NJPN E-Bulletin 29<sup>th</sup> January 2023

# 'Sustainability? Survival or Shutdown'

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Taken from The Beatitudes in Matthew 5:1-10)

## Dear Friends,

I hope that you have had a good fortnight. The weather has certainly been very seasonal - very cold! Not good if you are being careful about putting the gas/electric on.

The above logo introduces our Conference, which will take place between the 21st - 23rd July, at the Hayes Conference Centre in Swanwick, Derbyshire. Don't forget to save the date! Geoff tells me that Booking Forms will be going out with the postal copies of the newsletter very soon, and it will also then be available on the <u>NJPN website</u>. Keep an eye out for it.

So it has been another dismal week in politics, another scandal, another resignation - and to top it all, Sir Rod Stewart is another celebrity that has come out and spoken against the Government. He reckons that in all his 78 years he has never seen the country in such a state. More on that later.

There were a few worthy items sent for our Action of the Week, but we have gone with this petition from Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT) as it is urgent, with a *deadline of 31st January*. The other items you will find further down this e-bulletin.

I should be sending the next edition out in around two weeks time. In the meantime, keep up the good work and stay warm and safe.

God bless,

Sharon

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#### \*\*\*ACTION OF THE WEEK\*\*\*

## STOP ARMING SAUDI - EMAIL YOUR MP URGING THEM TO TAKE ACTION



**CAAT write:** - On 31st January, CAAT is taking the government back to court! The government will face a judicial review into its decision to

continue to allow arms sales to Saudi Arabia despite overwhelming evidence of serious violations of international humanitarian law in Yemen.

Saudi-led Coalition bombardments of Yemen have killed at least 8,983 civilians, and have contributed to a devastating humanitarian disaster in the country.

Over half of Saudi Arabia's combat aircraft used for the bombing raids are UK-supplied.

UK-made equipment used includes: Typhoon and Tornado aircraft, Paveway bombs and Brimstone and Stormshadow missiles. In total the UK has supplied at least £23 billion worth of arms to the Coalition.

The UK government must be held accountable for their actions.

Despite a previous Court of Appeal ruling in CAAT's favour – which found that the government's licensing decisions on arms to Saudi Arabia were 'irrational and therefore unlawful' – the UK government continues to export arms for use in Yemen.

Email your MP now to demand they take action in Parliament and speak out.

## Thank you!

More on the arms trade: -

CAAT reports through <u>ICN</u> that half of UK arms exports go to human rights abusers.

## **NEWS AND COMMENT**

## 1. Climate/Environment (includes an Action)

## UK aid being wasted on fossil fuel investments

The Catholic Network reported on the meeting that CAFOD's Head of Policy, Graham Gordon, had with the International Select Committee in the House of Commons on the 24th January. In it, Mr Gordon reported that some £700 million of UK aid in 2021 was being used to invest in fossil fuel by the UK government's development finance institution, British International Investment (BII) (what BII calls carbon-related exposure).

'BII also admit that they do not know their current exposure to fossil fuels through indirect investments in funds and financial intermediaries, so the real figure will be higher.

This undermines the government's legal commitments to reach net zero emissions and its "number one foreign international priority to tackle climate change".'

You can read the full article through The Catholic Network.

## Action - Save bees from deadly pesticides

I know we have seen these before, but this time it is a new Environment Secretary, Therese Coffey, and who knows...maybe she will do something about it...

Greenpeace write: - Bees are essential for our survival. They pollinate much of what we eat and play a critical role in sustaining ecosystems around the world. But the last decade has been devastating for insect populations, and bees have been hit hard - with populations shrinking by a third in the UK.

Bee-killing neonicotinoids have been banned across Europe since 2013, but the UK government has just approved these deadly chemicals for emergency use for the third year in a row - posing a lethal threat to bee populations.

Add your name to their petition here.

