



Pax Scotia

Issue 67

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Seeking MSPs who will speak out against nuclear weapons

Lynn Jamieson has been involved in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament since 1980 and is the current elected chairperson of Scottish CND. Her day job is now half-time as a sociologist, a professor in the subject at Edinburgh University, and a co-director of the Centre for Research on Families and Relationships.

The May 2026 Scottish parliament election has particular significance for peace, justice and environmental concerns bound up with nuclear issues, even although the presence of nuclear weapons in Scotland is beyond the powers of the parliament. Because of the significance of this election, Scottish CND has sought to consolidate alliances with campaigning organisations sharing peace, justice and environmental concerns, including Pax Christi Scotland. The resulting consortium is working together to try to find out and publicise the candidates' positions on key questions to help voters make informed choices.

The consortium will hold a 'national hustings' on March 24. Many organisations will also participate in a rally on March 14 at the site of the UK's nuclear weapon system, HMNB Clyde, otherwise known as Faslane.

Since 2016, the majority of MSPs in the Scottish parliament oppose nuclear weapons and advocate for 'renewables' such as wind and solar rather than nuclear power, reflecting the policies of the SNP and Scottish Greens. Obviously, this could change. Many current members of the parliament won't seek re-election. New parties are on the scene. The policies of the Conservatives, Labour, Liberals and Reform UK advocate readiness for nuclear warfighting and nuclear power. Reform UK also question manmade climate change, with leader Nigel Farage calling the scientific consensus on climate change 'a scam'. Meanwhile, lobbying by arms manufacturers, oil and nuclear industries is well financed and relentlessly promotes these interests.

Decisions about energy are devolved to the Scottish parliament, decisions about security and defence are not, but both take on huge significance within the political culture of Scotland.

The vision of an independent Scotland whose nuclear-free ambitions require the rest-of-the-once-UK to remove its nuclear weapons has entered popular fiction, academic discussion and political imagination.

A group masquerading as not-party-political, Britain

Remade, which Bella Caledonia exposes as a Tory Think Tank is using glossy brochures to advocate for nuclear power in Scotland accompanied by fact-free claims about the backwardness and incompetence of the Scottish government's position that are uncritically printed by the much of the press .

For many peace and justice organisations, nuclear weapons are the pinnacle of a neo-colonial mentality that displays utter disregard for species other than humans, ignores humanitarian and international law which prohibits the indiscriminate targeting of civilian populations and diverts resources from address climate change, loss of biodiversity and social injustice. By the UK government's own admission, the nuclear weapons industry needs the support of the nuclear power industry, for research and development, education and training. Commitment to nuclear weapons encourages advocacy for nuclear power despite delivery-times too late to address climate change, and much more expensive, less flexible power with more harm and risks than renewable energy.

Although decisions about security and defence are not devolved to the Scottish parliament, it is very important for Scottish political culture that MSPs, particularly First Ministers, counterbalance the warfighting macho-militaristic tone of Westminster politicians. For example, although revulsion at Israeli bombardment of Gaza was wide spread, Humza Yousaf was one of the first politicians to speak out as Scotland's First Minister. He would have been less able to do so in a political culture that supports nuclear weapons and therefore routinely promises complicity to commit genocide. We hope the Scottish public will continue to hear arguments from politicians as well as civil society suggesting better ways of spending the money than on nuclear weapons, challenging the 'independence' of a nuclear weapon system dependent on US missiles, questioning the need to nuclear-annihilate 'enemies,' and the magical thinking that nuclear weapons keep us safe, or that joining in with threats to end life for all living things is really 'security'. In the 2026 election we hope voters will reaffirm support for a nuclear free Scotland that uses resources for the common good.

Lynn Jamieson

<https://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2025/05/01/who-are-britain-remade/>



Mike Mineter is a member of the St Andrews & Edinburgh RC Archdiocesan Caritas Justice and Peace Commission, and its Israel-Palestine working group. He is a member of the Iona Community. Now retired after a career in computing for environmental research at Edinburgh University he was most recently in Israel and Palestine last November, witnessing the launch of the new Kairos Palestine document. He is writing in a personal capacity.

A Kairos time for Palestinians, Israelis..... and us

The word 'kairos' characterises a time with challenge and potential: a moment of truth, making new demands to create paths to a better future. Alert to the Kairos document of South Africa, written before its apartheid ended, Palestinian Christians published their first Kairos document in 2009 - "a word of faith, hope and love from the heart of Palestinian suffering". It called the global church to act in solidarity. It would have been their only Kairos document had we heeded their call. Instead we ignored Palestinians and in the "West" permitted growth of the perverted religion and politics that sustained occupation, ethnic cleansing and then genocide. No wonder that the second Kairos Palestine document (KP-II) issued in November 2025 called us to repentance as well as to increased solidarity. Were the focus solely on the UK it would also have called for reparation, as Palestinians do here (see links).

