



# FARINGDON

# PEACE GROUP

**A PEACEFUL NEW YEAR TO ALL**

**JANUARY 2022**

## THE ECO EXHIBITION

First displayed at Faringdon Meeting House, it has been to a couple of venues since. If you know of anywhere it could be displayed again before I dismantle it, please email Jenny on [jennyridd@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jennyridd@yahoo.co.uk)  
It is easily transportable in a medium car boot.

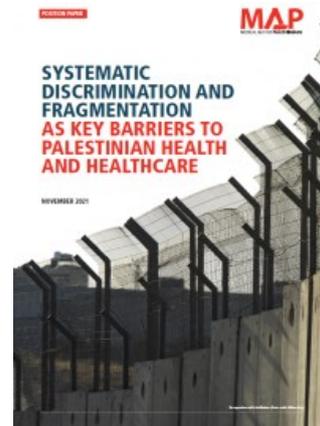
## MONTHLY MEETING IN DECEMBER

David Johnston MP was unable to speak at our monthly meeting in December, as arranged, so we are grateful to Helen Holly for stepping in at the last moment to talk about various aspects of climate change, and her experience of going to Glasgow while COP26 was in progress. The MP has been invited to speak at our February meeting.

## SHARE YOUR NEWS!

Items for the next newsletter to [jennyridd@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jennyridd@yahoo.co.uk)  
by 23th January please

## SYSTEMATIC DISCRIMINATION AND FRAGMENTATION



In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza, Israel has maintained effective control over the lives of Palestinians for more than half a century through occupation, annexation and blockade.

Israel has wielded its control in ways that privilege its own citizens, while geographically segregating Palestinian communities and denying them equitable access to many of the essential building blocks of health.

Meanwhile, Israel's decades-long denial of Palestinian refugees' right to return to their homelands has kept communities in Lebanon in a state of perpetual humanitarian crisis, unable to enjoy their full rights to health and dignity, or contribute to the collective development of essential Palestinian institutions like healthcare.

Our new position paper describes how systematic discrimination and the fragmentation of the Palestinian people by Israel present a fundamental challenge to Palestinians' rights to health and dignity, and inhibit the delivery and development of a Palestinian healthcare system. It exposes how this has resulted in stark health inequalities between Palestinians and Israelis, which have accelerated as a result of recent military offensives and the COVID-19 pandemic.

See [MAP website](http://MAP website) for more details



## RIGHTS GROUPS CONDEMN GOVERNMENT'S 10-YEAR TRADE AND DEFENCE DEAL WITH ISRAEL

RIGHTS groups have condemned Tory ministers for pledging to enter a new 10-year trade and defence deal with Israel, warning the pact will deepen Britain's complicity in apartheid.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss and her Israeli counterpart Yair Lapid signed a memorandum of understanding in London today promising to co-operate on issues such as cybersecurity and preventing Iran developing nuclear weapons.

Following the meeting, the Foreign Office said the ministers discussed forging a "closer alliance on cyber and tech, and will help to ensure that future standards on new technology are shaped by democratic nations." The deal comes despite growing evidence that Israeli spyware has been used to hack the phones of two British lawyers working for Princess Haya, the ex-wife of Dubai ruler Sheikh Mohammed.

The Israeli firm NSO's technology was recently added to the US's trade blacklist, with Washington saying the software had "enabled foreign governments to conduct transnational repression."

Campaign Against the Arms Trade's Katie Fallon said it was extremely worrying that the government was choosing to align itself so closely in cyber security with Israel, given its dubious record.

The evidence that Israeli spyware has been used against journalists, human rights defenders and lawyers in the UK continues to pile up," she said.

"This agreement signals that the government prioritises trade deals to the degree that they

are willing to jeopardise the security of people in the UK who are most at risk of illegal surveillance — totally at odds with their stated foreign policy priority to protect and support human rights defenders."

Campaigners also cited recent reports by international human rights groups accusing Israel of committing the crime of apartheid as reasons why the government should not be deepening ties.

"It is despicable that Britain is choosing to enter into a pact with Israel while its apartheid regime continues to ramp up its repression of the Palestinian people," Palestine Solidarity Campaign director Ben Jamal said.

"At a time where it's more important than ever to heed the call for divestment from Israel, Britain has chosen to further deepen its complicity with the repressive regime."

War on War's senior campaigner for militarism and security Chi-Chi Shi said: "If the UK government observed its duty to uphold human rights and international law, it would end the UK-Israel arms trade.

"Instead, it is actively enabling grave human rights abuses and Israel's occupation and apartheid regime against the Palestinian people."

