

NON-VIOLENT RESISTANCE NETWORK NEWSLETTER

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IN CONTEMPT OF COURT!

As reported in the June/July edition of this newsletter, the first five of the so-called “Elbit 25” Palestine Action (PA) activists arrested on Hiroshima Day 2024 on suspicion of aggravated burglary, violent disorder, criminal damage, and one with causing grievous bodily harm, at Israeli company’s Filton arms factory in Bristol in 2024 were tried on these charges on February 14. The jury found them not guilty of aggravated burglary and violent disorder, but failed to reach a verdict on the other charges.

The six were retried on April 14 on the criminal damage and GBH charges and the jury found four of the six guilty of criminal damage and one of causing grievous bodily harm *without*

intent – he’d originally been charged with causing it with intent. This was after the judge had refused to allow the defendants to mention to the jury their motivations for their actions - that of trying to destroy weapons the UK government was allowing to be sent to Israel to be used in Israel’s genocidal war on Gaza - on the grounds that this motivation was “irrelevant”. The problem for the court (and indeed government) was that if the defence were allowed to explain their motivation the jury might consider such evidence all too relevant and acquit the defendants, as had happened previously in similar cases. The jury was also not told that though the defendants were on trial for “criminal damage” the judge had decided to consider whether their actions had a “terrorist connection” (as permitted under the *Sentencing Act 2020*) and no evidence was given in court to prove such a connection.

The judge postponed sentencing to June 12th by which time he’d decided there was a terrorist connection and passed much heavier sentences than he would have imposed if he had found no such connection.

On June 12th, the judge sentenced Charlotte Head (29) and Elie Kamio (30) to 5 years and Fatema Rajwani (21) to 4 years and 8 months for “criminal damage with a terrorist connection” and Sam Corner (23) also for 4 years and 8 months for the same offence plus an added 3-year sentence for inflicting grievous bodily harm to a police sergeant (though the jury had found the harm was unintentional)

Time served on remand before trial (up to 18 months in the case of the four) will count as part of the sentence. However, though the time off for good behaviour for being found guilty of criminal damage would these days be 60% off one’s sentence, it being found to have a terrorist connection meant that their time off for good behaviour would be limited to a third of the sentence.

In the judge’s statement after sentencing he said he’d found the defendants’ actions had a terrorist connection by breaching the *Sentencing Act 2020* by involving serious property damage “designed to influence government or to intimidate a section of the public” to advance a political or ideological cause.



Filton 6: Jordan Devlin, Charlotte Head, Zoe Rogers, Samuel Corner (back row) Leona Kamio & Fatema Zainab Rajwani (back row)

The actions of the Elbit four were of course designed to influence the government and for the purpose of advancing a political or ideological cause, though the defendants had been stopped by the judge from trying to explain and justify these purposes to the jury. The odd thing is that if the defendants had caused the same destruction at Filton just for the hell of it they would have received much lower sentences than the defendants did for doing it for strong political and ideological reasons.

At the end of July PA co-founder Huda Ammori won permission from the UK's Supreme Court to challenge the proscription of PA at a hearing on November 4-5th.. If that appeal fails she may take it to the European Court of Human Rights. Huda herself, as a member of PA, had been charged with being a member of a "proscribed" group under the *Terrorism Act*, a crime with a maximum 14-year sentence.

In previous trials of PA activists, when the defendants have tried to explain to the jury their motives for their actions in spite of the judge ruling against them doing so, the judge has sent them to prison for "contempt of court." But surely it was the judges in making such rulings who were in contempt of court in preventing defendants putting forward their defences, or in the above case informing the jury that the defendants were being tried for aggravated trespass *with a terrorist connection*.

The situation reached absurdity at the February 4th trial of the Elbit 6, when Judge J. Johnson charged a defence counsel Rajiv Menon KC for having the temerity to mention the common law principle that juries can reach verdicts on grounds of conscience in his closing speech on behalf of Charlotte, when the judge had forbidden counsels in the case from doing so. Thus Rajiv was charged with being in contempt of court for making a true statement! Rajiv has appealed twice against the charge of contempt and the trial date has been postponed till after the hearing of the second appeal, Maximum sentence for contempt of court is two years.

In a similar case involving PA activists, also in June, the "Barclays 5" were convicted of criminal damage to Barclay's Bank in Burnley in August 2024 by splashing it with red paint and splintering windows. Again the jury was not allowed to hear a defence from the defendants in terms of motivation being trying to stop Barclay's involvement in arms companies supplying £6bn in weapons and technology to Israel. Only after the jury was dismissed that the judge said he would hear submissions from prosecution and defence as to whether the defendants should be sentenced on the charge of causing criminal damage *with a terrorist connection*. So again the jury was unaware of this possibility when reaching their verdict. Sentencing was postponed to September 4.