KP-II is a meticulous document of 14 pages. It addresses in turn Palestinians, Christians worldwide, and people of good will. A few extracts, to encourage reading the whole, highlight some of their challenges to us, as Christians in the "West":

- "How can one speak of Christian fellowship or communion while denying, supporting, justifying or remaining silent before genocide — especially when such acts are committed in the name of God and Scripture?" [3.4]
- "We call for a global theological movement... that arises from the

contexts and struggles of peoples [who are] suffering from.... the world's empires." [3.6]

- "We challenge the false logic of a "neutral" or "balanced" peace as well as forms of ecclesial diplomacy that do not speak truth to power as a way to evade moral and spiritual responsibility." [3.6]

- "The time has come for the churches of the world to repudiate Zionist theology" [3.7]

- "We call for the creation of an alternative, just and humane world order" [3.9]

- We repeat and emphasise our appeal to the churches of the world - working together with both religious and secular coalitions - to pressure their governments to isolate Israel, hold it accountable, impose sanctions, boycott it, and to ban the export of arms until it complies with international law, ends oppression and tyranny, and adheres to the principles of justice and peace." [3.10]

Being informed without acting as we are able is 'remaining silent'. In accord with [3.10], two obvious actions can be seen in the light of September's report on "Trading with illegal Settlements" signed by 80 organisations including Justice and Peace Scotland. The UN and even the UK have stated the settlements are illegal, so states have legal obligations to ban "trade, including the provision of services and investments, with settlements" and to bar "investing in settlement-based companies and in companies that maintain the illegal occupation." (p48).

Don't we also need to act as individuals to stop both buying from settlements, and profiting from settlements through investments (pensions, ISAs.....), and by our choice of bank? Can we help

also sharing January's UN report on Israel's administration of the West Bank?

Our motivation is to end the suffering of Palestinians: in Gaza, in the West Bank, in prisons in Israel - the thousands of ignored detainees still held by Israel - and refugees world-wide with a UN-affirmed right of return.

We might associate ourselves with the closing paragraph of Kairos Palestine II:

"We declare our commitment to work for the good of this land and of all humanity on the basis of our shared humanity...founded on justice and equality for all God's creation" [4.5]

Mike Mineter

<https://kairopalestine.ps/index.php/resources/publication/kairos-palestine-ii-a-moment-of-truth-faith-in-a-time-of-genocide>

<https://www.britainowespalestine.org/>

<https://oi-files-d8-prod.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2025-09/Trading%20with%20Illegal%20Settlements.%20September%202025.pdf>

<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/israel/20260105-thematic-report-israel-discrimin.pdf>



Semih Sapmaz works for War Resisters' International (WRI), where he coordinates the Right to Refuse to Kill programme. His work focuses on conscientious objection to military service, antimilitarism, and supporting activists resisting war and militarisation worldwide. He engages in international advocacy, solidarity campaigns, and movement-building across borders.



Militarism in an Age of “Security”

Across Europe - and far beyond it - militarisation is becoming normalised in ways that would have seemed unthinkable only a few years ago. Governments frame political debate in the language of national security, geopolitical competition, and conflict preparation. Military expenditure is increasing dramatically. In more and more countries, we witness debates around the introduction or reintroduction of conscription.

This shift is commonly justified by reference to global instability: from the war in Ukraine to tensions in the Indo-Pacific and the state of transatlantic relations. We are going through times where security is increasingly defined in military terms. The dominant message is simple: we will be safe if we are stronger, and we will be stronger if we expand military capacity.

But this framing risks becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy. When states prioritise military preparedness above all else, they fuel a worldview in which conflict appears inevitable and diplomacy secondary. A stronger military and increasing defence spending may be presented as a stabilising measure, but they actually heighten tensions and deepen global arms competition.

In the UK, tens of billions of pounds of public resources are being committed to defence expansion at a time when communities face widening inequality, overstretched public services, and accelerating climate breakdown. This raises urgent questions about what we mean by “security.” If security policy fails to address climate crisis, social cohesion, economic justice, and democratic resilience, it risks neglecting the actual conditions that sustain peace.

As organisations such as Rethinking Security have argued, a comprehensive understanding of security is necessary. Real security cannot be built through military means. It must be grounded in justice, sustainability, and international cooperation.

A clear indicator of this shift is the renewed debate over conscription and “national service.” Across Europe, governments are reintroducing compulsory service or openly preparing for it. Germany has reinstated compulsory registration with the option of broader conscription. France is reintroducing a limited form of military service. Croatia is bringing back mandatory service for young men for the first time in nearly two decades, while Serbia is moving in the same direction.

These developments are presented as practical

responses to geopolitical uncertainty. However, they represent a deliberate policy shift: political leaders increasingly frame war as inevitable and reshape societies around that premise. It means that militarisation is becoming a guiding principle for public policy.

But war is not inevitable. It is the result of political choices, economic interests and power structures. Framing conflict as unavoidable obscures the role of governments in escalating tensions, expanding arms production and prioritising military spending over social investment. When war is treated as destiny, dissent is marginalised, and alternative visions of security are dismissed as naïve.