## Passenger pigeons and polar bears: the ethics of global warming

Sr. Margaret Atkins, OSA has written this very thought-provoking piece on global warming, and how many of us like the idea of doing something about it, and yet seem incapable of doing much about it ourselves. Sr. Margaret looks at three reasons that could be the cause of the inconsistency, which lead to a paralysis when it comes to taking personal action. She then suggests that we look at things in a different way. Well worth at read, and available through <u>Thinking Faith.</u>

Talking of Sr. Margaret, we advertised it in the last e-bulletin, but don't forget the Living Laudato Si': Your Parish, Your Planet - Zoom Weekend. It is for all of those people who missed the first weekend in 2020. Taking place over the weekend of the 17th-20th February, to apply, please email Sr. Margaret: margaret@boarbankhall.org.uk

More details available through ICN.

## **Christian Climate Action protect at GCM AGM**

Ellen Teague, through ICN, reports - Members of Christian Climate Action joined London Mining Network on the 18th January outside the GCM Resources AGM at QEII Conference Centre, Westminster, standing in the cold in solidarity with the indigenous community in Phulbari and urging GCM to abandon the project.

GCM plans to develop an open-pit coal mine which would displace over 50,000 people of 23 different Indigenous groups and destroy a huge area of Bangladesh's most fertile farmlands. CCA members - including Catholic Lawyer Melanie Nazareth - were praying outside while representatives of the London Mining Network were in the AGM itself, asking questions on behalf of the Phulbari community.

To read more about it, and for links to Christian Climate Action and London Mining Network, go to the <u>ICN website</u>.

## Wild Justice: We lost our OFWAT challenge (includes an Action)

Wild Justice, rather disappointingly write: - We're disappointed to have to tell you that we lost our appeal for permission for judicial review of Ofwat's regulation of sewage releases. This is a blow to us and we know it will be to many who supported us financially and/or morally. We've invested a lot of time and effort researching the issue, and over £40,000 of your donations in legal fees taking the case and then taking it on to the Court of Appeal. We gave it our best shot but there is nowhere else to go.

Frankly, we are surprised that we were not given permission to go to a full court hearing. We believed, and still do believe, that we had a strong and arguable case. We would have relished having a day in court to make that case.

We'd much rather win than lose - wouldn't everyone? But we are often told, and often by those against whom we have taken legal action, that despite losing, the very act of taking a legal challenge changes the future behaviour of public bodies. We are now accustomed to being told that things would have happened, bad things, but someone said 'What if Wild Justice got to hear of this? We'd be in court pretty quickly.'. So we guess our view is that if we keep throwing ourselves against the door then we will sometimes break through, and even when we don't then we've rattled the windows as well as the doors and the residents know there is someone outside.

But we wish we could have won this case.

They then go onto say: - We've already started some further investigations in relation to sewage discharges. We'll let you know if anything comes of them. But we'd also like to wish others well in their actions on water quality; small organisations like <u>Windrush Against Sewage Pollution</u> with whom we worked closely, <u>Surfers Against Sewage</u>, <u>River Action</u>, <u>Wild Fish</u> and the incomparable <u>Feargal Sharkey</u>.

Action - The reason that I shared the above is that around the same time, the Liberal Democrats posted details of a campaign on Twitter, to <u>Stop</u> <u>Sewage Dumping</u>. You can add your name through the link.

## 2. Refugees/Migrants (includes Actions and an Event)

## **Missing Child Asylum Seekers**

So the Callous Comment of the Week award has to go to Tory MP Jonathan Gullis when he heckled Labour MP Tulip Siddiq during Prime Minister's Questions on Wednesday. She referred to the missing 200 refugee children who have disappeared from Home Office hotels by saying:- *"Ministers have admitted that they have no idea of the whereabouts of these children. Does he* (the Prime Minister) *still think the UK is a safe haven for vulnerable children?"* Mr Gullis then shouted out: - *"Well they shouldn't have come here illegally".* 

Hang on, let's rewind here just a minute....**Missing refugee** children...around 200 of them...many of whom have been seen being bundled into cars/vans according to various news reports....

For many of us, this was the first that we had heard about refugee children being put into hotels by the Home Office, let alone around 200 vanishing. There are many fears here - being trafficked into the sex industry or forced labour, or even being recruited into criminal gangs. James O'Brien on LBC had an absolute field day according to my other half, as did the many callers that day.

