

NON-VIOLENT RESISTANCE NETWORK NEWSLETTER

Published on behalf of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

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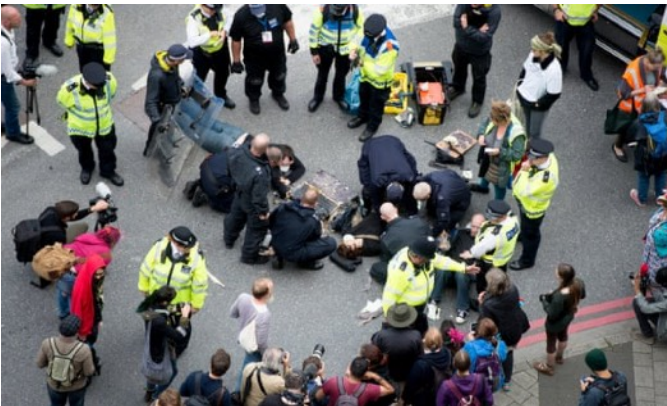
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LAWFUL DISRUPTION

On 25th June 2021, Britain's Supreme Court ruled protesting can be lawful excuse for obstructing the highway.

The case the Court was considering arose from arrests just before the 2017 DSEI arms fair in London during the "No Faith in War" day of action on 5th September. Chris Cole, Henrietta Cullinan, Joanna Frew and Nora Ziegler were arrested after locking-on to each other to blockade lorries from carrying weapons of destruction into the Excel Centre where they were to be displayed for sale during the arms fair.



The 4 being cut free by police on 5/9/17

At Stratford Magistrates' Court in February 2018, in what seemed at the time a maverick judgement, District Judge Angus Hamilton acquitted the four on the grounds that the right to demonstrate includes the right to cause a reasonable amount of disruption in order to draw attention to one's cause. The same judge and a fellow district judge acquitted eight other disrupters of the arms fair on similar charges, Hamilton saying that he had been presented with "clear, credible and largely unchallenged

evidence" that criminal wrongdoing had occurred at past DSEI arms fairs, that it was likely to take place again, and that no real action was being taken against such criminal behaviour. Subsequently the CPS dropped more than a dozen similar cases against protesters at the arms fair. The not guilty verdicts against the four were as expected overturned by the High Court in January 2019, after it heard an appeal by the CPS against the verdict. It was this verdict by the High Court that was in turn overturned by the Supreme Court this June.

The court's reasoning for arriving at this verdict amount to a very strong defence of the right to protest. The court opined that "Intentional action by protesters to disrupt by obstructing others enjoys the guarantee of articles 10 and 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights...there must be an assessment of the facts in each individual case to determine whether the interference with articles 10 and 11 rights was necessary in a democratic society."

The court ruled that the nature of the protest was important, including whether the nature of the protest was "very important" and of "considerable breadth, depth and relevance". The sincerity of the protester's beliefs and their peaceful intentions were also relevant. The importance of the location to the protesters, whether it had a symbolic force" and the need to have "sight and sound" of the object of the protest were also relevant.

It also ruled that failure to notify the police in advance of the protest did not, in itself, disqualify the campaigners from being able to call on a lawful excuse argument.

Adapted from a report by Milan Rai in the August/September edition of *Peace News*

MPs CRITICISE POLICING OF PROTESTS AND POLICE BILL

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Rights and Democracy (APPG) was set up to examine the policing of the Sarah Everard vigil in London and Kill the Bill protests in Bristol, after much criticism of this.

In its report, published July 2nd, it finds that police actions in both cases "caused, or at least exacerbated, some of the violence". The report contends that the police's "failure" to provide "transparency and clarity" about how lockdown rules would be enforced in relation

to peaceful protest constituted a breach of fundamental rights and that both the Met and the Somerset and Avon police had “failed to understand their legal duties in respect of protest.”

The inquiry says the police’s failure to work with Everard vigil organisers had created “conditions for their later enforcement intervention and increased the risk to both officers and civilians” and “may have increased the risk of Covid-19 transmission at the vigil.”

