

# Update – August 2021



## Northern Friends Peace Board

NFPB, Victoria Hall, Knowsley Street, Bolton BL1 2AS  
[nfpb@gn.apc.org](mailto:nfpb@gn.apc.org) 01204 382330 <http://nfpb.org.uk>  
Charity SC 024632

## NFPB members' June meeting

In late June NFPB members again **met online**, for their second meeting of the 2021. For this meeting, we made time for discussion in small groups as well as gathering in worship and considering matters together in the whole meeting.

A number of **reports** were received, including those from trustees, giving an update on finances and on work to update our governing document. In the regular news-sharing forum, a Friend reflected that, after the recent **election in Scotland**, there is now a majority of Members of the Scottish Parliament opposed to nuclear weapons. In Yorkshire, regular vigils and Meetings for worship are under way again at the US base at **Menwith Hill**, we heard. We were told of Friends in **Wales** forming a new Peace and Peace Education group, of a range of action in **solidarity** with refugees and on issues including black lives matter, economic justice and climate change, and arms sales to Saudi Arabia.

We reflected together on the situation in **Israel and Palestine**, following the recent escalation of violent tensions and attacks. We heard from Friends who have been active in a number of different ways, from dialogue groups to Palestine solidarity campaigning in the UK, to serving as EAPPI volunteers. Particular concern was expressed about how much British mainstream news media do not report about the situation. We heard of the profound and widespread distress that many Palestinians feel as a result of the ongoing occupation and other policies of the Israeli government. Friends were reminded of the range of nonviolent initiatives that are seeking to build justice and peace, many of which are listed at:

<https://www.betterworld.info/peace/peace-movements-ngos-country/middle-east/israel-palestine/israel-palestine>

## Nuclear Weapons – unwelcome warheads

In April, NFPB joined with others from the wider network of nuclear weapons campaigners in sending a letter to the Prime Minister to express profound concern about the announcement that the UK intends to significantly increase its **stockpile of nuclear warheads**. In July CND announced that it was going to report the UK to the United Nations for breaking international law, citing a legal opinion that the warhead increase goes against the country's obligations under the **Non Proliferation Treaty** to work towards disarmament. They are asking people to support this action – see

<https://cnduk.org/report-the-uk-to-the-un>

Meanwhile, **nuclear weapons convoys** continue to travel up and down motorways, smaller roads and

through both countryside and densely populated urban centres. *NukeWatch* monitors these movements and would welcome further involvement from volunteers to be part of the network – they are particularly looking for people from Manchester and Leeds.

NFPB has produced an **information** sheet about this for Friends, which can be downloaded from: <https://nfpb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2020/10/NucConvoys1.pdf>.



## Peace, climate and change

We have been including a call to act on climate change for many years, as part of our vision of a sustainable approach to building peace and security. We are not alone, and voices from different parts of the peace movement are, rightly, becoming stronger.

The *Rethinking Security* initiative (<https://rethinkingsecurity.org.uk/>), of which we are now a member organisation stated in its submission to the government ahead of its Integrated Security Review that *“In a context of climate and ecological emergency, rebuilding planetary (ecological) security must be an integral part of the UK’s vision and strategy for security.”*

In a briefing paper after the review was published in April, Rethinking Security observed that whilst the review mentioned the environment in its introduction *“the rest of the document is concerned with maximising UK influence and ‘strategic advantage’ within an increasingly competitive state system, as per previous strategies.”*

Early in the pandemic, the government had invited different industries to consider reorienting production to produce ventilators. Change is not always straightforward – and the climate crisis requires a radical shift in spending priorities – but the fact that the government recognised that it could make decisions of that sort in the face of a

## Workshop explores armed forces covenants

During the past few months in a number of towns and cities, armed forces personnel in full camouflage have been visible – mostly involved in promoting or delivering Covid vaccines and testing. This was one of the issues that came up in an online workshop in May that we arranged around the theme of Armed Forces Covenants.

