home Office has launched a "consultation" into the Inquiry's future - without consulting the survivors of the abuses. The group *Police Spies Out of Our Lives* which has been reporting on the Inquiry says it is clear that the Home Office hopes to either scrap or severely limit the scope of the Inquiry before it starts looking at the more recent abuses by undercover police, and calls on everyone to boycott the official "consultation" website and message the Home Office directly.

The Undercover Policing Inquiry should be compared to the public Inquiry into the disastrous fire at the Grenfell tower block in West Kensington which occurred on June 17 2017 and in which 72 people died.

The Inquiry took place between August 15, 2017, and February 10, 2025, with a final report issued on September 4 2024. This concluded that every one of the deaths in the 2017 fire was entirely avoidable and that the disaster was a culmination of decades of failure, "systematic dishonesty", and incompetence by central government, local authorities, construction contractors, and manufacturing companies. It issued a large number of recommendations for avoiding such tragedies in the future.

But, incredibly, in spite of these excoriating findings, no individual or company has yet been charged with any offence in relation to the tragedy. Only in late 2026 did police get round to submitting evidence files to the Crown Prosecution Service for them to considering charges - including corporate manslaughter, gross negligence manslaughter, and fraud - against 20 companies and 54 individuals, with the aim that any charges decided on will be imposed before the 10th anniversary of the fire next year!

Meanwhile the burnt tower block was completely demolished in September 2025.

SEEKING ASYLUM IN THE UK

There are no facilities abroad generally for people from abroad to claim asylum in the UK and there is no such thing as an "asylum visa" that allows someone to travel legally to the UK to claim asylum. Hence dangerous attempts by asylum to reach the UK stowing away in lorries or small boats across the Channel

There are exceptions for people from a very few countries. Ukrainians are allowed into the country but only if they are invited to stay with sponsors in England through the H*omes for Ukrainians Sponsorship Scheme*. Hong Kong citizens who hold British National (Overseas) BN(O) status can travel to the UK and live here on a specific BN(O) visa pathway that leads to citizenship. After withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan in August 2021 the UK introduced schemes to resettle in the UK pre-approved vulnerable Afghans and former contractors for UK troops and other UK institutions there. These schemes were closed to new applicants in July 2025. However, on September 28 2026, the Home Secretary announced the reopening of the broader UK Resettlement Scheme for new referrals in which one in four referrals are reserved for Afghan women and girls. The new Afghan scheme also covers vulnerable Palestinians fleeing war and persecution, but only if they have already managed to reach neighbouring countries, which is very difficult for people in Gaza to do.

It should be pointed outthat according to the 1951 Refugee Convention, to which the UK is a signatory, there is no such thing as an "illegal immigrant", as the Convention guarantees the right to apply for asylum in any signatory country, and it explicitly recognises that people fleeing persecution may need to use irregular or unauthorised means to cross borders.

Nevertheless in the UK, hatred of migrants arriving across the Channel in small boats has been so whipped up by politicians and by newspapers and social media that not only do mobs protest violently against such refugees, attack them and the hotels and military camps in which they are housed, but recently have also attacked lifeboat crews that have rescued refugees from such boats in danger of sinking in the Channel. Presumably they are supposed to let them drown.

COMING EVENTS

October

17, Manchester, 10am-5pm: "*Together Alliance* Summit" (Northern) with eminent politicians, trade union and community leaders speaking. At Kings House. Kings Church, Sidney St. Together Alliance is a UK-based civil society coalition formed to counter the rise of the far-right, racism, and social division. Info: contact info@standuptoracism.org.uk

20, Online, 7-8pm: "People, not Nukes." CND Webinair. Speakers include ones from *Friends of the Earth* and *Socialist Health Alliance.* Chair: Sophie Bolt, CND. To register contact information@cnduk.org or 020-7700 2393.