The report notes that Avon and Somerset officers used excessive force against peaceful protesters at the protests against the government’s Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill (“Police Bill”). It judges that the use of “blading” (“use of strikes with the thin edge of square riot shields”) against seated or prone individuals by police officers in Bristol “may amount to criminal offences against the person”, since those seated or prone “did not present any threat to officers”. The inquiry accepts that police “faced real violence,” but says they “failed to distinguish between those protesting peacefully and those engaged in acts of violence.”

The report also says that police were put in difficult situations due to “ambiguity” surrounding the government’s Covid rules.

Labour MP Geraint Davies, who chaired the inquiry, was reported as commenting, “The police must not become the enforcement agency of the state against those who choose to publicly and collectively call for change - political, economic, social or environmental” and that the right to peaceful protest “must be supported not suppressed by the law.”

Police officer Wayne Couzens pleaded guilty to the murder of Sarah Everard on 9th July, having previously pleaded guilty to her kidnapping and rape. Sentencing was postponed until 29th September.

In respect of the Police Bill the report finds that the new powers it gives to police, “unnecessarily expand police powers over peaceful protest, create excessive legal ambiguity, and [is] a recipe for the arbitrary use of power.” It concludes: “We therefore see no option but to recommend the wholesale removal of the clauses in the Bill which give the police or government coercive powers over peaceful protest.”

None of the concerns raised by APPG have been addressed at Committee Stage of this Bill and it has passed through this stage unchanged.

There was certainly violence on both sides at the Bristol protest, with a police van set alight and a police station trashed. 79 people were arrested as a result. On 30th July four of these were sentenced at Bristol Crown Court to imprisonment after having plead guilty previously. Three men were sentenced to between 3 years 3 months and 3 years 11 months for riot in connection with the police station trashing, with two of them found guilty on extra charges of arson and possession of drugs respectively. The fifth, a woman, was sentenced to five months for “urinating on a police officer”. I’ve not seen any reports of police being charged or disciplined for their excess violence at the protest.

After the protest, Bristol’s Mayor, Marvin Rees, had accused “self-indulgent, selfish, self-centred” rioters of handing the Government public backing to crackdown on protest with their actions. David Polden.

PA’S DIRECT ACTION CAMPAIGN CONTINUED

Palestine Action’s (PA) campaign against the Israeli arms manufacturer Elbit continues (see June/July NVRN)

At 6am on Monday 12th July, two PA activists entered Elite KL factory in Tamworth, Staffordshire, a subsidiary of Elbit, smashing windows and property. Two others occupied the roof, spraying blood-red paint. The aim was to prevent production of parts for drones used by Israeli in the surveillance and bombardment of Palestinians. This action came in the wake of a weekend of attacks by Israeli forces on Palestinians, with almost 400 injured in the West Bank town of Beita, some by live ammunition deployed against Palestinians protesting at illegal seizure of Palestinian land.

He went on hunger strike and said he would continue it unless one of four demands, including Israel releasing all Palestinian prisoners or Elbit shutting down all its UK operations, was met. He was released from prison on July 23rd, having completed a 37-day hunger strike.

Meanwhile, a PA activist, named Yogi Bear, perhaps shown in the picture, was remanded in Foston Hall prison on June 17th, following involvement in an occupation of the Arconic factory in Birmingham in a protest at Arconic having supplied the cladding used on Grenfell Tower as well supplying materials used in Israeli military aircraft.



On 5th July, also at 6am, three PA women occupied the premises of Vine Property Management, the property manager of Elbit subsidiary UAV Engines which makes engines for Israeli drones. The women chained the gates shut preventing the factory operating and also occupied its roof and sprayed it with red paint.

