

COMBATING XENOPHOBIC LANGUAGE IN THE MEDIA: FOSTERING INCLUSIVE INTEGRATION OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

Thursday 15 September, 10:00 – 13:00
Conference Room 5
United Nations Headquarters
New York, NY

*For more information about
the UNAOC #SpreadNoHate initiative,
visit www.unaoc.org.*



UNITED NATIONS SUMMIT FOR
REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS
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General Assembly



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High Representative for the
United Nations Alliance
of Civilizations (UNAOC)
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on the Summit on Addressing Large
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UNAOC Side Event

“Combating xenophobic language in the media and fostering inclusive integration of migrants and refugees”

**Co-sponsored by the European Union, the International Organization for Migration
& the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Malta to the United Nations**

Thursday 15 September, 10:00 – 13:00, Conference Room 5, United Nations Headquarters

CONCEPT NOTE

On the occasion of the 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), the United Nations High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) is convening a side event on “Combating xenophobic language in the media and fostering inclusive integration of migrants and refugees.”

Background:

With an increasing number of people and families fleeing poverty, war and persecution, there has been a sharp increase in hate speech against refugees, asylum seekers and migrants by the media worldwide. The dissemination of negative narratives towards migrants and refugees heavily impacts the perception of these populations, and impedes their integration in host societies.

Many refugees and migrants are confined to the margins of the societies in which they live. This situation denies the human potential of refugees and migrants, and results in economic strain and social tensions. All refugees and migrants are entitled to respect, protection and full enjoyment of their human rights, including the right to non-discrimination, regardless of their refugee or migration status.

As stated in the Secretary-General’s report “In safety and dignity: addressing large movements of refugees and migrants¹,” discrimination and marginalization characterize the experience of many refugees and migrants around the world, and must be addressed urgently by the international community. Inclusion of migrants and refugees requires the broad engagement of a wide range of actors, including the media, which play a significant role on the perception and social integration of migrants and refugees.

In this context, UNAOC has developed a niche of expertise on the treatment of migrants and refugees by the media and its impact on their integration in host societies. A recent example is the UNAOC’s #SpreadNoHate initiative, which aims at countering xenophobia, racism and narratives of hatred. The #SpreadNoHate initiative also contributes to changing perceptions towards refugees and migrants by engaging a dialogue on hateful language, especially with the media, and providing positive narratives to reject rhetoric that stigmatizes those populations.

The media has an important role to play in providing positive narratives on migrants and refugees, combating racial discrimination and xenophobia, and promoting inclusion. The 71st Session of UNGA represents a unique opportunity to address the global challenges related to the spread of xenophobia and negative narratives in the media, particularly in the context of the September 19th Summit to Address Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants, and in line with the Secretary-General’s global campaign to counter xenophobia.

The UNAOC side event will serve as a unique platform for Member States, media experts, advocates, activists, policy-makers and other stakeholders to share experiences and good practices to counter and prevent hate speech

¹ http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/70/59

against refugees and migrants, strengthen the collective resolve to combat xenophobia, and build partnerships with different actors that are committed to preventing discrimination and promoting peace, respect and inclusion.

Objectives:

The UNAOC side event will serve as a platform to discuss the different measures that have been taken globally to counter negative narratives against migrants and refugees, as well as their limitations, and to explore ways and means of providing positive narratives and fostering integration and inclusion of migrants and refugees within their host societies. The outcomes and recommendations of the event will contribute to the discussions of the upcoming UNGA Summit to Address Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants, especially roundtables 4 and 5, and to the UN global campaign to counter racism and xenophobia.

Points of Discussion:

1. How can the increase in negative speech incidents, especially against migrant and refugee populations, be explained?
2. What are examples of measures taken globally to curb hate speech and provide positive narratives? What are their limitations?
3. What is the impact of negative narratives on migrant and refugee populations? How can they contribute to countering the negative image portrayed in the media?
4. How can the media avoid disseminating xenophobic language and provide strong positive narratives on migrants and refugees? How can they contribute to fostering social inclusion and promote peace?
5. How can Member States develop and implement communication strategies to combat xenophobia and racial discrimination? How can they balance freedom of expression with the necessity to prevent the spread of xenophobic rhetoric? Where can the line be drawn between censoring hate speech and shutting down political debate?

Outcomes and Visibility:

UNAOC will take advantage of the momentum of its ongoing social media campaign, with the hashtag #SpreadNoHate, which has already reached millions of people online globally. The side event will be covered live on social media, in order to share key messages in real time, and to engage UNAOC global followers on several social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google+, LinkedIn, and Snapchat (100,000+ followers across all platforms). Through this effort, the debate will gain global visibility and reach a maximum number of people, in particular among the youth.

At the conclusion of the event, UNAOC will compile all the information shared during the various presentations and discussions, and produce a report, which will include a set of concrete recommendations. This report will be made available on the UNAOC website (www.unaoc.org). UNAOC will also share the report with its international network of Member States, international organizations, NGOs, media organizations, journalists, academia, including graduate schools of journalism and communications, as well as think-tanks.

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UNAOC
United Nations Alliance of Civilizations



71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly

UNAOC Side Event:

“Combating xenophobic language in the media and fostering inclusive integration of migrants and refugees”

Co-sponsored by the European Union, the International Organization for Migration and the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Malta to the United Nations

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@UNAOC #SpreadNoHate

AGENDA

10:00 – 10:50

High-Level Opening Remarks



H.E. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, United Nations High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC)



H.E. Ambassador Carmelo Inguanez, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Malta to the United Nations



H.E. Ambassador William Lacy Swing, Director General, International Organization for Migration (IOM)



H.E. Ambassador João Vale de Almeida, European Union Ambassador to the United Nations

Keynote Presentation:



H.E. Mrs. Karen AbuZayd, Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Summit on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants



Emcee:

Nihal Saad, Chief of Cabinet and Spokesperson for the United Nations High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC)

10:50 – 11:00

Screening of “Exit Right” by Rupert Holler and Bernhard Wenger (Austria), UNAOC PLURAL+ 2015 winners



PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival is a joint initiative of UNAOC and IOM that invites the world’s youth to submit original and creative videos focusing on the themes of migration, diversity and social inclusion.

11:00 – 12:30

Panel



Moderator:

Arun Venugopal, Reporter and Host of Micropolis, WNYC



Panelists:

Cindy Carcamo, Staff Writer, *Los Angeles Times*



Damien Cave, Deputy National Editor for Digital, *The New York Times*



Rachel Peric, Deputy Director, Welcoming America



Mohamad Bazzi, Associate Professor of Journalism, New York University



Sharon Moshavi, Vice President, New Initiatives, International Center for Journalists

Designated discussants: [5 minutes each]



H.E. Ambassador Alvaro Albacete, Deputy Secretary General for External Relations, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, KAICIID

12:30 – 12:55

Q&A

Participants are invited to ask questions and share short comments with the panel. They may also join the conversation online using #SpreadNoHate

12:55 – 13:00

Closing

For more information about the UNAOC #SpreadNoHate initiative, visit: www.unaoc.org or email: HateSpeech@unaoc.org