



During his visit to Paris, **Under-Secretary-General Miguel Ángel Moratinos**, the High Representative for UNAOC and UN Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia, held a series of high-level and constructive meetings with senior French officials, religious leaders and faith actors, and international partners. Discussions focused on strengthening cooperation to combat racism, xenophobia, and identity-based polarization, including Islamophobia and antisemitism – while advancing dialogue, prevention efforts, and multilateral partnerships aimed at building more inclusive and resilient societies. (9–11 February)

Message by the High Representative for UNAOC and UN Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia on the Occasion of the Holy Month of Ramadan

On the occasion of the **Holy Month of Ramadan**, the High Representative for UNAOC and UN Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia, extends his warmest wishes to Muslims around the world.

“Ramadan is a time of reflection, compassion and generosity. It invites us to deepen our sense of shared humanity, strengthen solidarity with those in need, and reaffirm the values of dignity, respect, and living peacefully together,” he highlighted. “I recognize the profound spiritual significance of this month and the important reminder it offers: that empathy, mutual understanding, and care for one another must guide our societies – especially at a time when divisions, prejudice, and hatred continue to affect communities across the globe”.



Scan the QR Code to read the full message: <https://www.unaoc.org/2026/02/message-ramadan2026>

The High Representative Travels to Paris for a Series of Engagements

In Paris, the High Representative held meetings with (in no particular order):



Dr. Khaled El-Enany Ezz,
Director-General of UNESCO



Ms. Anne Hidalgo, Mayor of
Paris



Mr. Chems-eddine Hafiz, Rector
of the Grande Mosquée de Paris



Ms. Anne-Claire Legendre,
MENA Advisor to the President
of the Republic of France, Élysée
Palace



Mr. Bassirou Camara, President
of ADDAM (Association for the
Defense Against Discrimination
and Anti-Muslim Acts)



Judge Guillaume Vieillard, Head of Institutional & Diplomatic Affairs, Ministry of Justice of France, and **Mr. Pascal-Alexandre Roche**, Deputy Head of European & International Affairs, Ministry of Justice of France



Mr. Max-Gonnet, Deputy Head of the Delegation for European & International Affairs, Ministry of Interior of France, and Officials representing the **Central Bureau for Religious Affairs** ('Bureau Central des Cultes') and the **Central Office for Combating Crimes against Humanity and Hate Crimes (OCLCH)**



Photo from 2021 UNAOC archives.

Mr. Yonathan Arfi, President of
CRIF (Representative Council of
French Jewish Institutions)



UNAOC concluded the 3rd edition of “#LesMediasCestNous: News Generation Against Hate”, its joint initiative with the municipality of La Courneuve, France, designed to empower young people to counter hate and misinformation through media literacy.

During the culminating ceremony, **Under-Secretary-General Miguel Ángel Moratinos**, High Representative for UNAOC and UN Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia, and Mr. Gilles Poux, Mayor of La Courneuve, congratulated the young participants for their leadership, creativity, and commitment to building informed, inclusive communities.

Mr. Moratinos left the young leaders with a powerful message: in these turbulent times, two things are essential: resist division, and keep hope alive through action.

Meanwhile, **Mayor Gilles Poux** reaffirmed La Courneuve as a “ville-monde” (a global city), highlighting the vital role of youth, their local engagement, and the importance of ensuring their voices are heard far beyond the city – from La Courneuve to New York and the United Nations.

From local action to global impact, these young leaders are proving that informed voices can make a difference. (10 February)



Identifying Good Practices to Foster Effective Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue for Peace and Solidarity

On the occasion of **World Interfaith Harmony Week** and the **International Day of Human Fraternity**, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) participated in a high-level panel discussion on “**Identifying Good Practices to Foster Effective Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue for Peace and Solidarity: Lessons Learned**” held at United Nations Headquarters in New York. The event was organized by the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations and the University of Essex Human Rights Centre.

Opening the event, **H.E. Mr. Farid Jafarov**, Deputy Minister of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan, reaffirmed the importance of sustained international cooperation to advance dialogue and mutual understanding, underscoring the longstanding partnership between UNAOC and Azerbaijan.