There had been at least five PA actions in June. On the 9th, PA activists had sprayed red paint over the façade of the offices of Elbit's landlords in London, LaSalle Investment Management. On the 10th, PA activists scaled and occupied the Runcorn factory of APPH, which manufactures military technology and landing gear for Elbit Systems' drones. On the 14th, the 4th anniversary of the Grenfell Tower fire, the Arconic factory in Birmingham, was occupied. Arconic supplied the cladding used on Grenfell Tower as well as materials used in Israeli military aircraft. On the 16th, the Arconic factory was again occupied - two PA activists were arrested inside before three others climbed on the roof where they stayed for three days, causing much damage, resulting on two further arrests. The occupation was supported by road blockades holding up police vehicles approaching the factory. On 21st June, PA activists occupied the Elbit Ferranti factory in Oldham,

dismantling machinery, including computers, used for the production of military equipment supplied to the Israeli military, throwing parts out of windows and spraying red paint over the floor. Police violently removed the activists in the afternoon, arresting three who were released without charge the following morning. Further information: www.palestineaction.org

At the end of May, PA members occupied the roof of a drone manufacturing factory in Leicester owned by UAV Tactical Systems, a subsidiary of Elbit. The occupation lasted at least six days.

In a remarkable act of solidarity, local firefighters called to the scene refused to remove the protesters from the roof, withdrawing after having "assessed the wellbeing of the PA members on the roof". The Leicester FBU chair, Graham Vaux, issued a statement which said that FBU members had made it clear that "as firefighters, we are, and remain, a proud humanitarian service and our role does not involve law enforcement" and concluded, "The Fire Brigades Union stand in support of Palestinian solidarity and the right to protest."

POLICE STOP SHELL PROTEST AT SCIENCE MUSEUM

On Saturday 19th June, the UK Student Climate Network London group held an intended 24-hour sit-in protest against the Science Museum's accepting sponsorship from oil giant and major polluter, Shell, for its current exhibition "Our Future Planet" on carbon capture and storage. At the entrance to the exhibition, an intended 24-hour live-stream was set up, and speakers including climate campaigners and scientists began delivering talks on climate change and the true impacts of Shell's activities. Meanwhile, inside the museum, "Scientists for XR" talked to the visitors on the same subjects.

The protesters were targeting Shell's sponsorship as "green washing". Shell presents itself as embracing climate solutions, hence its sponsorship of the exhibition, while continuing to pollute through the extraction of oil and gas.

As the museum prepared to close, the group moved to the museum's "Energy Hall" where they unfurled two massive banners reading "Drop Shell Sponsorship" and "Stop Taking Oil Money" from a balcony above, and informed museum security that they planned to stay throughout the night.

The museum called the police and around 8.15pm the protesters were faced with 30 police who threatened to arrest them if they didn't leave voluntarily. The protesters left but returned with supporters on the Sunday.

ETHNIC CLEANSING CONTINUES IN JERUSALEM

As reported in the June/July NVRN, the Israeli municipality of Jerusalem is planning to demolish over 100 Palestinian homes, occupied by 1,550 residents, including over 800 children, from the East Jerusalem area of Silwan to make way for a "municipal park". Other demolitions in Silwan and in the Sheikh Jarrah area of East Jerusalem are also planned

This demolitions for the park began on June 29th, when 40 Israeli bulldozers, police and military forces invaded the area and bulldozed a grocery owned by El Rajabi family, in spite of attempts by Silwan residents to prevent Israeli forces from destroying it. The police used tear gas and made arrests in enforcing the demolition.



The shop after being demolished

The owners of the shop and neighbouring properties had been given till June 28th to demolish the properties "voluntarily" themselves. The grounds given for the demolitions were that they were all built illegally since they fell foul of Israel's "zoning regulations". This in spite of some of the inhabitants having lived in them since before 1967. Palestinians

report it is near-impossible for them to get building permits to live in East Jerusalem; not so for Jewish settlers.

More Port Boycotts: Further to the report “Boycott of Israeli ships in support of Palestine” in the June/July edition of NVRN, such boycotts also took place in Canada and as a result of such action at the port of Prince Rupert, members of the International Longshore Workers Union were suspended by Dubai Ports World, owned by the Dubai government, but the suspension was reportedly rescinded.