Considering militarisation happens across borders, as peace movements, we cannot afford to think locally alone. We need to strengthen our international solidarity. Rising military budgets, renewed conscription debates, and expanding defence policies are interconnected trends. We need to learn from one another's resistance, share strategies, and build cross-border alliances.

At the same time, we need to deepen our alliances beyond traditional anti-war circles. Militarisation reinforces, and is reinforced by, climate injustice, racialised border regimes, economic inequality, and shrinking civic space. Building alliances with climate justice groups, migrant solidarity networks, labour movements and anti-racist organisations strengthens our collective ability to challenge the structures that enable war.

Also, we need to be clear in our communication: War is not destiny, it is not inevitable. When governments present permanent mobilisation as common sense, we must insist on democratic accountability, diplomacy and international law. Countering the narrative of ‘inevitability’ requires consistent public engagement — research, campaigning, cultural work, education, and nonviolent action.

Real security will not emerge from permanent mobilisation. It will emerge from societies that prioritise justice over dominance, cooperation over competition, and care over coercion.

Semih Sapmaz

Our website

Blogs, podcasts, book projects, past and future events – these are all on our Pax Christi Scotland website. All newsletters are archived there. You can pay your annual membership fee on the Membership page and make donations. Please explore and share:

<https://www.paxchristiscotland.org>

Continued thanks to webmaster Chris Boles of Caledonian Websites:

<https://www.caledonianwebsites.com/>

Membership Reminder

Please pay in November on the membership page of our website, or, if you pay by online banking, please give your name to identify your payment.

If you wish to pay by cheque, send to the address below, cheques payable to Pax Christi Scotland.

You can also make regular donations on our 'donate' page or by standing order - thank you.

Membership fees per annum are £10 for waged, £5 for unwaged.

Explore the website for all our activities:

<https://www.paxchristiscotland.org>

Where to find Pax Christi Scotland:

<http://www.paxchristiscotland.org>

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They Broke the Planet: We Are Paying the Price

By Mike Mwenda, a mental health activist and environmental rights defender with a strong focus on climate justice. He currently works for a non-profit organisation as a programme officer, supporting community-based initiatives that promote mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of children and young people in Zambia.

In 2023 and 2024, Zambia was ravaged by one of the worst droughts I have ever witnessed in my lifetime. My family, like millions of others, survives through subsistence farming. During that period, we lost everything. In my community, people harvested nothing: complete zero. Fields dried up, rivers disappeared, livestock died, and hunger became a daily reality. It was suffering on a scale I had never seen before. In moments like these, some people begin to wonder whether God is angry with us. I asked myself the same question. But the more I reflected, the clearer it became that this disaster is not divine punishment. Climate change is not an act of God; it is the direct result of human actions, decisions, and negligence.

This then raises a painful but necessary question: how responsible are we as Africans, and as Zambians in particular, for this crisis? The truth is deeply unfair. Africa contributes only about 3 to 4 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions. Zambia's contribution is almost negligible, less than 0.03 percent. In contrast, Europe contributes close to 18 percent, the United States around 15 percent, and Asia over 50 percent of global emissions, largely driven by industrial production and overconsumption.

Yet despite contributing the least, Africa is suffering the most. Many African countries are bearing the harshest impacts: droughts, floods, cyclones, food insecurity, and displacement. This is not coincidence - it is climate injustice. Those who polluted the most are shielded by wealth and infrastructure, while those who polluted the least are left exposed and vulnerable.

So it's heartbreaking and infuriating to read reports that Britain and other European countries are backtracking on their commitments under the Paris Climate Agreement. These are the same countries that promised to lead the fight against climate change, yet they are now quietly abandoning the very agreements they championed. This betrayal comes while African communities are drowning, starving, and burning.

Do they not see the floods tearing through Mozambique, the droughts destroying livelihoods in Zambia and Zimbabwe, the cyclones flattening Madagascar? Or are African lives simply easier to ignore because the suffering happens far away from their comfort?

The fight against climate change has also been weakened by dangerous political leadership. Donald J. Trump denies climate science. He dismissed climate change as a hoax, glorified coal, rolled back environmental protections, and cut funding to United Nations programs meant to address climate change. These actions actively worsened a crisis that is already killing people.

But climate change respects no borders. The same emissions that are destroying African livelihoods will eventually flood European cities, burn American forests, and devastate Asian coastlines.

We can protest. We can write. We can shout until we lose our voices. Still, our concerns are ignored. Africa is told to adapt, while others continue to pollute. We are told to be resilient, while those most responsible refuse accountability. This is no longer ignorance; it is moral failure. I commend Pax Christi Scotland for recognising the links with peace.

Climate change is not about belief, politics, or convenience. It is about justice, responsibility, and survival. Africa did not cause this crisis, yet we are paying the highest price. History will remember who polluted, who looked away, and who suffered most.

Mike Mwenda

