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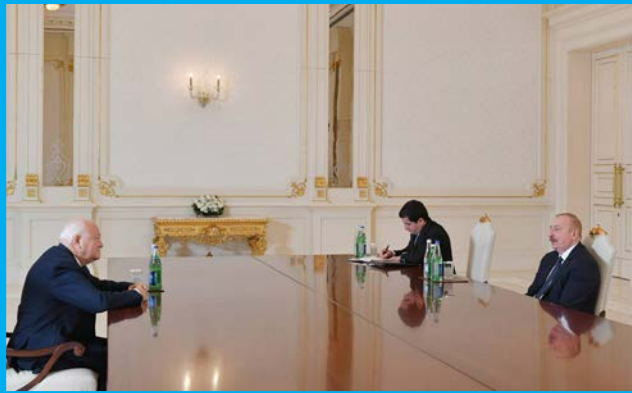
H.E. Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for UNAOC, participated in the **XI Global Baku Forum in Baku, Azerbaijan** that explored the theme, **“Fixing the Fractured World”**.

Organized by the **Nizami Ganjavi International Center**, the Forum brought together more than 400 participants, including current and former heads of states and governments, senior UN officials, Nobel Laureates as well as representatives of international organizations and civil society.

Mr. Moratinos addressed the high-level opening ceremony and the closing session of the Forum. In his opening remarks, Mr. Moratinos pointed out that promises of a “new era of hope” considering the technological advancements and increasing interconnectedness at the turn of the millennium have been challenged by “wars, new and old unresolved conflicts, exclusion, discrimination and hate... The truth is that confrontation, bipolarity, mistrust and the fight for hegemony are back on the global scene.”

Addressing these fractures, Mr. Moratinos required a “reinforced multilateralism” that is guided by the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The High Representative further pledged that UNAOC “will continue to lead as a global platform for dialogue... [and] is committed to developing a strategy of engagement and dialogue across diverse actors, cultures and religions and civilizations, inclusive to all”. (14–16 March)

The High Representative Holds Series of Bilateral Meetings in Baku, Azerbaijan



The President of Azerbaijan, **H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev**, received Under-Secretary-General Miguel Ángel Moratinos in Baku, Azerbaijan in advance of the XI Global Baku Forum. They discussed a range of global issues, joint cooperation and advancing peaceful dialogue. (13 March)



On the margins of the XI Global Baku Forum, the High Representative had a meeting with **H.E. Mr. Hakan Fidan**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Türkiye. Mr. Fidan reiterated Türkiye's support to UNAOC. (15 March)



The High Representative was pleased to meet **H.E. Mr. Karimli Adil Gabil Oglu**, Minister of Culture of Azerbaijan, on the margins of the XI Global Baku Forum. They discussed ongoing preparations for the 6th World Forum for Intercultural Dialogue in Baku under the title "Dialogue for Peace & Global Security: Cooperation and Interconnectivity". (16 March)



The Under-Secretary-General was pleased to meet with the President of the United Nations General Assembly, **Mr. Dennis Francis**, on the margins of the XI Global Baku Forum. They exchanged views about advancing dialogue in the context of current global challenges. (15 March)



On the margins of the XI Global Baku Forum, the High Representative met with **His Virtue Sheikh-ul-Islam Allahshukur Pashazadeh**, Chair of the Caucasus Muslims' Board and Co-Chair of the Interreligious Council. They discussed advancing intercultural and interreligious dialogue. (15 March)



The High Representative, USG Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos, expressed his appreciation to the Secretary-General of the Nizami Ganjavi International Center (NGIC), **Mr. Rovshan Muradov**. (15 March)

High-level Advisory Council Meeting on the Sidelines of the XI Global Baku Forum



Photo courtesy of the **Nizami Ganjavi International Center (NGIC)**

On the sidelines of the XI Global Baku Forum, the High Representative convened a working lunch with his High-Level Advisory Council, which is co-chaired by H.E. Mr. Amre Moussa, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt. The High-Level Advisory Council of the High Representative, which includes former heads of states, former ministers, heads of institutions and private sector leaders, exchanged views on current global affairs and UNAOC priorities.