G7 CORNWALL REBELLION, 11th-13th June

Extinction Rebellion (XR) reports that 1,000 “rebels” descended on Cornwall in an attempt to influence the G7 countries’ delegations present at the summit to effectively combat climate change.

Day one of the rebellion was all about sounding the alarm. The day started with a dawn wake-up call. Mermaids lay lifeless on the beach as a Viking boat, with G7 leaders sleeping nearby, gave 5 long blasts from its foghorn. This was followed with other theatrical and noisy actions. A march was held through nearby St. Ives with a samba band. Activists from the global south carried letters to G7 leaders, which security staff at the summit venue refused to accept.

The second day was dedicated to exposing greenwashing; how G7 countries and banks talked about green investment while actually investing in fossil fuels and other propellants of climate change. Rebels marched to the G7 summit’s media centre in Falmouth

and demanded the media report more effectively on climate change.

In the evening, “Ocean Rebellion” ships projected slogans onto the vast cruise liner housing the thousands of police deployed for the summit. These highlighted the vast carbon footprint of such vessels, and how fuel subsidies systematically destroy our oceans,.

On day three came the results of the G7 discussion on “climate and nature”. XR reports they were a dismal failure, mainly a repackaging of old pledges. Disappointed activists set up blockades to try and stop the G7 leaders from leaving with dozens locking on and dancing across the main road out, with a van parked across a nearby roundabout. Police used a cherry-picker to remove locked-on rebels from the van’s roof, and cleared the blockades in a couple of hours.

NUCLEAR SAFETY REPORTS HIDDEN FROM PUBLIC

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) released reports from the MoD’s internal watchdog, the Defence Nuclear Safety Regulator (DNSR), during seven years following a challenge in 2010 under Freedom of Information law 2000 (FOI). These reports reported considerable numbers of breaches of safety at nuclear installations. But, presumably to keep information about such breaches from the public in future, in 2017 publication of these reports ceased, with the MoD claiming that the reports had to be kept under wraps to protect “national security”.

Peter Burt of the Nuclear Information Service appealed against this decision to cease publication to the First Tier Tribunal under section 57 of FOI, which allows for such an appeal by an individual or public authority against a notice served under part of the Act.

The appeal was heard in December 2019. The Tribunal dismissed the appeal; endorsing the MoD’s argument for secrecy, arguing that defence matters were exempt from FOI.

In a Kafkaesque twist, this dismissal of Peter’s appeal was itself not published until July this year, so even the decision to keep reports on nuclear safety secret was itself kept secret from the public for some 19 months!

Peter was afterwards reported as commenting that the ruling “allows the Ministry of Defence to get away with concealing the risks posed by its nuclear programme to the public.”

LICENCE TO KILL

Research by the Campaign Against the Arms Trade (CAAT) has discovered that far from having the most ‘rigorous and robust’ arms export controls in the world, as Ministers consistently claim, the majority of UK arms

exports are supplied via secretive “Open Licences” which contain no specific detail on the value of the equipment being licensed.

The government claims that Open Licences are for selling “less sensitive” equipment to “uncontroversial” destinations. However, according to CAAT, such licences have been used to supply aircraft components to Israel, tear gas to states which have used it on protestors and bombs to Saudi Arabia during its war on Yemen.

The government has recorded £6.8bn in UK arms sales to Saudi Arabia since the war in Yemen began - but including arms exported under Open Licences, CAAT estimates that the real value of such exports in that time to be £20.6bn.

CAAT claims that Open Licences make dodgy sales easier to license, and harder to scrutinise.

They also allow the government to get around legal proceedings. In June 2019 the Court of Appeal ordered

the UK government to review its ‘Single Value’ licensing decisions on arms sales to Saudi Arabia for use in Yemen and to halt new arms export licences. However, “Open License” arms deals were allowed to continue. BAE Systems received £2.5 billion a year in revenue from Saudi Arabia in 2019 and 2020, only slightly less than the average for previous years. CAAT comments that “Enough is enough”.