Several articles (and I thank Phil Kerton for his help here) focus on the same story: -

<u>The Guardian</u> focus on the fact that it is *'unclear who has legal responsibility for children placed in hotels.'* 

<u>Universe Catholic Weekly</u> ask 'Where's your compassion.' They quote various prominent Catholics' responses to the news of the missing children.

InfoMigrants report on the answer that Simon, Lord Murray of Blidworth, gave to Paul Scriven (a Liberal Democrat peer) in the House of Lords on Monday. Lord Murray described what happens when a child goes missing, and went onto say that only one of the 200 children is female, 13 are aged under 16, and 88% are Albanian nationals.

Letter to Prime Minister - Children in Hotels : - Please click on the link to read the letter sent from various organisations, including JRS, requesting an urgent enquiry, and an immediate end to the practice of housing refugee children in hotels.

Feel free to send your support too.

#### Update on Migrants from Seeking Sanctuary

<u>ICN</u> have shared the most recent updates from Seeking Sanctuary, including the situation in Calais as well as other places in Europe.

#### Joan's Open Letter to Suella Braverman

83-year old Joan Salter is a Holocaust Survivor, and just over a week ago she went viral! Joan writes: - *I confronted our Home Secretary about the dangerous words she uses to talk about refugees like me – but she refused to apologise.* 

I told her that the words she uses remind me of the words used to dehumanise and murder my family. Yet rather than listen and change course, the Home Office tried to get the <u>video</u> of me taken down.

I saw what happened when people in power convinced their population that Jewish people like me were less than human. I will not allow refugees today to be dehumanised in the same way.

That's why I speak out with organisations like Freedom From Torture and anti-genocide charity Aegis Trust – and if the government thinks I'll quieten down, they can think again.

Stand with Joan and stand with refugees by signing her <u>Open Letter</u> to the Home Secretary.

## 3. Racism (includes an Action)

## Holocaust Memorial Day - 27th January

The Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales report on this year's Holocaust Memorial Day, and the theme of 'Ordinary People'. The theme vision Introduction begins: - *Genocide is facilitated by ordinary people. Ordinary people turn a blind eye, believe propaganda, join murderous regimes. And those who are persecuted, oppressed and murdered in genocide aren't persecuted because of crimes they've committed – they are persecuted simply because they are ordinary people who belong to a particular group (eg, Roma, Jewish community, Tutsi).* 

The introduction then goes onto say: - Our theme this year, though, highlights the ordinary people who let genocide happen, the ordinary people who actively perpetrated genocide, and the ordinary people who were persecuted.

Our theme will also prompt us to consider how ordinary people, such as ourselves, can perhaps play a bigger part than we might imagine in challenging prejudice today.

Read more about the message from the <u>Catholic Bishops</u>, and access the various articles through the links on the web page.

## Action: - Shared by Christians Aware

Barbara Butler of Christians Aware has shared their latest Action Card for February, based on the theme of Ordinary People.

The Card says: - 'Ordinary People,' was the focus for Holocaust Memorial Day on January 27th this year. It was chosen when research revealed that not only were the victims of the Holocaust and other atrocities ordinary, but those who oppressed them were also very often ordinary.

When we realise that evil acts are not necessarily carried out by evil people

we have to ask why.

Soon after the assassination of Martin Luther-King in 1968 Professor Jane Elliott performed an experiment. She asked a class of children to divide themselves into the blue eyed and brown eyed children and went on to tell them that the blue-eyed group was more intelligent and therefore superior. Very soon the blue eyed children were achieving much more than the brown eyed children. Later the experiment was reversed, and the brown eyed children achieved more. In 2001 Jane Elliott carried out the same experiment with young adults and followed it with discussions on discrimination, including racism. She hoped that her work would help to end all forms of discrimination, but she now says that things are worse than they were. She is 86 now, and continues her work.

#### Some possible actions

Share news of the Holocaust Memorial and also of Jane Elliot's experiments to raise awareness that prejudice, racism and oppression may be carried out by ordinary people everywhere.

Find ways to create understanding between different groups of people, so that all forms of oppression are less likely. Perhaps create a cross-cultural group.