Present at the meeting were (in alphabetical order): **H.E. Mr. Amre Moussa**, (Chair) Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt and Former Secretary-General of the League of Arab States; **H.E. Mr. Ammar Abdelwahed El Khudairy**, Founding Chairman of Amwal Capital Partners; **H.E. Ms. Benita Ferrero-Waldner**, Former Foreign Minister of the Republic of Austria and Former European Commissioner for External Relations; **H.E. Mr. Egemen Bağış**, Ph.D., Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye in the Czechia and Former Minister for European Union Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye; **Dr. Elkhail M. Binebine**, Moroccan Businessman; **H.E. Ms. Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović**, Former President of the Republic of Croatia; **H.E. Ms. María Fernanda Espinosa**, President of the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly and Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic Ecuador; **H.E. Dr. Vaira Vike-Freiberga**, President of Latvia (1999–2007) and Co-Chair of the Nizami Ganjavi International Center (NGIC); and **H.E. Dr. Yehuda Lancry**, Former Ambassador of Israel to France and Former Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations. (16 March)



The UNAOC delegation – led by **USG Moratinos** with **Ms. Mehrangez Rafieva**, Head of the Administration Unit – had a successful series of high-level meetings in Baku.



UNAOC Director addresses First Coordination Meeting on Combating Anti-Muslim Hatred at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg

At the first “**Coordination Meeting on Combating anti-Muslim Hatred**” at the **Council of Europe** in Strasbourg, France, UNAOC Director, **Ms. Nihal Saad**, stressed: “When any form of religious bigotry such as Islamophobia exists in a society, other forms of racism and discrimination will most likely emerge in that society, whether it is a democratic or a totalitarian one.”

Ms. Saad joined special representatives, envoys and ambassadors from Member States and the heads of leading international organizations at the event in the Palais de l’Europe. She pointed out that combating racism and discrimination based on religion, belief, ethnicity, gender or culture “demands action every day”.

Among the cross-cutting programmes and initiatives UNAOC has created for that purpose is a joint initiative launched with the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe and other partners that fosters intercultural and interreligious dialogue through the development of pedagogical tools, she added.

During her trip to Strasbourg, the UNAOC Director had an enriching tour of the **Grand Mosquée de Strasbourg**, the **Synagogue de la Paix** and the **Notre Dame Cathedral** that reflect the spirit of religious and cultural diversity characteristic of the city. (14–15 March)



Photo courtesy of European Union Delegation to the Council of Europe (CoE)



 **Nihal Saad**
@nsaad777

I was privileged to represent @UNAOC in the 1st joint coordination meeting organized by @CoE & @EU_Commission Stemming out #Islamophobia & all forms of religious hatred & discrimination requires global collective efforts @MarionLalisse @MarijaPBuric europa.eu/ljB4dNV

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UNAOC and UNOSAPG Host IATF-MFAC Thematic Discussion on Anti-Blasphemy and Anti-Apostasy Laws

As co-chairs of the **United Nations Interagency Task Force on Religion and Sustainable Development**, UNAOC, together with the United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide (UNOSAPG) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), hosted a **Virtual Thematic Discussion on the Human Rights Impact of Anti-blasphemy and Anti-apostasy Laws**, with a view to moving towards the alternative of protecting individuals and communities against incitement to hatred.

The discussion was opened by Under-Secretaries-General, **Ms. Alice Wairimu Nderitu**, Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, and **Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos**, the High Representative for UNAOC, with **Mr. Ibrahim Salama**, OHCHR Chief of Human Rights Treaties Branch. **Ms. Nihal Saad**, Director for UNAOC, moderated the segment on expert briefings, which featured interventions from **Ms. Nazila Ghanea**, UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, **Mr. Thiago Alves-Pinto**, Director of Studies in Religion and Theology at the Department for Continuing Education at the University of Oxford, and **Mr. Iqtidar Cheema**, Director of the Institute for Leadership and Community Development and Member of the Advisory Committee of the Fez Plan of Action. **Mr. Michael Wiener** of OHCHR also moderated a discussion among IATF-MFAC members. (26 March)