It argues that to hold the UK government and its arms trade accountable, we must have clear, transparent reporting of all arms sales. CAAT says it will be working with allies in Parliament to demand a more transparent system.

Read the full report on CAAT’s website, www.caat.org

RAAB FAILS TO SAVE MUSTAFA AL-DARWISH’S LIFE



Mustafa (pictured) was executed in Saudi Arabia, at the age of 26, on June 15th after having been found guilty on several charges, including meeting with others involved in riots between 2011 and 2012, "participation in armed rebellion," "sowing discord" and plotting to kill local security forces, mostly when he was 16 and 17, technically a child.

The evidence cited in his trial was a picture “offensive to the security forces”, a signed confession and having participated in more than 10 “riot gatherings” when he was 16 and 17. When he was arrested, Mustafa was placed in solitary confinement and beaten so badly that he lost consciousness several times. To make the torture stop, he ‘confessed’. At trial, he told the court that he’d only ‘confessed’ to make that torture stop.

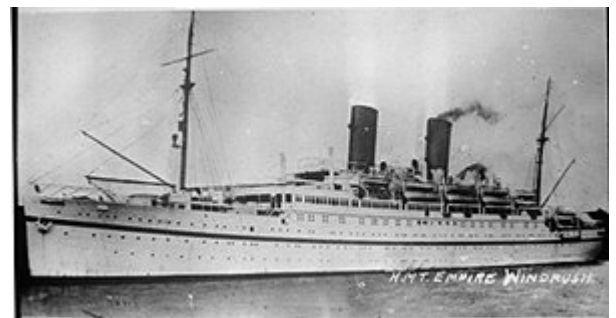
Reprieve had sent a petition to UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab asking him to raise Mustafa’s case with Saudi Arabia’s Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman when he met him on June 7th. When asked in Parliament whether he had raised done so on the 7th, Raab declined to say. Almost certainly he didn’t, as Saudi Arabia, in spite of its terrible human rights record and its continuing bombing of Yemen, is a major purchaser of UK military equipment, including aircraft used in the bombing of Yemen.

Reprieve reports that nine other child defendants facing execution in Saudi Arabia.

WINDRUSH GENERATION STILL WAITING FOR JUSTICE

The Windrush scandal broke in 2018 when it was revealed that many people had been wrongly detained, denied legal rights, threatened with deportation and in at least 83 cases wrongly deported from the UK by the Home Office. Others lost their jobs or homes, had their passports confiscated or were denied benefits or medical care to which they were entitled. A number of long-term UK residents were refused re-entry to the UK. Many of those affected had been born British subjects and had arrived in the UK before 1973, particularly from Caribbean countries.

Their crime? Never having been issued with the “appropriate” paperwork, which had not been required when they arrived as British citizens.



The Empire Windrush

A Windrush compensation scheme was announced in

April 2019. However, a National Audit Office report

released this May found that fewer than 700 claims had been paid since the Windrush compensation scheme was introduced in April 2019, while more than 2,000 further claims were outstanding. Meanwhile some 21 people have died while waiting for compensation. On 16th June, Patrick Vernon delivered a 94,000 strong petition to Downing Street, calling on the Prime Minister to make the application process easier, fund legal assistance

and wellbeing for survivors and to send an apology with every compensation letter. The petition was handed in prior to the fourth annual “Windrush Day” on 22nd June. The date marks the anniversary of the arrival of the Empire Windrush carrying over 1,000 immigrants from the West Indies in 1948.

COMING EVENTS (London except where said. ZOOM meetings not included)

Friday August 6th, noon-1pm: London CND’s annual Hiroshima Day Ceremony by the commemorative Japanese cherry tree in Tavistock Square WC1. Info: info@londoncnd.org; 020-7607 2302

August 6th, Milton Keynes, 7.30pm: Hiroshima Day Lantern Floating Ceremony at Willen Lake. Info: mkpeacepagoda@gmail.com; 01908-663 652.