So far there are over 4,000 cases outstanding against people for supporting a terrorist organisation by holding posters at a series of demonstrations organised by *Defend Our Juries* (DOJ) reading "I oppose genocide; I support *Palestine Action*." A case management hearing for *all* the cases was called on July 30 which defendants were told *not* to attend, but which was subsequently adjourned to October 26. However it is likely to be adjourned again till after the Supreme Court hearing of the appeal against the proscription of PA is heard in November

In spite of the adjournment, DOJ called a protest demonstration outside Westminster Court on the 30th. A few hundred took part of whom well over 100 people were arrested for supporting PA.

In a small success by the campaign against the Gaza genocide, in July 2026 the group *Led by Donkeys* was awarded £27,000 for the destruction by the Greater London Authority of a 40 foot square banner reading "YES IT'S GENOCIDE" it had laid over Parliament Square in December 2024.

Rajiv Menon KC



ATTACK ON JURY TRIALS CONTINUED

As reported in the previous NVRN, in February this year a Bill, the *Jury Trials and Criminal*

Court Reform Bill 2026, which ends the long-established right of defendants in a large range

of cases to choose to be tried before a jury, was put before parliament and is still going through the House of Commons, having passed by 304 to 203 votes in March at the Second Reading and seen off amendments attempting to overturn the bill at the Committee stage. The Report

Stage and the Third Reading have not yet been scheduled. It is reported that the government is considering compromises on the jury "reform" proposals due to widespread legal and political opposition.

CAN NOBODY STOP THESE WARS?

In July 2025 The UN's top court said that Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories, including Gaza and the West Bank is against international law and should be ended. In September 2025 a UN Commission of Inquiry found that Israel had committed genocide in Gaza. And, under the Genocide Convention all UN members must act to stop genocide. Yet no country has done anything effective to help stop this genocide. Indeed countries such as the US and the UK continue to be complicit in the Gaza genocide by supplying arms to Israel and few countries have adopted economic sanctions against Israel.



Destruction in Iran

The new UK Prime Minister, Andy Burnham, has criticised Labour's response to Israel's attack on Gaza saying he would put more pressure on the Israeli government, including further sanctions on individuals as well as a possible ban on the trade of goods with the illegal settlements, but has made no mention of anything more effective, such as an arms embargo or economic sanctions on Israel as a whole.

In the last NVRN I detailed the deaths and destruction that have continued to mount up in Gaza, Iran and Lebanon since the supposed ceasefire announced between Israel and Hamas in October 2025. In Gaza large losses of life and yet more destruction of property have continued to be caused by air attacks and some 65% of its land area has been occupied by Israeli troops with Netanyahu threatening to eventually occupy all of it. In Iran much loss of life and destruction have been caused by air attacks by both Israel and the US starting in February; and in Lebanon by heavy air attacks by Israel begun in April 2026, followed by invasion and occupation of a large part of it.

The biggest reason for the US and Iran failing to end their war is that Trump and the Iranian government both want to be able to claim victory. There is no doubt Israel has "won" the war in Gaza by causing genocide there and almost total destruction in the territory, but at enormous cost to its international reputation. Israel has not yet won the war against Hezbollah in Lebanon using similar tactics to those in Gaza. However Netanyahu has a personal reason for continuing Israel's wars: while they continue he is, as Prime Minister, immune from facing trial on serious charges of bribery, fraud and breach of trust that have been laid against him. Elections for the Knesset are due to be held on October 27th and it is doubtful whether Netanyahu's party can win enough seats for him to be asked by the Israeli President to again form the government, with Netanyahu becoming increasingly unpopular because of Israeli casualties in his unending war of revenge on Gaza and Israel's wars on Lebanon and Iran.

Trump and his wars in the Middle East are also becoming unpopular in the US as they have led to loss of some US lives and inflation. This without Trump having achieved any of the objectives he claimed at the start of the war: the liberation of Iran's people from their repressive government and the destruction or shutting down of all its nuclear facilities. Trump claimed initially that this was to be achieved in two weeks of war. What has instead been brought about is Iran's current blockade of the Hormuz Straits through which some 20% of the world's oil is normally shipped, increasing the price of food and fuel world-wide. And one main group profiting from the war are oil companies which, *The Guardian* reported on August 5, had by then made \$90bn from profits stemming from the increase in the price of oil.

Even as early as June 3 the US House of Representatives passed, with the support of four Republican representatives, a war powers act to force Trump to seek approval by the US Congress for the continuance of the war on Iran or withdraw US forces. Though the vote was short of the two-thirds majority needed to override a presidential veto it does seem a harbinger of Democrats being likely to take control of the House at the Mid-Term Elections due in November which would help restrict Trump's powers.