UNAOC Marks International Day to Combat Islamophobia

In a video message to mark the **International Day to Combat Islamophobia**, the High Representative praised the efforts of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to call for action to end Islamophobia. “Manifestations of discrimination, bigotry and violence against Muslims including the desecration of their holy book, mosques and sacred sites are unjustifiable and are utterly rejected,” Mr. Moratinos added. “I stand ready with my office to work closely with [the UN family] to address Islamophobia through mobilizing concerted actions towards a paradigm of mutual respect among diverse cultures and religions,” he concluded. (15 March)



In Geneva, the Senior Representative of the UN-AOC Geneva Office, **Mr. Hakan Kivanç**, attended a meeting, co-organized by the **Permanent Delegation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)** to the United Nations Office and the **United Nations Office in Geneva (UNOG)**, to commemorate the International Day to Combat Islamophobia. The meeting, which was opened by the UN Geneva Director-General, **Ms. Tatiana Valovaya**, explored best practices to combat discrimination and stereotypes based on religion or belief and encouraged all stakeholders within the UN family and beyond to continue opposing religious intolerance.



The Under-Secretary-General participated in a Workshop on the Summit of the Future titled, “**Program on the Fraternal Economy of Integral and Sustainable Development**”, organized in Vatican City by the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network.

Mr. Moratinos joined other distinguished panellists, including **Mr. Earle Courtenay Rattray**, Chef de Cabinet to the United Nations Secretary-General, and **Ms. Maria Fernanda Espinosa**, former President of the United Nations General Assembly, in a discussion titled, “**Towards The Summit of the Future**”.

His Holiness Pope Francis has long been an advocate of strengthening multilateralism to address ecological and social crises. The Workshop was convened in response to his appeal for “one world with a common plan” as well as a call from the Secretary-General of the United Nations for “a new global consensus on what our future should look like, and what we can do today to secure it.” (4–5 March)

High-level Panel Discussion Interfaith Dialogue

The Senior Representative of the UNAOC Geneva Office attended the High-Level Panel Discussion on Interfaith Dialogue organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) during its 148th Assembly. The event, which focused on the theme, “**Parliamentary diplomacy: Building bridges for peace and understanding**”, followed up on discussion started 2023 at the 1st Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue in Marrakesh, Morocco that was supported by UNAOC. (25 March)



The Under-Secretary-General met with **Mr. Martin Chungong**, Secretary-General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. They discussed opportunities for continued collaboration in the context of promoting interreligious dialogue and the Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue held in Marrakech, Morocco in 2023. (8 March)



The High Representative met with the Deputy Director-General of the International Organization for Migration, **Ms. Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano**, at the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Headquarters in Geneva. They discussed their joint initiative, PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival, and explored opportunities for expanding outreach of the programme. (8 March)

Briefing on VI World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue



UNAOC, the Ministry of Culture of Azerbaijan, and the Permanent Mission of Azerbaijan to the United Nations, held a joint briefing on the upcoming **VI World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue (WFID6)**, which is scheduled to take place in Baku, Azerbaijan, from 1–3 May 2024, under the theme **“Dialogue for Peace and Global Security: Cooperation and Interconnectivity”**.