In his keynote remarks, **Under-Secretary-General Miguel Ángel Moratinos**, High Representative for UNAOC and UN Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia, emphasized, “As wars and conflicts continue to rage...human fraternity seems far from reach, while peace and solidarity seem elusive. This is where intercultural and interreligious dialogue becomes essential.”

The panel brought together prominent voices from across the UN system and beyond, including: **Ms. Melissa Fleming**, UN Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications; **Ms. Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda**, UN Assistant Secretary-General and UN Women Deputy Executive Director for Normative Support, UN System Coordination, and Programme Results; **Mr. Eliot Minchenberg**, Director of the Office and UNESCO Representative to the United Nations in New York; **Mr. Ahmed Shaheed**, Professor of International Human Rights Law in the School of Law and Human Rights Centre at the University of Essex; **Mr. Francis Kuria**, Secretary-General of Religions for Peace; as well as representatives of Member States. The discussion was



moderated by **H.E. Amb. Tofiq Musayev**, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the UN.

Throughout the discussion, speakers highlighted practical lessons learned, including the importance of combating hate speech, empowering women and youth, leveraging media and digital platforms responsibly, and strengthening cooperation among faith-based organizations, governments, civil society, and other key stakeholders. (4 February)



The High Representative received a delegation led by the Deputy Minister of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan, **H.E. Mr. Farid Jafarov**, at the UNAOC office in New York. They discussed areas of mutual interest and joint priorities in 2026, including the **7th World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue** under the Baku Process. (3 February)

NGIC Side Event on the Margins of the Munich Security Conference

On the margins of the Munich Security Conference 2026, the High Representative participated in a high-level side event organized by the **Nizami Ganjavi International Center (NGIC)** alongside other eminent leaders and officials to reflect on the future of international cooperation amid deepening geopolitical divides.

The roundtable, titled “Multilateralism in a Fractured Global Order”, was moderated by **H.E. Ms. María Fernanda Espinosa**, President of the 73rd Session of the UN General Assembly and Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Ecuador. The panel also featured **H.E. Mr. Amre Moussa**, former Secretary-General of the Arab League, and **H.E. Mr. George Papandreou**, former Prime Minister of Greece, among other distinguished speakers. (14 February)



HIGHLIGHTS



The High Representative took part in an interactive webinar titled “**The Geopolitics of War and Peace**,” hosted by the **UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN)**. The session, moderated by **Professor Jeffrey Sachs**, President of SDSN, convened leading foreign policy experts to examine the mounting global challenges reshaping the international order. **Mr. Moratinos** joined other featured speakers, including **H.E. Ms. María Fernanda Espinosa**, President of the 73rd Session of the UN General Assembly and Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Ecuador, and **H.E. Mr. Vuk Jeremić**, President of the 67th Session of the UN General Assembly and President of the Center for International Relations and Sustainable Development. (2 February)



Ms. Nihal Saad, UNAOC Director, spoke at the annual retreat of the **Multi-Faith Advisory Council (MFAC) to the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Religion and Sustainable Development (UNIATF)**, which UNAOC co-chairs with the UN Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect (UNOSAPG) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

In her remarks, Ms. Saad underscored UNAOC’s commitment to supporting the UNIATF-MFAC partnership, stating, “Diverse religious actors and faith-based organizations are the backbone of our work on interreligious and intercultural dialogue.” (2 February)



In the framework of the **UNAOC Sport for #OneHumanity campaign**, the **#OneHumanity International Beach Soccer Cup** is set to take place from 8 to 10 May 2026 at Laboma Beach in Accra, Ghana. The event was announced during a press conference in Accra, organized by Beach Soccer Worldwide and in close coordination with the United Nations office in Ghana. Rooted in UNAOC’s mission to foster intercultural dialogue, solidarity, and mutual respect across cultures, faiths, and communities, the tournament will bring together national teams from Ghana, Nigeria, Germany, and Türkiye (TBC) in a celebration of unity through sport. Beyond the competition itself, the initiative positions beach soccer as a platform to promote shared human values, peaceful coexistence, and inclusion at a time of growing global polarization. (6 February)