All this has not stopped Trump frequently claiming victory in the war on Iran, interspersed with threats of bombing Iran back to the stone age and suchlike, and claims that the US is just about to sign an agreement with Iran to end the war,

The US and Iran's negotiators did agree a 2-week ceasefire on April 8. Iran, Pakistan as negotiator of the ceasefire and Hezbollah claimed the ceasefire also included a ceasefire in the Israel/Lebanon war.

On June 11 the US/Iran ceasefire was extended by another 60 days, "to facilitate...negotiations under the 'Memorandum of Understanding'".

This memorandum involved a great climb-down on Trump's part from his original war aims. Under it the US would agree to lift its blockade of Iranian ports and lift sanctions on Iranian oil exports; undertake, "with regional partners": to develop £225 billion plan for the reconstruction and economic development of Iran and to discuss freeing Iran's frozen funds. In return Iran would arrange for the safe passage of ships through Hormuz within 30 days, and undertake to never procure or develop nuclear weapons. On June 14 Trump even announced that Iran had signed a peace deal on the basis of this memorandum. agreeing a permanent termination of military operations between Iran and the US

However Trump faced humiliation on two fronts when Iran refused to sign such an agreement in spite of its favourable terms. Iran clearly had no intention to end its blockade of the Hormuz Strait. And Israel continued its war on Lebanon, in spite of Iran's and Pakistan's interpretation of the agreement.

And the war has continued to spread with Houthis in Yemen threatening to attack oil tankers using Saudi ports in the Red Sea if the war on Iran doesn't end and the Saudis threatening to attack Houthis if they do.

At the end of July Trump announced that a US-backed deal had been struck in Gaza involving the phased disarmament of Hamas in parallel with Israeli military withdrawal.

Israel gave the lie to this claim as far as it was concerned by bombing Gaza three days later, killing another 18 people. And in the Knesset Netanyahu explicitly rejected the claim,, pouring scorn on "rumours of...Israeli withdrawal on all fronts" and stating, in a direct challenge to Trump, "we know how to stand our ground, even against our best friends." And far from withdrawing from Gaza, Israel has continued to expand its military occupation.

Meanwhile in Gaza formal schooling has not restarted, the health system has been largely destroyed with medical and humanitarian aid very restricted and rebuilding blocked. Trump's "Board of Peace" has given up its big plans to organise the rebuilding of Gaza as a whole and the only building it has contracted to be built there is one to house foreign troops intended to police Gaza after the war there ends.



Destruction in West Bank

IN THE WEST BANK

Since the attack of Hamas in southern Israel on 7/10/23 and the war on Gaza in response, the position of Palestinians in the West Bank has become much worse, with Jewish-only settlement expanding and new ones being set up and with the settlers, often supported by Israeli Defence Force troops, invading and destroying Palestinian houses and other buildings and even entire villages, killing some inhabitants, stealing sheep and destroying Palestinian crops and olive trees.

Indeed, according to figures from the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East since October 2023 over a thousand Palestinians had by then been killed in the West Bank, a third of

whom were children. Until a settler was charged in August this year for killing a community leader in the West Bank in 2025, in three years no such charge against a settler or IDF soldier had been brought.

There is opposition in Israel to the actions of settlers and soldiers in the West Bank. An example is that in June 2026, dozens of what *The Guardian* describes as “from the security, political and cultural elite” signed a “final warning” over violence against Palestinians, threatening legal action against the government for support for “Jewish terrorism” and an “ideology of ethnic cleansing” in the West Bank. There have also been lots of anti-war protests in Tel Aviv.

NO WELCOME FOR MIGRANTS

During his campaign for election for the parliamentary seat of Makerfield in the Lancashire, Andy Burnham was reported as supporting the current UK’s Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood’s draconian attempts to limit legal and “illegal” migration to the UK. (According to the Refugee Convention refugees should not be criminalised by the way they travel here, so there should be no such thing as an illegal immigrant and so they shouldn’t be prosecuted for entering on small boats as more than 1,000 migrants have been.) Any hope that this was to avoid losing the election to the Reform candidate in an area where anti-immigrant sentiment was strong was dashed when as PM he re-appointed Mahmood Home Secretary.

I set out changes Mahmood has introduced to Parliament this year in June/July’s edition of this newsletter. The major ones involve: doubling the time foreigners have to wait to be considered for “Indefinite Leave to Remain” from 5 to 10 years. For those who arrive illegally or who are not allowed to work and so are supported by public funds, the wait can be extended to 30 years; refugees have to have their status reviewed every 30 months and can then be deported to their home countries if these countries are considered “safe”; to be given a “Skilled Worker Visa” to work in the UK from abroad you need a degree and the level of salary of the job you’ve been offered must exceed £41,700 per annum; you must pass an English test: as a student for a Bachelor or Master’s degree you can be granted a student visa only valid for 8 months, for a PhD it is 18 months. Nor can students bring dependents with them. This has led to over 16,000 refugees unable to join their families in this country, according to *Migration Watch*.