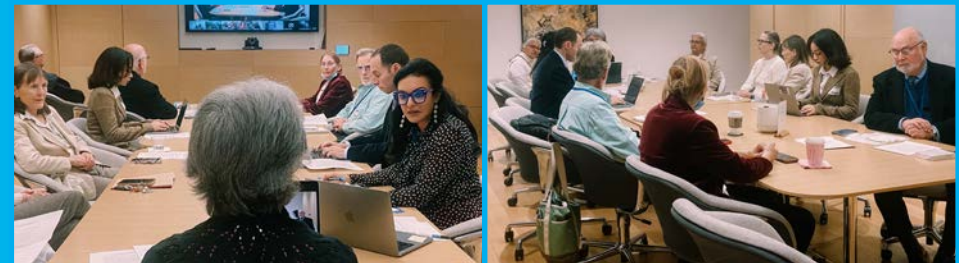
Ms. Nihal Saad, UNAOC Director, moderated the briefing. **H.E. Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos**, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for UNAOC, and **H.E. Mr. Yashar T. Aliyev**, the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the UN, delivered opening remarks. Lastly, **H.E. Mr. Farid Jafarov**, Deputy Minister of Culture of Azerbaijan, presented the details of the Forum, while **Ms. Dana Podmolikova**, UNAOC Programme Management Specialist for Youth, elaborated on UNAOC contributions to WFID6, including the youth-led intergenerational dialogue and the launch of the Young Peacebuilders programme in the region. (12 April)



International Day of Conscience Commemoration



Ms. Nihal Saad, Director of UNAOC, delivered remarks at an event marking the International Day of Conscience at the United Nations headquarters in New York. Entitled **“Harmony in Diversity: Promoting Peaceful Coexistence”**, the event was organized by the Permanent Mission of Bahrain to the United Nations, with the participation of **H.E. Mr. Dennis Francis**, President of the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly. (5 April)



The UNAOC Director participated in a meeting to commemorate the **International Day of Conscience** at the Bahá’í International Center in New York. Organized by the Global Security Institute, the meeting explored the theme **“Building the Culture of Peace with Love and Conscience”** and featured speakers from various spiritual traditions. In her remarks, **Ms. Saad** discussed how UNAOC, as an inclusive platform for dialogue, puts conscience into action and promotes unity. (5 April)

HIGHLIGHTS



At a **United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism Ambassadorial-level Briefing to Member States** at the UN headquarters in New York, UNAOC Director, **Ms. Nihal Saad**, summarized the efforts of UNAOC to advance dialogue between civilizations and foster respect for diversity to prevent violent extremism through a whole-of-society approach.

“The first line of defence against violence and conflict should be an examination of the root causes, promotion of the rule of law and respect for human rights,” emphasized Ms. Saad, adding that UNAOC activities “are grounded in strategies that reflect marginalized and vulnerable communities”. (5 March)



Ms. Nihal Saad, Director of UNAOC, moderated a session entitled “**Multi-Stakeholder and Multi-Faith Partnerships and Initiatives**” at a Multi-Faith High-Level Forum organized jointly by Religions for Peace and the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) in New York.

During the discussion, panellists shared their experiences in faith engagement and opportunities for collaboration, taking into account the multiple and cross-cutting areas of intervention and needs for children, families and communities. The session also considered opportunities for scale and potential resource mapping as well as resource mobilization strategies and partnerships building. (27 March)



Ms. Julie Ann Ladan, Web and Multimedia Communications Specialist for UNAOC, addressed a side event on the margins of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) Forum entitled “**Challenging stereotypes and harmful gender norms in pop culture**” organized by the Red Dot Foundation and Women in Media Newark.

Joining other distinguished media professionals, Ms. Ladan spoke about the need to develop an equitable media landscape and create an ecosystem of support for diversity and inclusion. She highlighted the **PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival**, a joint initiative of UNAOC and IOM, as a global platform to amplify diverse perspectives. (15 March)



UNAOC’s global Call to Action **#forSafeWorship** to safeguard religious sites and worshipers worldwide is in full swing! This new UNAOC communications campaign engages the global community in taking concrete actions to contribute to implementing the UN Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites, developed by UNAOC.

Visit www.forsafeworship.org for a chance to watch inspiring multimedia stories from across the globe, and make sure to submit your own story about your special sacred place!