Announcing the agreement in a joint article in the Telegraph on Monday, Ms Truss and Mr Lapid said the deal amounts to a "a new strategic plan for the next decade spanning cyber, tech, trade and defence."

They added that Israel would also have greater access to the British market and embark on discussions for a new trade deal next year.



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The UK government justifies its support for the arms trade by arguing that it needs to protect jobs. In reality the economic importance of the industry is often overstated, and reallocating these resources could create more and better jobs and contribute to a safer world.

**ARMS TO RENEWABLES**

Shift priorities from Arms to Renewables to create better jobs: jobs in an industry which is growing not declining, and which create a safer, rather than a more dangerous, world.

Read the full reports on both these topics - and a lot of others - on the CAAT website.

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According to the Defence Committee, we're going to need a **BIGGER NAVY**

You may not agree!

Full report available

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5802/cmselect/cmdfence/168/report.html>

**LETTER**

SINCE September, local Conservative politicians have seemed very eager to praise the new military pact known as AUKUS. They are apparently unconcerned that the US and UK will be assisting Australia to acquire new long-range strike capabilities for its air force, navy and army, including the provision of nuclear-powered submarines fuelled by weapons grade uranium. They clearly hope that BAE Systems staff in Barrow will be involved in designing and building the submarines, but appear to have ignored the potential threats to peace and stability inherent in such military escalation. In the UK, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament is calling on the UK government to focus its resources instead on funding our NHS more adequately and on meeting the social care needs of our communities. Indeed, CND wants the government to halt all its dangerous and provocative nuclear adventures.

*Carlisle News & Star 12th Dec 2021*

<https://www.newsandstar.co.uk/news/19777700.spend-money-nhs---not-nuclear-subs/>

**MONGOLIA AND THE BAN TREATY**

MONGOLIA ACCEDED TO the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) on 10th December 2021, becoming the 57th state party to do so.

In a speech to the national parliament in October, the Mongolian foreign minister Battsetseg Batmunkh, said that joining this landmark treaty would "meet the fundamental interests of national security". With Russia located to its north and China to its south, Mongolia is surrounded by nuclear-armed states and has long emphasised the need for greater action on disarmament. In 1992, it formally declared itself a single-state nuclear-weapon-free zone. Posted: 13th Dec. 2021

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**Rich government and big pharma  
pledges make flattering headlines,  
but distract from the real solutions**

The facts paint a dire picture. While we in Britain have given vaccines to everyone who wants one, the whole African continent has only vaccinated 6% of its population.

To cover his own back, Boris Johnson claims the UK is donating vaccines. But the government has given miniscule amounts, with many of those close to expiration. They represent only a tiny fraction of the excess doses the UK has ordered. In fact, the government's lack of concern about global access led them to throw away 600,000 expired doses in August.

While a global pandemic is raging, big pharma companies are propping up their monopolies. **Research shows that Moderna, Pfizer and BioNTech are making \$1,000 profit every second.**

Our demand for a waiver would allow countries to override corporate monopolies and ramp up production of vaccines. **Our movement has support from thousands of people from across the globe including the Pope, dozens of former world leaders, Nobel laureates – and even the US president.**

Global Justice is scaling up efforts and go is demanding large pharmaceutical companies share their vaccine technology and know-how, to maximise global vaccine production and continue to build public pressure on the UK government to support the waiver.

Donations are very welcome! (Global Justice)

## CORPORATE COURTS COULD BLOCK CLIMATE JUSTICE *from Global Justice*

**Fossil fuel companies could demand over \$9 trillion** from governments for passing climate laws, using corporate courts.

And the stronger the actions governments take to tackle the climate crisis, the more they can expect to be sued in these secretive tribunals.

For once, this isn't coming from us. This is actually what energy insiders and specialist lawyers are saying!

We've seen slides from a presentation at an industry conference a few weeks ago where speakers openly and brazenly predicted that ambitious climate policy will drive an increase in corporate court cases - with these astronomical figures.

It is exactly why we need to get rid of corporate courts. Fossil fuel companies are using these secret tribunals to push back against climate action.

### Exit the Energy Charter Treaty

The Energy Charter Treaty is a giant corporate court deal focused on the energy sector, and many of the fossil fuel companies are using it for these cases. Together with groups all across Europe, we are calling for our governments to exit the Energy Charter Treaty. And there is beginning to be some movement - some countries such as France and Spain are listening to the pressure and considering leaving. So far the UK wants to stay put, but if we can ramp up the pressure that could change.

### High Stakes

The amounts at stake are immense. The industry insiders reckon it could be over \$9 trillion - which is more than ten percent of the global economy. That's based on knowing we need to leave fossil fuels in the ground and shift power generation to renewables.