August 6th-9th: annual international Hiroshima-Nagasaki fast and days fast and days of action. People, fasting or not, are particularly invited to join fasters and supporters from 11 to 11.45am each day in the Embankment Gardens immediately behind the Ministry of Defence in Whitehall, for a get-together with entertainment and speeches, followed by a daily anti-nuclear vigil in Whitehall opposite Downing Street from noon-1pm. (On the 6th, the vigil will be from 2-3pm, to follow the Hiroshima Day Ceremony in Tavistock Square – see previous entry) Info: marcwmorgan@btinternet.com

There will also be fasts and days of events in other place in the UK. These include **Bristol** (contact Row on Rowland.Dye@cooptel.net for details), **Plymouth, Wales and Scotland**. For these contact marcwmorgan@btinternet.com

Monday August 9th: Nagasaki Day Peace Walk. Assemble 7.30pm in the courtyard in front of Westminster Cathedral in Victoria Street to walk to the London Peace Pagoda in Battersea Park for the lighting of Japanese lanterns at dusk in memory of those killed in the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. For details, contact londonpeacepagoda@gmail.com.

August 9th, Lewisham, 1.30-3.30pm: socially-distanced picnic, with music & poetry. In the Archbishop Tutu Peace Gdn, Chinbrook Meadows, Grove Park. Info: annegarrett@yahoo.com; 020-8460 1295.

August 6th-9th, Oxford: events to mark the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Org. by Oxford CND 01865 248357; www.oxfordcnd.org.uk

September 14th, Waddington, noon-3pm: “Say no to US military drones in UK skies. Info: Drone Wars UK 07960 811 437; www.tinyurl.com/peacenews3623

September 14th, 11am: assemble outside Stratford tube/DLR/overground station for protest walk through East London to the Excel Centre protesting against the arms fair. Info: davidtrpolden1@gmail.com

September 14th-17th: Defence and Security Equipment International arms fair (DESI) held in Excel Centre in Docklands in East London. DESI is a major international defence equipment fair which specializes in aerial, land and naval vehicles, arms, drones and other military and security equipment. As usual, demonstrations are being organised to try to stop it both in the week before the arms fair and during it. For information as to what is happening, contact: info@stopthearmsfair.org.uk

September 18th, Lossiemouth, noon-3pm: “Say No to military drone tests in the UK.” Protest demo against US drones being tested over Scotland. Organised by Drone Wars UK. Info: 07960-811 437; www.tinyurl.com/peacenews3624

September 18th-25th, Derby: Peace Week. For details search “Derby Peace Week” on Facebook.

September 25th, Norwich: Peace Camp & Peace Cycle at The Forum. Info: 07828-278 444; www.norwichpeace.org

October 2nd, Croughton: “Keep Space for Peace” rally at USAF Croughton. Info: www.tinyurl.com/t7a2c6ax

October 2nd, Newcastle Upon Tyne: Christian CND AGM and Annual Conference, with Nick Megoran of the Martin Luther King Peace Committee. Info: 020-7700 4200; www.christiancnd.org.uk

October 3rd-6th, Manchester: Protest at the Tory Party Conference, organised by National People’s Assembly Against Racism. Info: www.tinyurl.com/peacenews3630

August 26th-September 3rd, Cardiff-Newbury: “Greenham Women Everywhere” walk on the 40th anniversary of the peace walk from Cardiff that led to the setting up of the Greenham Common Women’s Peace Camp, following the same route. Info:

<https://greenhamwomeneverywhere.co.uk/march-2021/>
Every Wednesday, 6-7pm: Women in Black silent vigil against militarism and war by the Edith Cavell statue in St. Martin’s Place, London WC2. Wear black. Info: <https://www.facebook.com/womeninblack.london>

For other events, see *Network for Peace*.