

**The Movement for the Abolition of War**  
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We aim to create a world where war is no longer seen as a way to solve a problem; where it has ceased to be an option; where conflict resolution means resolution, but to do this we need you. To join MAW or renew your membership, complete this form or download the membership and standing order forms from our website at <http://www.abolishwar.net/support-us/join-us/> Send the completed form (and cheque if applicable) to: Movement for the Abolition of War, 1 Old Mill Place, Haslemere, GU27 1NE

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**For an electronic version of this newsletter email Gill Hurle at [gill.hurle@abolishwar.org.uk](mailto:gill.hurle@abolishwar.org.uk) The next edition of Abolish War will be published in June.**



**Flying the MAW flag in Canterbury**

"I have been representing MAW at the UN Annual Service in Canterbury Cathedral for several years. A community of familiar faces meet in the Chapter House each year to join the procession. It's like a modern version of Chaucer's Pilgrims - the Gurkhas for Peace, the Mothers' Union, the Soroptimists, Humanists, Quakers, Amnesty International, some unexpected new arrivals/some departures of the old; a wonderful gathering of fellow travellers for a better world. The highlight for me at the last service was the address by the new Chair of the Board of the UNA-UK, Ian Martin. Ian spoke critically of the threats to the UN from 'the usual suspects' of nations and leaders whom he name-checked with the nature of their undermining. I walked twice with Bruce Kent. We carried the large MAW banner which required both of us at either end to hold it; 'a bit like a pantomime horse', we joked. Twice my grandchildren have walked with me. Once I had to hastily improvise a sign when the Post Office failed to deliver the banner in time. This has added to the special, unpredictable quality of the UN Service. But the key thing is that MAW is represented."

**John Hills, MAW member**

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- that Israel has breached international law by its cruel and heartless treatment of the Palestinian people.
  - 3** Give urgent priority to achieving a negotiated settlement to the Russia/ Ukraine war in order to end the loss of life and destruction caused by this dreadful war.
  - 4** State categorically that the US attack on Venezuela is a serious and flagrant breach of international law.
  - 5** Make clear to President Trump that invading, or annexing sovereign states – such as Greenland – is totally unacceptable.
- <https://abolishwar.net/venezuela/>

**Elbit not a contender for £2bn training contract**

It has been reported that the UK government is no longer considering the Israeli arms firm Elbit as a bidder for a £2 billion contract for a 15 year military training programme for the British Army. One of its selling points was its experience in Gaza, which included autonomous weapons systems using Artificial Intelligence and military drones.

This is a significant success achieved by many different strands of protest: The Early Day Motion 1784 of 1 September 2025 signed by 88 MPs, the hunger strikers who have now stopped after 73 days, letters to MPs and the many small and large street protests carried out by peace organisations.

It is encouraging that persistent small weekly actions by MAW and other organisations outside the Department for Business and Trade, the Ministry of Defence, the Foreign Office, No 10, outside Parliament and many similar actions in other parts of the UK, both cycling and on foot, have contributed to this outcome.

Peace movements helped to move public opinion - we and others shamed our defence behemoth into a change of policy.

**Make a date:** Friday, May 15, for the annual International Conscientious Objectors Day event in Tavistock Square London.

Visit [www.ppu.org.uk/](http://www.ppu.org.uk/) for details.



**MAW member Sally Reynolds (centre) and others are pictured in Abingdon celebrating the fifth anniversary of the entry into force of TPNW (Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons).**

**Seeking a path to a more peaceful world**

The Movement for Abolition of War ( MAW ) condemns the recent US attack on Venezuela and the resulting casualties.

The attack was illegal and was a clear breach of international law, particularly Article 2 of the United Nations Charter, which requires all member states to refrain from the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any country. MAW believes that international law has been a casualty of the US attack on Venezuela – as has been the case with the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the Israeli military actions against the Palestinian people.

MAW also notes with concern the situation which is developing in Iran and the lives being lost.

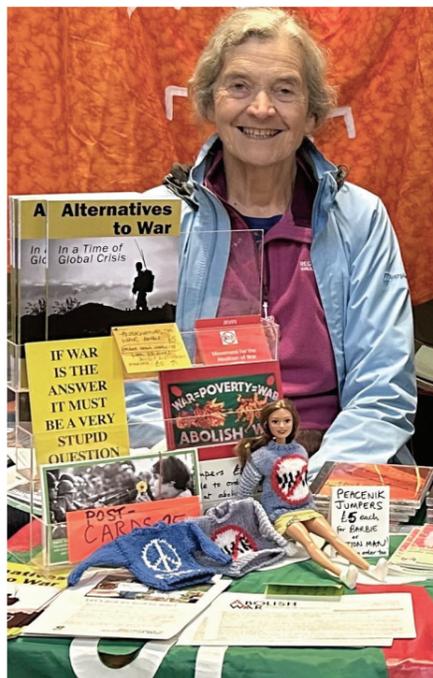
We call for an end to war and political violence being used to resolve tensions and disagreements both between and within countries.

MAW calls for several steps to be taken as a pathway to a more peaceful and stable world.

