

UNAOC ISSUES CALL FOR MUTUAL RESPECT OF ALL RELIGIONS AND BELIEFS

Following his statements condemning recent terrorist attacks around the world, especially the killing of a French teacher in a north-western suburb of Paris and of three people at the Notre-Dame Basilica in Nice, France, Mr. Miguel Moratinos, High Representative for UNAOC, issued a **Call for Mutual Respect of all religions and beliefs and for fostering a culture of fraternity and peace**. The text re-affirms that acts of violence should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization, or ethnic group and that violence should never be a justifiable or acceptable response to acts of intolerance on the basis of religion or belief. (28 October)



UNAOC
United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

A Call for Mutual Respect

The High Representative stresses that the freedom of religion or belief and the freedom of expression are interdependent, interrelated and mutually reinforcing rights rooted in the articles 18 and 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

October 28, 2020
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Statement Attributable to the Spokesperson of the High Representative of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

A Call for Mutual Respect

New York – 28 October, 2020

The High Representative is following with instances of intolerance triggered by the depicting Prophet Muhammed, which Muslim civilians who were attacked for their sh... Representative stresses that insulting religi... hatred and violent extremism leading to pe... He calls for mutual respect of all religions, fraternity and peace.

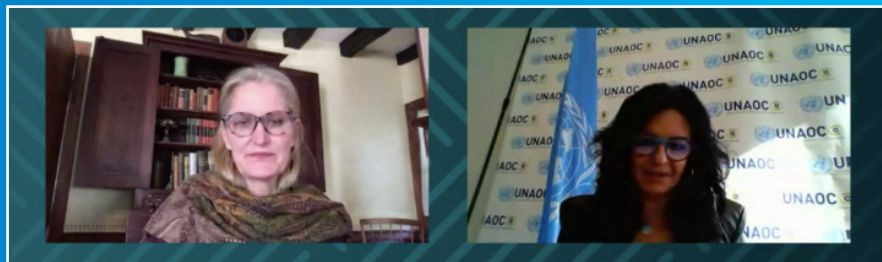
The High Representative stresses that the f... of expression are interdependent, interrelate... the articles 18 and 19 of the Universal De... protecting these fundamental rights is the... the same time, freedom of expression should be exercised in a way that fully respects... the religious beliefs and tenets of all religions.

Miguel Ángel Moratinos @MiguelMoratinos
Insulting religions and sacred religious symbols provokes hatred and violent extremism leading to polarization and fragmentation of the society. #forSafeWorship #UNAOC @UNAOC @forSafeWorship

Miguel Ángel Moratinos @MiguelMoratinos
Replying to @MiguelMoratinos
Freedom of expression should be exercised in a way that fully respects the religious beliefs and tenets of all religions.

Read the full statement: <https://www.unaoc.org/2020/10/a-call-for-mutual-respect>

The **United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC)**, in partnership with the **International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID)**, the **G20 Interfaith Association**, and the **Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's National Committee for Interfaith and Intercultural Dialogue**, co-organized the seventh annual **G20 Interfaith Forum**. The five-day event brought together prominent religious leaders from across the faith spectrum, distinguished members of faith-based organizations, as well as government and UN officials, and more than two thousand participants from all over the world to discuss a wide array of issues ranging from COVID-19 to inequality and racism, climate change and the safeguarding of sacred sites. Originally intended to be held in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, host of the 2020 G20 Summit, the conference was conducted virtually. Throughout the event, speakers noted how COVID-19 has exacerbated challenges across the entire spectrum of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Addressing the Opening Plenary, **the High Representative for UNAOC, Mr. Miguel Moratinos**, called for “a different approach driven by unity and solidarity, but most of all by compassion and humility” and underlined the need for “a convergence between faith actors and state actors.” At the closing of the G20 Interfaith Forum, the organizing partners issued a joint statement calling for more robust representation for religious leaders and faith-based actors at global policy-making tables. (13-17 October)



As part of the G20 Interfaith Forum, **Ms. Nihal Saad, UNAOC Chief of Cabinet and Spokesperson**, participated in a plenary session entitled “**Religious Actors and Multilateral Responses to the COVID-19 Crisis**” (14 October). In her remarks, Ms. Saad spoke about the surge in hate speech, xenophobia, antisemitism, racism, and other forms of discrimination amid COVID-19. “The current health crisis requires a whole-of-society approach rooted in compassion and solidarity,” she said.