## **Racial Justice Sunday - 5th February**

Taking place next weekend, again the Catholic Bishops Conference have details on this year's theme: - "All are included in the mission of Christ and His Church. Let us walk together, pray together and work together"

They have produced a prayer that can be used by either individuals, or by parishes, on Racial Justice Sunday: -

God of our past, present and future, you created each one of us in your image and likeness, help us to recognise you in each person. As we pray for end to suffering caused by racism lead us this day to walk with one another, pray with one another and work together, so that we create a future based on justice and healing, where all can fulfil the hope you have for all peoples. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen Go to the <u>CBCEW website</u> to access the various resources.

## 4. Persecuted Christians

Vatican News have reported that over 360 million Christians worldwide are being persecuted for their faith.

Their source comes from the Open Doors World Watch List 2023, confirming that one in every seven Christians worldwide suffer high levels of persecution and discrimination for their faith.

Although this figure is not up much from the previous year, 2022 was by far worse due to the increasing levels of violence and persecution.

You can read more through Vatican News here.

## 5. St. Josephine Bakhita Day - 8th February 2023

The Feast Day of St. Josephine Bakhita, the Sudanese Nun who was kidnapped as a child and sold into slavery, is celebrated on the 8th February.

On this day we are encouraged to pray for those affected by the crimes of human trafficking and modern day slavery. More information on St. Josephine is available through the <u>Catholic News Agency</u>.

The theme this year is 'Journeying in Dignity' and Talitha Kum invite you to participate in the day by sharing links and resources <u>here.</u>

## 6. Palestine/Israel (includes an Action and an Event)

## WCC deeply concerned about increased violence in the Holy Land

ICN report: - World Council of Churches general secretary Rev Prof Dr Jerry Pillay has expressed deep concern about increased violence in Jerusalem and the West Bank.

A gunman opened fire outside an east Jerusalem settlement synagogue on Friday 27 January, killing seven people, including a 70-year-old woman, and wounding ten others before he was shot and killed by police, officials said.

"There is a particular horror in any such attack which takes place at a place of worship," said Pillay. "I condemn this violence unequivocally, as I do all violence between the peoples and communities of this region which has seen so much bloodshed in the name of religion." Pillay added

"Violence, collective punishments, and communal attacks can only further damage the prospects of peace and justice for all," Pillay added.

Go to the <u>ICN</u> website to read the full article.

## Palestinian child succumbs to wounds from last year's Israeli aggression on Gaza

<u>If Americans Knew</u> have produced this article on a 13 year old Palestinian boy, Nayef al-Oweidat, who died as a result of his injuries from Israeli planes bombing the neighborhood of al-Hasayna, in the refugee camp of al-Nuseirat, central Gaza. The article cites the number of Palestinians, including children, who have died as a result of Israeli attacks in 2022.

## Action: - Stop arming Israel

Palestine Solidarity Campaign write: - On the morning of 26 January 2023, the Israeli military carried out a large-scale military invasion of Jenin in the illegally occupied West Bank. The Israeli military killed at least 9 Palestinians, while injuring dozens more with live ammunition.

The invasion of Jenin is one of the countless raids that characterise Israel's militarised repression against Palestinians, a cornerstone of its apartheid regime. Such raids have increased in frequency since the start of last year as part of an all-out onslaught on Palestinians who are continuing to resist Israel's illegal occupation and apartheid regime. In 2022, at least 150 Palestinians, among them 33 children, were killed by Israel in the occupied West Bank. Just this month, 29 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces.

Write to your MP to ask them to push the UK Government to Stop Arming Israel.

## Events - The Balfour Project are invited you to the following event: -



Please support our work with a donation - **www.tinyurl.com/donatetoBP** Balfour Project is a Scottish Registered Charity (SC 047090) Balfour Project

Book your place at the above event here

## 7. The UK today

## **Survival of the Richest**

As alluded to in the introduction at the start of this e-bulletin, there has been more scandal in the Government. One of our privileged MP's, and a former Chancellor of the Exchequer (for a very short time), Nadhim Zahawi, has had to pay a penalty to HMRC for tax issues. This penalty was around £4.8million reports say.