MEETINGS



At a meeting in New York, the High Representative and **H.E. Amb. Stavros Lambrinidis**, Ambassador of the European Union to the United Nations, discussed avenues of collaboration and issues of mutual interest. (18 March)



The High Representative had a constructive discussion with **Ms. Deborah Lyons**, Canada's Special Envoy on Holocaust remembrance and combating antisemitism. They exchanged views on combating antisemitism. (29 March)



The High Representative received the first Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs, **Mr. Felipe Paullier**, at the UNAOC office in New York. They discussed strengthening collaborations and explored further synergies between UNAOC and the United Nations Youth Office. (19 March)



The Under-Secretary-General received the Director-General for Justice and Consumers of the European Commission, **Ms. Ana Gallego Torres**, at his office in New York. They discussed advancing dialogue, addressing all forms of religious hatred and the Coordination Meeting on Combating anti-Muslim Hatred held in March at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, France. (19 March)



The High Representative, Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos, received **Mr. Robert Singer**, Chair of the Center for Jewish Impact, at the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations office in New York. They exchanged views on combating antisemitism. (2 April)



Mr. Moratinos received a delegation of "**Estudiantes por la Inclusión**", an initiative of the University of Malaga in Spain. The delegation was led by **Ms. Susana Fajardo**, Councillor of Mérida, Spain. Also present were **Mr. Ignacio Calderón**, a Professor at the University of Malaga, and two beneficiaries of the initiative, **Mr. Darío Calderón** and **Ms. Indira Martínez de Ilarduya**. (25 March)

HIGHLIGHTS



The High Representative had an opportunity to welcome **H.E. Mr. Volkan Bozkir**, President of the 75th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, to the UNAOC office in New York. They had a fruitful discussion on planning related to future UNAOC activities. (9 April)



USG Moratinos received a delegation from the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan, led by Deputy Minister **H.E. Mr. Farid Jafarov**, at the UNAOC office in New York. The Azerbaijan delegation discussed preparations for the upcoming VI World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue (WFID6), which is scheduled to take place on 1–3 May 2024 in Baku, Azerbaijan. (11 April)



The High Representative met with **H.E. Mr. Zlatko Lagumdžija**, the Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the United Nations and Board Member of the Nizami Ganjavi International Center (NGIC). They discussed upcoming activities and explored avenues of cooperation. (9 April)

UNAOC co-organized a session entitled “**Engaging Youth in Building Peaceful and Inclusive Societies**” at the ECOSOC Youth Forum, in partnership with UNFPA, MGCY, UNOY, UNDP, UNODC, UNODA and OHCHR. The session underscored the vital role of youth in shaping sustainable solutions and promoting peace and justice amidst the current turbulent global landscape of escalating conflicts, pervasive polarization, and persistent crises.

Two participants of the of UNAOC Young Peacebuilders programme, **Ms. Bahia Ghatti** from Argentina and **Mr. Rolando Pelicot** from Panama, participated as panellists and highlighted their impressive peacebuilding work within their communities. (17 April)





Intercultural Innovation Hub Capacity-Building Workshop

The **Intercultural Innovation Hub (IIH)** hosted its second in-person capacity-building workshop in São Paulo, Brazil, which featured training sessions, reflections with IIH alumni and key stakeholder visits. Participants included representatives of the global grassroots initiatives from Australia, Brazil, Colombia, Germany, Guatemala, Indonesia, Israel, Jordan, and Mexico that are recipients of the current edition. Workshop sessions focused on sustainable funding strategy as well as leadership and culture, among other themes aimed at strengthening the capacities of the recipients and expanding the impact of their projects. Participants visited the Brazilian-based **Mais Diferenças**, a recipient of the current edition of the programme. They also engaged with representatives of IIH alumni organizations **Politize**, **Usina da Imaginação**, and **Vaga Lume**. The IIH is a partnership of UNAOC and the BMW Group, with the support of Accenture, that connects people and cultures, empowers grassroots organizations and elevates intercultural innovation. (17–22 March)