In response to a concern about the signing of a covenant by Lancaster University, the workshop was an opportunity to hear from and discuss with Emma Sangster of *ForcesWatch*, an organisation that

growing crisis is important. NFPB is part of a network of groups advocating for arms conversion and defence diversification to this end.

Leading up to the COP26 climate conference in Glasgow, there are calls for emissions of greenhouse gases arising from the military to be included in negotiations – see <https://ceobs.org/governments-must-commit-to-military-emissions-cuts-at-cop26/>

### New web page on peace and climate

We have added to our website a page with links to resources and groups in the Quaker and peace and social justice movements where the case is being made from different angles for a dramatic change of priorities for the future wellbeing of people and planet. (see: <http://shorturl.at/iH WX3> )



**Quakers in Britain** have a new resource and Quakers and climate justice and other related links and materials via <https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/taking-action-for-climate-justice-2021>

researches and speaks out on arms forces issues from an ethical and rights perspective.

Participants at the workshop found the information and discussion helpful in understanding how the covenants fit into a broader strategy of promoting support for the armed services. An article from *ForcesWatch* brings the issues up-to-date here: <https://www.forceswatch.net/comment/embedding-the-covenant>. We hope to facilitate further events, either online or in person, on the issue of militarism and education over the autumn.

## DSEI Arms Fair – update from Quaker Roots



DSEI, the world's biggest arms fair, is due to take place in person 14-17 September at the Excel Centre, London. Quaker Roots are planning a series of **online briefings** for Friends who might wish to be involved or to support the Quaker witness and action. These will take place on: 27 July, 12 August,

17 August, 24 August and 7 September. There will be two **in-person briefings** at Friends House on 13 September. To find out more, go to: <https://www.quaker-roots.org.uk/events>

## New tech – old story

In the government's most recent 'Integrated Security Review' there was an emphasis on new technology being deployed militarily. One organisation focussing on these developments is **Drone Wars UK**. As well as undertaking vital research and information dissemination, Drone Wars UK are planning two **protest** actions in the NFPB region - at RAF bases at **Waddington** in Lincolnshire on 14 August and **Lossiemouth** in the North of Scotland on 18 September

Details: <https://dronewars.net/2021/07/13/say-no-to-us-drone-tests-in-uk>.



Part of the history of aerial warfare is the focus of a new **online exhibition** from the Peace Museum. **Bombs Away** "is a project that will explore the impact of aerial bombardment against civilians during World War Two and use The Peace Museum's unique collection to examine how peace campaigns formed in response". We were pleased to give permission for some of our historic posters to be incorporated into the exhibition. See: <https://www.bombsawayexhibition.com>



---

## Remembering Hiroshima and Nagasaki, 6-9 August

- events marking the anniversaries of the dropping of atomic bombs on these Japanese cities in 1945 are listed at

- <https://cnduk.org/events/>

- and at

<https://www.banthebomb.org/index.php/get-involved/scnd-events>

---

## Peace Cranes exhibition - Edinburgh

6th to 28th Aug

*Peace Cranes* is a monumental exhibition of 140,000 origami paper cranes of peace and hope by Scottish artist Janis Hart. The installation spans the heritage space of St John's Church and explores the twin existential threats of nuclear weapons and climate change.

<https://www.just-festival.org/eventbrite-event/peace-cranes/>

---

---

**Ecumenical collaboration** – as a member of the **Network of Christian Peace Organisations**, we joined in arranging and hosting a series of webinars during May, looking at aspects of militarism, racism and climate change. **Links to video** input at these can be found at

<http://ncpo.org.uk/ncpo-webinar-may-2021-video>

---

## NFPB Calendar

Our regularly-updated events listing – including Quaker events and those of other groups – can be found at <https://nfpb.org.uk/calendar>. Please get in touch with information we might add to this.

**Contact us**

(and sign up to receive these updates) via

<https://nfpb.org.uk/contact>