Many of us on more 'normal' incomes can only dream about that sort of amount, let alone be able to pay it to HMRC. Another example of the Government ministers being totally out of touch with the rest of us.

Oxfam have produced a report entitled 'Survival of the Richest' which highlights how the richest 1% grabbed nearly two-thirds of all new wealth worth \$42 trillion created since 2020. They write: - *Tens of millions more people are facing hunger. Hundreds of millions more face impossible rises in the cost of basic goods or heating their homes.* 

Climate breakdown is crippling economies and seeing droughts, cyclones and floods force people from their homes.

Millions are still reeling from the continuing impact of COVID-19, which has already killed over 20 million people. Poverty has increased for the first time in 25 years. At the same time, these multiple crises all have winners. The very richest have become dramatically richer and corporate profits have hit record highs, driving an explosion of inequality.

You can read the Oxfam report here.

## Benefits worth millions left unclaimed

Premier Christian News report on the fact that Christians Against Poverty set up an online calculator whereby people can check to see if they are entitled to extra benefits. In total over £6million in potential extra annual income has been found that was previously left unclaimed - meaning an extra 2,000 people are likely to see a boost to their household budgets. For more details, as well as access to the online calculator, <u>click here.</u>

## **Reimagining Care Commission**

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York have this week published a report on the future of social care which calls for a rethink on the way we look after the elderly and vulnerable in our society, and just as importantly, how we fund it.

You can read the report, and watch the videos of the launch, through the <u>Church of England website</u>.

## Sir Rod Stewart calls Sky News

This was my favourite article of the week. Sir Rod Stewart took it upon himself to ring into Sky News and comment on the plight of the nurses, and the fact that people are dying due to there being such a long waiting list for scans. He has even offered to pay for up to 20 scans in private hospitals, in the hope that other people will also come forward and do the same.

The news piece is available to listen to through The Guardian.

Just a few months ago he was outside his Essex home, filling in pot holes with 'the boys' as 'no one else could be bothered to do it'. It is always refreshing to see someone putting their money where their mouth is!

## 8. Situation in DR Congo

A senior Catholic Priest in the Democratic Republic of Congo has berated the international community about the 'deafening silence' to the acts of terror that are being committed around the country. Fr. Marcelo Oliveira spoke to <u>Aid to the Church in Need</u> following an attack on a church in Kasindi.

In contrast, there is much excitement in Kinshasa ahead of Pope Francis' visit this week. Pilgrims have been coming across the border from the Central African Republic and Angola, according to <u>ACI Africa.</u>

## 9. Traidcraft closing its doors

I was very sad to receive the email from Transform Trade a week or so ago, giving the news that Traidcraft was going into administration.

We had a Traidcraft stall at the back of church for some years, until people realised you could get very similar Fairtrade items for less cost in the local supermarkets (although interestingly, not so much now). Over the pandemic I shopped in bulk a couple of times through their website- they were one of the very few places that you could get a large order of toilet rolls and kitchen paper, as well as some useful store cupboard staples, without the need to leave home.

More details are available from Charlotte Timson, Transform Trade's CEO, through <u>ICN.</u>

#### **Newsletters/Reports**

#### 10. Refugees at Home January 2023

Read about the work they are doing, and how you can help here.

#### 11. Transform Trade January 2023

A showcase of their work, focusing on the people as well as the goods. Read it <u>here.</u>

#### 12. Boaz News January 2023

Always a good read about the work that they are involved with for refugees. You can find it <u>here.</u>

#### 13. Joint Public Issues Team January 2023

Lots of resources, events and dates for your diary. Available here.

#### 14. The Peace Museum January 2023

A good newsletter that you can sign up for, but it is not available on their <u>website</u>, however all of the articles are.