21, Bristol and Shenstone, 11am-1pm: demonstrations outside Elbit Systems arms factories, in Bristol factory at 38, Bolinbroke Way, in Shenstone, Staffs. Outside UAV Engines in Lynn Lane. Org. PSC. Contact: info@palestinecampaign.org; 020 7700 6192.

21, Reading, 7.15-9.15pm: "Gaza Hospital under attack," Eye-witness account by Prof. Nick Maynard, at RISC Global Café, 35-39 London Street. Free. Register at https://eastberkshirepsc.uk/event/24

22-29: "Welfare Not Warfare" tour of *International Movement Against War* with rallies with eminent speakers, at Birmingham (22) 6.30pm at Quaker Mtg. Hse, 40 Bull St; London (23) at 6.30pm on 23rd October at the Brunei Gallery in SOAS university; Bristol (24), 2pm at The Station, Silver St; Brighton(24), 7:00- 8:30 pm at Friends' Meeting House, Ship Street; Liverpool (26) 6:30-8:30 pm, at the Fact Cinema, Wood Street; Glasgow (29) 7-9pm at Adelaide Place Baptist Church, 209 Bath St. Contact Org. Stop the War Coalition. For info on booking, contact: office@stopwar.org.uk; or 020-7561 4830.

24, Menwith Hill, noon-4.30pm: "Kick Out Trump's Spy Station." Meeting noon-2pm at Friends' Meeting House in Harrogate (tea and coffee provided; bring lunch) followed by transport to spy base for everyone at 2.30pm for protest there from 3-4pm, with transport back to Harrogate. Org. Yorkshire CND. Registration essential. Contact: information@cnduk.org or 020-7700 2393.

24, Countrywide: "Don't buy Apartheid." Day of protest at supermarkets calling for boycott of Israeli goods. Contact PSC, 020 7700 6192; info@palestinecampaign.org;, for details of nearest protest venue.

24, London, from 9am:"*Together Alliance* Summit" (Southern). As the One in Manchester on the 21st. At 20, Bedford Way WC1.

November

8, London, noon-1pm: annual "National Alternative Remembrance Ceremony in Tavistock Square. With speeches, a minute's silence and the laying of white poppies in remembrance remembering of all victims of war, military and civilian. Organised by the *Peace Pledge Union.* Contact: mail@ppu.org.uk or 020-7424 9444

8, Bradford, 1-2pm: "Songs of Peace" marking Remembrance Sunday. Singers & poets welcome to perform. At Bradford Cenotaph, Prince's Way. Org. Yorkshire CND. Info: sam@yorkshirecnd.org.uk or 01274-730795.

14, London, 10am-4.30pm: "Workers Organising for Palestine." PSC Trade Union Conference in Central London (Venue TBA) £10-£15. To register contact PSC, info@palestinecampaign.org; 020 7700 6192.

Every Tuesday, 6-7-30pm, Menwith Hill: peaceful witness at the main gate of the surveillance base. Org. *HM Accountability Campaign.* Contact: sswift64@gmail.com

First Tuesday of every month, Brighton, from 10.30-noon. Meeting of Brighton branch of *Women's League for Peace & Freedom* at Jubilee Library. Info: brightonwib@11qp.co.uk

Second weekend of every month, Friday to Sunday: Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp. Meet like-minded women; take part in workshops and talks etc. Info: 07852 293 386

Every Wednesday, 6-7pm: ***Women in Black*** **silent vigil** against militarism and war by Edith Cavell statue in St. Martin's Place, WC2. Wear black. Info: www.london.womeninblack.org

Third Tuesday of each month, 6.30pm, on ZOOM: Planning meetings of London Campaign Against the Arms Trade. Contact: locational@riseup.net

Every Friday, 1-2pm, Brighton: *Women in Black* silent vigil at the War Memorial, Old Strine. Info: Brighton@11qp.co.uk

Every Saturday, Oxford, 2-3pm: *Women in Black* silent vigil for Peace and Justice at the Martyrs Memorial, bottom of St Giles, Oxford. Info: oxfordwib@gmail.com