MEETINGS



Photo courtesy of News Diplomacy (<https://newsdiplomacy.com/>)

As preparations begin for the **2026 International Day to Combat Islamophobia**, Under-Secretary-General Miguel Ángel Moratinos joined discussions with the Permanent Representatives of the **Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Core Group on Islamophobia** and **H.E. Ms. Annalena Baerbock**, President of the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly. (6 February)



H.E. Ms. Yolanda Díaz Pérez, Second Vice President of the Government of Spain, paid a courtesy visit to Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos at the UNAOC Office in New York. Discussions focused on strengthening collaboration in advancing shared priorities. Spain, along with Türkiye, is a co-sponsor of UNAOC. (6 February)



The High Representative met with **H.E. Mr. Abdulaziz Alwasil**, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations. Mr. Moratinos expressed his appreciation to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the successful hosting of the 11th UNAOC Global Forum and reaffirmed his commitment to continuing joint efforts in fostering dialogue and mutual respect. (2 February)



USG Moratinos had a bilateral meeting with **H.E. Mr. Lukman Al-Faily**, Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations. They discussed areas of mutual interest and the upcoming 52nd Session of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM), scheduled to take place in Baghdad in April. (5 February)



The High Representative met with **H.E. Mr. Omar Said Omar Al Kathiri**, Permanent Representative of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Nations, during which they exchanged views on deepening cooperation and advancing shared priorities. (19 February)



Mr. Habib Ephrem, Advisor to the President of Lebanon on Human Rights and Interfaith Dialogue, paid a courtesy visit to the UNAOC office and met with **Ms. Anna Pavlyuchenko**, Programme Officer, Institution and Member States Relations Officer, to discuss the priorities of his term and areas of mutual interest. (10 February)

PROGRAMMING



UNAOC participated in the high-level event marking the **International Day for the Prevention of Violent Extremism as and when Conducive to Terrorism**, organized jointly by the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and the Permanent Mission of Iraq to the United Nations.

In a video message, the High Representative for UNAOC emphasized that addressing violent extremism requires whole-of-society engagement. "Prevention is not a one-time effort; it is a sustained commitment to counter hatred, misinformation, and division by fostering dialogue, trust, and respect for human dignity," he said.

Ms. Dana Podmolikova, UNAOC Programme Management Specialist for Youth, presented UNAOC programmes highlighting the critical link between youth empowerment, technology, and the prevention of violent extremism.

Meanwhile, **Mr. Himanshu Panday**, UNAOC youth alumnus from India, underscored the importance of protecting dignity as a core strategy in preventing violent extremism: "Extremism feeds on humiliation, isolation, and fear. Our job is to make dignity, connection, and courage easier to choose." (12 February)

UNAOC participated in the side event "**Youth at the Center of Inclusive Social Development**", organized by the **Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum (ICYF)** in partnership with the **Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)** in the framework of the **64th session of the Commission for Social Development (CSocD64)**. Ms. Dana Podmolikova, UNAOC Programme Management Specialist for Youth, presented key elements of UNAOC's youth-focused programming and advocacy work, including meaningful partnerships with young people to foster peaceful societies, promote inclusion, and advance dialogue. Central to her presentation was the **UNAOC Young Peacebuilders programme**, which exemplifies how young people can become powerful agents of peace when equipped with the right tools, opportunities, and platforms for meaningful engagement. (6 February)



UNAOC convened a virtual, interactive workshop for participants of its **Women's Alliance for Peace (WA4P)** initiative as part of its monthly capacity-building series, focusing on media, communication, and the importance of confidentiality in mediation processes. Bringing together grassroots and senior women leaders and peacebuilders, the session provided a platform for participants to share updates from the field, including a presentation on civic space and civil society engagement. The workshop also underscored the critical role of trusted information channels in conflict settings and examined opportunities to leverage community media and partnerships to counter misinformation. (12 February)



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