However it does seem Burnham is considering introducing legal ways of claiming asylum in the UK – at present such legal routes are only available from a very few countries – and that would of course help lower the number of refugees risking their lives in crossing the Channel in small boats.

Actually net migration into the UK has fallen greatly recently, in spite of public opinion generally believing it is rising. Home Office figures are that net migration has fallen from the record peak of 944,000 in the year to March 2023 to 171,000 in the year ending December 2025.

In July a court has found a part of Mahmood’s that removed the right of potential trafficking victims ordered to be removed from the UK by the “one in, one out” asylum agreement with France, to have cases reconsidered. The case was brought by five asylum seekers earmarked for return to France.

Potential refugees to Britain are also treated badly in France, with encampments being destroyed. The charity *Utopia 56* claims, supported with footage and photographs, that French riot police funded by UK taxpayers, at the end of July, fired tear gas at asylum seekers in an attempt to stop them boarding a boat in which three women were later found dead.

In the US the situation with migrants is even worse with a militarised *Immigrant and Customs Enforcement agency* (ICE) tasked with taking the lead in carrying out the Trump administration’s mass deportation initiative by rounding up “illegal” immigrants and incarcerating them in large warehouses prior to future deportation. So far some 60,000 have been detained. ICE are allowed to use wide discretion as to who they detain and the methods



Refugees trying to board a dinghy on French coast

they use, which have even involved killings. In some US states there has however been strong opposition ICE's activities

COMING EVENTS

August

15, London: "Merchants of Death Tour." Organised by *Campaign Against the Arms Trade*. Assemble at 1.45pm outside Boeing's offices at 25 Victoria Street SW1 for two-hour walk past HQs companies involved in supplying weapons to be used in attacks on Middle East countries including Gaza, stopping for a talk outside each HQ on the involvement of the company in such attacks. Info: <https://tinyurl.com/3whm47za>

15, RAF Fairford: "Stop Bombing Iran." The base in Gloucestershire is used as a base for US bombers taking part in the US's illegal war on Iran. Protest along the perimeter fence begins at 1pm along Welford Road. Org. by CND and others. Fairford doesn't have a train station. Shuttle buses from Fairford to base from corner of Fairford High Street and Park Street at 12:20pm, 12:50pm and 1:20pm Email rachel.earlington@cnduk.org to book seat.

22, Shenstone, Staffs, 1-3pm: PSC demo at Elbit Systems factory, 31 Main Street, Shenstone. Elbit supplies weapons to Israel used in genocidal attacks on Gaza. Contact: info@palestinecampaign.org or 020-7700 6192.

22, Brighton: counter-protest against planned visit by far-right group *White Vanguard*. Assemble 11.30am at Brighton Pier. Org. by Brighton & Hove Stand Up to Racism. Contact: btonhovesutr@gmail.com

31, Carshalton, from 10.30am: Kingston Peace Council Stall with books, plants and bric-a-brac to raise funds for charity at annual local Ecofair Carshalton Park, Ruskin Road Info and offers to help: Maggie margaret@galdor.co.uk

31, Bromley, 2.30pm: Bank Holiday Nuclear Ban campaign stall in Bromley Market Square. Org, by Bromley Borough CND. Contact: anncgarrett@yahoo.com

September

3, Bristol, 7-8pm: Bristol CND meeting. Info or to join: SecretaryBristolCND@gmail.com

27, Finchley, 2-5pm: showing of film "Gentle Angry Women" following three young women as they learn about the history of Greenham Women's Peace Camp which was sited outside the Cruise nuclear missile base from 1981-2000 by which time the missiles had been removed. Followed by Q&A session with film's director

Barbara Santi & CND Vice-President Kate Hudson. Queries: finchleycnd@gmail.com

29, Hastings, 2.30pm: Hastings PSC supporting annual International "Swim with Gaza" event by holding a swim from Marina Beach at around the time of a swimming carnival in Gaza. More information from the [#swimwithgaza website](https://www.swimwithgaza.org). Hastings: [#swimwithgaza 2023](https://www.swimwithgaza.org)

October

4, Online, from 10am: CND AGM and Policy Conference. Info: enquiries@cnduk.org or phone the CND office on 020 7700 2393.

10, London, noon-4pm: "End the Genocide After Three Years": National March for Palestine. Org. by PSC, with support from CND & other groups. information@cnduk.org or phone 020 7700 2393.

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

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

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

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