## **EVENTS** (in chronological order where applicable)

**15. 1st February - 3.30pm - 5pm - London Mining Network** Toxic Bonds: Fossil Fuels, Funding & Fighting for Our Future

#### **16. 4th February - 10am - 1.30pm - PACT Roadshow, Maidstone** Book here.

#### 17. 16th February - 7.30pm - 9pm - London Mining Network

Global Justice and Climate Solutions - at Cyclehub, 47-49 Wood Street, Kingston upon Thames, KT1 1UJ (We will be joining Kingston Climate Hive to speak on how global justice is a necessary part of how we deal with the climate emergency.) **18. 25th February - 10.45am - 3.30pm - NJPN** Open Networking Day via Zoom

**19. 18th March - 10am - 1.30pm - Poole PACT Roadshow with Caritas** Book here

20. 25th March - 11am - 6pm - Global Justice Now Resisting Monopoly Capitalism

21. 22nd April - Newton Abbott Pact Roadshow with Caritas Book here.

**22. 13th May - NJPN Open Meeting and AGM** Details to follow

23. 24th May - 6pm - 8.30pm - PACT Sir Harold Hood Memorial Lecture, London 'Is there a Christian answer to the problems of the Criminal Justice System?'

**24. 11th June - Tax Justice Sunday** Details to follow

**25. 21st - 23rd July - NJPN Annual Conference** Watch this space!

#### 26. Various dates - Meditatio Centre, London

Our friends at the Meditatio Centre London have a full programme of events (you may remember they held a workshop at the NJPN Conference last year). Check out details <u>here</u>.

## Actions

## 27. Sign up for Church Action on Poverty Sunday

Church Action on Poverty write: - On Sunday19 February 2023, churches across the country will be coming together to give, act and pray for an end to poverty.

No one should have to go without food or be cold in their own home. But there are many people going without their basic needs and making difficult choices to feed their families.

To end poverty, we need to listen to the people poverty affects most. Only then can we really understand how to change lives.

On Church Action on Poverty Sunday, join with other churches across the UK in giving, action and prayer. Celebrate the transformational possibilities of people coming together to reclaim their dignity, agency and power.

Resources and more information available here.

## 28. Stand in solidarity with small-scale farmers

CAFOD writes: - At the heart of the global food crisis is a struggle for control over the world's seeds. For generations, small-scale farmers have freely swapped and shared a wide variety of seeds.

However, the freedom of farmers to choose what seeds they use is under threat as the World Bank supports new laws which push farmers towards using seeds sold by big agribusiness.

This puts control of the world's seeds into the hands of a few giant corporations. If we want a sustainable food system, then we must stand with small farmers across the world as they fight for control over their seeds.

Join us in demanding the World Bank end all policies that restrict farmers' freedoms to choose which seeds they use to grow food.

Add your name to the CAFOD petition here.

## THE LAST WORD

#### 29. WHOSE WILL?

How can anyone choose to go ahead with his or her own will and not consider God's? Very easily. I think it happens all the time.

But comparing the extent of what we can draw on with the unlimited resources that God has, would make any human being pause in humility!

When we ask our Creator for something we should not be surprised when we don't get what we hoped for. He knows what we really need. We should simply trust Our Loving Father to see to things for us.

Knowing that, we should not forget to thank Him and tell Him that we love Him.

"Loving Father, thank You for absolutely everything! "

- Michael Pulham 17 Jan. 2023.

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#### **NEWS LINKS**

## Independent Catholic News

Find Justice and Peace stories at: http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/justice-peace-environment Sign up to receive these regularly.

> Catholic Communications Network Find news stories at <u>www.catholicnews.org.uk</u>

> > Latest Zenit Headlines here

Vatican News homepage: www.vaticannews.va

#### World Council of Churches https://www.oikoumene.org/en/

#### UK Parliament News https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/

Follow us on Twitter: @NJandPNetwork

Follow us on Facebook: National Justice and Peace Network

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#### About these E-BULLETINS

The items above are emails received from around the Network which may be of interest to those involved in working for justice and peace.

The views expressed are not necessarily those of NJPN.

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#### **Urgent Actions:**

We sometimes receive emails that need immediate action and cannot wait for the weekly bulletin. To receive these items email the same address with "**urgent actions**" in the subject

box.

If you appreciate these bulletins, help to keep them coming by donating to NJPN:

Send **cheques** payable to NJPN to: NJPN, 39 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1BX. Make a regular donation by **standing order**: Download standing order/membership forms from <u>http://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/</u> (NJPN is a registered charity no: 1114947 Company no: 5036866)

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