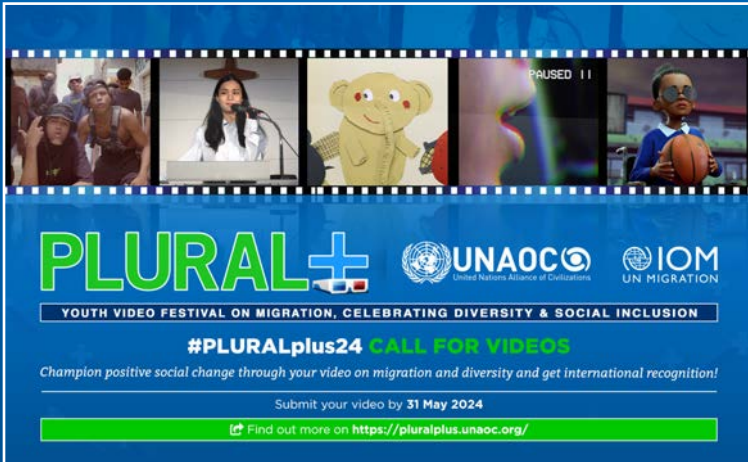
“News Generation Against Hate” Event at the United Nations Office in Geneva


UNAOC hosted a culminating event for its joint initiative with the municipality of La Courneuve, France – **“News Generation Against Hate”** (#LesMediasCestNous) – at the United Nations Office in Geneva. Twenty young participants of the programme presented their projects under the theme **“Promoting Sports as a Tool for Intercultural Dialogue”**.

USG Moratinos delivered opening remarks alongside **H.E. Ms. Tatiana Valovaya**, UNOG Director-General, **H.E. Mr. Jérôme Bonnafont**, Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations Office in Geneva, **Hon. Mr. Alfonso Gómez**, Mayor of Geneva, and **Hon. Mr. Gilles Poux**, La Courneuve Mayor. (17 April)



PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS



PLURAL+  
YOUTH VIDEO FESTIVAL ON MIGRATION, CELEBRATING DIVERSITY & SOCIAL INCLUSION
#PLURALplus24 CALL FOR VIDEOS
Champion positive social change through your video on migration and diversity and get international recognition!
Submit your video by **31 May 2024**
Find out more on <https://pluralplus.unaoc.org/>

UNAOC and IOM are inviting global youth to submit short videos on pressing social issues for the 2024 edition of the **PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival**. This year's festival will continue to illuminate the enduring themes of migration, diversity, and social inclusion, while also spotlighting two special categories focusing on combating xenophobia and fostering inclusive climate action. Now in its 16th edition, PLURAL+ encourages diverse youth to use innovative storytelling techniques and any film genre to challenge stereotypes, promote dialogue, and advocate for social cohesion. Selected films will be showcased at the PLURAL+24 Annual Ceremony, which is scheduled for Autumn 2024 in Lisbon, Portugal, and will be broadcast live through UN Web TV and livestreamed on the PLURAL+ website. The **deadline** to submit videos to the 16th edition of PLURAL+ is **31 May**.

Full details and eligibility criteria are available here: <https://pluralplus.unaoc.org/submit/rules/>

The application period for the **Intercultural Innovation Hub (IIH)** is now closed, with **over 1,000 applications** received from **more than 122 countries**.

An initiative of UNAOC and the BMW Group, with the support of Accenture, IIH will select up to 10 projects for the 2024 cycle. Selected organizations will benefit from funding, mentorship and a comprehensive support programme designed to expand the impact of their projects. Grassroots organizations that promote intercultural dialogue and understanding as well as social inclusion are invited to apply.

Learn more by visiting:
<https://www.interculturalinnovation.org>



INTERCULTURAL INNOVATION HUB 
www.interculturalinnovation.org
@interinnovhub @interinnovhub hub@interculturalinnovation.org
Apply now and join our community of global changemakers!
Deadline Extended: 1 Apr 2024, 5pm EDT (New York time)



 **Young Peacebuilders**   **Youth Solidarity Fund**

Participants of the **Young Peacebuilders** programme and the recipients of the **Youth Solidarity Fund** continue to enhance their capacities through various online sessions aimed at strengthening their peacebuilding skills and competencies. In March, UNAOC partnered with Rondine, an organization committed to reducing armed conflicts around the world, who delivered a two-part sessions that integrated their unique methodology for addressing global conflicts. The interactive session engaged participants in discussions and reflections on conflicts at the personal and/or societal level, offering new approaches to address these challenges.