The UK Government should:

- 1** Move away from its policy of promoting militarism and substantially increasing military spending, focusing instead on strengthening the United Nations, promoting and supporting its aims and ideals and steadfastly upholding international law.
- 2** Halt all arms sales and supplies to Israel and acknowledge that there is now substantial evidence

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**Sally Reynolds**, MAW stalwart, above, at Stroud Peace Fair. MAW can provide materials for a stall at any event within mainland UK. If you are interested email Sally at [maworders@gmail.com](mailto:maworders@gmail.com)

### Things to see and read

Watch the 2025 Alternative Remembrance Ceremony, with actor Mark Rylance's contribution here: <https://youtu.be/qq6DBRDEjIw> - and read about it on the Peace Pledge Union (PPU) website: <https://www.ppu.org.uk/news/white-poppy-ceremonies-held-memory-all-victims-war-amid-soaring-casualties-worldwide>

Read about a moving "virtual cenotaph" projected on the side of Friends House in London by new charity Every Casualty Counts. <https://www.quaker.org.uk/newsand-events/news/powerfulcommemoration-of-every-lifelost-in-war>

## The United Nations General Assembly at 80

**MAW's David Collins reports on the conference which had the theme *From 1946 to Our Future*.**

For over an hour, 100s of people stood patiently chatting with strangers in a double queue which encircled Central Hall, Westminster, in the bright winter sunshine of January 17. At last in semi chaos people, including many in striking national dress, filtered through tight security into the massive hall with its multiple video screens, coaxed towards their seats, via urns of hot drinks, by Jane Kinninmont, UNA-CEO.

There was an intoxicating atmosphere of good humour, friendliness and relief at being in the company of like-minded people yearning for the success of the UN project.

First to speak in person was Annalena Baerbock, President of the UN General Assembly, and then Secretary General of the UN, Antonio Guterres, the latter recalling the first meeting of the UN Association in June 1945, two weeks before the UN Charter opened for signatures, the hall surrounded by blitzed buildings.

The message of the day was: "In the context of international chaos, with great powers routinely breaching international law, climate chaos, the world heading towards no rules and disorder, UN staff threatened, And global cooperation undermined, the answer is to mobilise civil society and fearlessly condemn breaches of the UN Charter."

A stand-out speaker was Sanam Naraghi-Anderlini, a British Iranian author and Founder and Director of the International Civil Society Action Network, whose treatise *Women at the Peace Table: Making a difference, Women Building Peace: what they do, why it matters* aptly describes her international work. To countries in conflict at the UN she says: "You need us because we will talk and we will not shoot and the key is *to do and not to be seen*. In this hall, 50 years ago, no female delegate was present: today the presence of women in peace talks increases the probability of success by 75%."

The full speech by Antonio Guterres can be found on the UN website - [www.un.org](http://www.un.org)

**MAW member Alison Williams** is pictured right with her father's UN staff badge. Alison's father was an early member of the UN Secretariat, present at the first meeting of the UN General Assembly in Central Hall in 1946. It felt very special for Alison to attend the conference and hear the UN Secretary General remind us that, far from being a naive fantasy, the founders of the UN knew from experience that "peace, justice and equality are the most courageous, practical, necessary pursuits of all."



### "We must find a way to bring wars to an end"

**MAW Annual Remembrance Lecture by Lord John Alderdice at Mander Hall, London, 9 November 2025**

Introducing his significant and timely talk *Ending Wars*, Lord Alderdice set the scene, describing the deterioration in global peacefulness as measurable, continuous and deeply worrying. The environmental crisis is making some parts of the world uninhabitable, resulting in population movements that trigger political conflict. "We must find a way to bring wars to an end, before wars bring an end to us".

Previously a consultant psychiatrist at the Centre for Psychotherapy in Belfast and Clinical Professor in Psychiatry at the University of Maryland and a politician crucially involved in the Good Friday Agreement, Alderdice analysed the psychology of conflict based on a lifetime of working on understanding and addressing religious fundamentalism, radicalisation, terrorism and violent political conflict. He recalled a previous effort to prevent a return to war in the 1922 International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation which brought together some of the foremost thinkers of the day, including Marie Curie, Albert Einstein and Sigmund Freud. The latter proposed that the Rule of Law comes about when several weaker individuals come together to confront a more powerful individual. Freud said that this must be maintained as a stable community of interests if it is to provide for a culture of lawfulness, as it can lead to the growth of emotional ties which strengthen the agreement and provide stability.

Alderdice gave us this gem: "My own experience in addressing conflict first hand in Ireland, then in various parts of the world, was that there were three elements always present in situations of intractable political violence. Firstly, one or more communities that felt humiliated and disrespected. Secondly, the perception by such communities that they were treated deeply unfairly. Thirdly, that peaceful democratic processes had failed to resolve the sense of disrespect and unfairness. Only addressing these three issues could remove the danger of political violence and war".

The full transcript of Alderdice's inspiring talk can be read here <https://abolishwar.net/remembrance-lecture-2025/>

**David Collins**, MAW Committee member

### Highlights of the Peace History Conference

In our last issue we carried photos from the Peace History Conference, held in Bradford in September 2025. The conference showcased the rich history of our movement. Here are some of the highlights.

Tim Street, Secretary of British Pugwash, gave us a history of the organisation. Becky Alexis-Martin analysed the "Hiroshima Maidens" (25 Japanese women disfigured by the 1945 atomic bomb who travelled to the US in 1955 for reconstructive surgery) from a feminist angle. Peter van den Dungen introduced us to the peace work of Felix Moscheles and Felix Mendelssohn. Bernie Arauz Canton recounted the history of Costa Rica and the abolition of its army. Pratika Dewi, a PhD student from Leiden University, argued that insufficient attention is paid to the contribution to peace by women of the global south. She cited the Non-Aligned Movement conferences such as Bandung 1955, Colombo 1958, and Cairo 1961. Local presentations featured the Commonweal Collection (Emma Goodway) and the Bradford Peace Trail (Peter Nias).

MAW was represented by a strong contingent, complete with a banner and a literature stall. It was good to be hosted by the University of Bradford and especially to have several post-graduate Peace Studies students participating. Our hearts were uplifted with a performance from the Bradford Women Singers. Thanks to organisers Professors Peter van den Dungen and Dave Webb.

**Colin Archer**