And when you add up the value of those oil and gas fields, coal mines, and obsolete power generation infrastructure, the fossil fuel companies see the dollar signs. The name used for all of these is 'stranded assets', but corporate courts provide a way for them to make profit from them after all.

We've already seen it happen - energy companies RWE and Uniper are both suing the Netherlands because the government is phasing out coal power, and so their coal power stations have become obsolete. And the industry insiders are clear that this is just the start.

It's an outrageous issue and the media picked this up during COP. The threat that corporate courts pose to climate action is increasingly being recognised, and we need to keep up the momentum.

Can you add your name to the petition calling for the UK to exit the Energy Charter Treaty, as well as dropping corporate courts in new trade deals? (via Global Justice website) Please do help build the movement to exit the Energy Charter Treaty and get rid of corporate courts.



**'The Conservatives have really achieved extraordinary things. It takes real commitment to bring 4.6 million children and 1.3 million pensioners into poverty in the 5th largest economy in the world, without even bringing down the deficit. But, thank God, the billionaires are okay.'**

**When do the benefits kick in for leaving the EU? Asking for 17million friends.**

## **Call for international accountability mechanism for Yemen**

CAAT is among a group of over 60 civil society organisations [calling on the UN General Assembly to establish](#) a new international accountability mechanism for Yemen - an independent and impartial body that would investigate and publicly report on the most serious violations and abuses of international law committed in Yemen. This step is urgently needed in light of the failure of the UN Human Rights Council in October to renew the mandate of the Group of Eminent Experts (GEE) on Yemen. (CAAT)

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## **SHARE IN DEFENCE**

Something curious happened this time last year when Serco lost its deal to run the Atomic Weapons Establishment, which manages Britain's nuclear warheads. The outsourcer's shares crashed. But after the news, its rating on several ESG indices - which measure compliance with environmental, social and governance metrics — shot up. The message was clear. While financial investors were worried about the loss of some £17 million a year in underlying trading profits, ESG analysts were delighted that Serco would no longer have anything to do with making the missiles carried on the Royal Navy's four Vanguard-class submarines. ESG investors have shaken up the oil, gas and tobacco industries, and now they're coming for defence. Concerns that weapons manufacturing could become unpalatable for a broadswathe of shareholders are weighing on share prices. In April, analysts at BNP Paribas pointed out that defence valuations had fallen in line with those for tobacco companies since 2018 — even though, unlike with cigarettes, victims of war are unlikely to sue for damages, and sales of planes and tanks aren't going to end.

Times 28th Nov 2021

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/nuclear-weapons-are-the-next-battleground-for-esg-warriors-5dlphlgsc>

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## **GOOD NEWS:**

Stop the War Coalition, which works tirelessly for peace, recently set themselves a target to raise £20,000. They actually raised £23,000! I think that should cheer us all up!

Jennie

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## **A VIGIL FOR BETHLEHEM**

Keeping to the now traditional 'Women In Black Silent Vigil for Peace in Bethlehem', five women (and a dog!) stood near the old Barclays bank on 14<sup>th</sup> December while 3 men handed out leaflets explaining why we were there.

There weren't many people in the Market Place at the time, but the response from passers-by was friendly and we felt it was a very worthwhile occasion; a chance to remind people that there is another way of thinking about Bethlehem these days, very different from the time when Jesus was born.

As Archbishop Desmond Tutu said, "It is unconscionable that Bethlehem should be allowed to die slowly from strangulation."

Bethlehem has only 3 gates to the outside world, all tightly controlled by Israeli occupation forces. Towering walls and militarised fences now encircle Bethlehem, turning the 4,000 year old city into a virtual prison for its Palestinian, Christian and Muslim citizens.

It is an outrage that the government of Israel is supported in this by our government, and the governments of the United States and other western countries.

Jennie. December, 2021

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## **BAE System and Dublin City Council SOCIAL HOUSING**

Following mounting pressure in the wake of an exposé in the Irish Times, Dublin City Council pulled out of a deal to lease six family homes purchased by the pension fund of arms manufacturer BAE Systems. You can read an op-ed by CAAT on BAE System's role in the war in Yemen, and why they should have no role in providing social housing here. (CAAT)

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## **and A BIT MORE GOOD NEWS ...**

New York has signed up for the TPNW..

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*And finally...*

I look around and see so much fear, people getting more and more comfortable with their hate, more at ease being mean, more united in their separation. And I think, NO. Not me. I will not get lost in this fearful world. I will not play with bullies, I will continue to be brave and kind. I will speak for real unity. And no matter what, I will never stop loving.

Scott Stabile

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