Ms. Ana Jimenez, UNAOC Political Advisor, also participated in the Forum and spoke during an interactive panel discussion on “**Religious Cultural Heritage, Human Dignity and Sustainable Development**”. During her intervention, Ms. Jimenez spoke about the UN Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites, developed by UNAOC and launched by the UN Secretary-General in September 2019. “There needs to be more dialogue between religious leaders and national governments to better prepare and prevent attacks against religious sites and worshippers”, she stated. Ms. Jimenez also spoke about UNAOC’s global call to action **#forSafeWorship**, inviting the public to submit multimedia stories about their personal connection and relationship to religious sites. (13 October)

HIGHLIGHTS



Ahead of the **G20 Interfaith Forum**, Mr. Moratinos addressed the **KAICIID G20 Fellows** during a **virtual Youth Forum**. In his remarks, he highlighted the essential role of young people in fostering mutual understanding between different cultures and religions. “Since its inception, UNAOC has recognized youth as one of its pillars. We work with them and for them. Through education, capacity building, training and many other opportunities for innovation and creativity, UNAOC empowers young women and men and youth-led civil society organizations globally and recognizes them as powerful agents for social change,” he stated. (8 October)

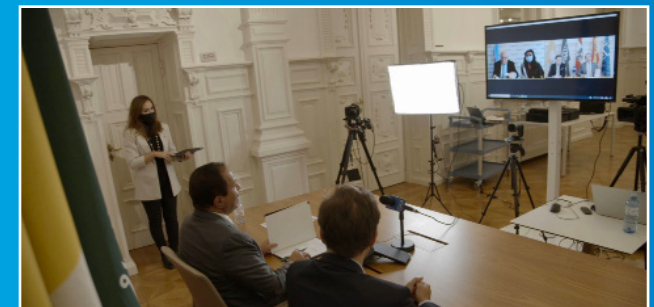
The High Representative for UNAOC met with the **President of the 75th Session of the UN General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Volkan Bozkir**, with whom he had a productive conversation on working together towards building cohesive, peaceful and inclusive societies. “UNAOC remains a key platform to address discrimination and polarization on religious grounds,” Mr. Bozkir stated. (21 October, New York)



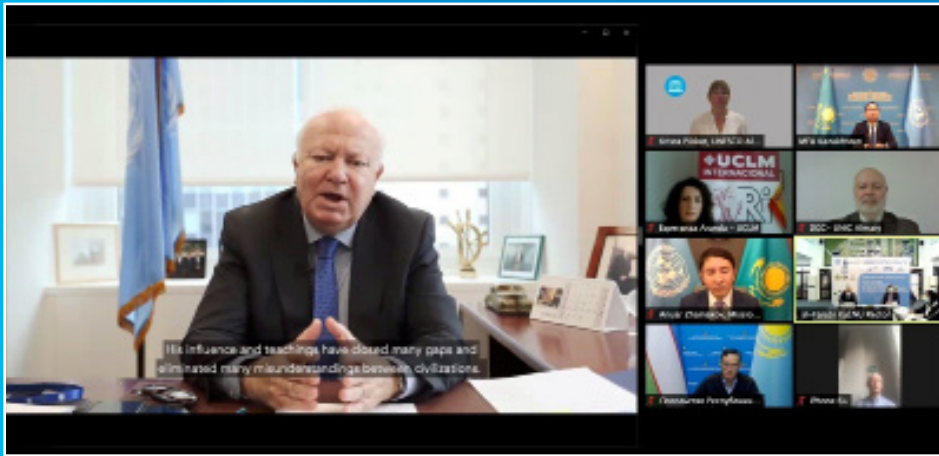
Mr. Moratinos met with the new **Permanent Representative of Israel to the UN, H.E. Mr. Gilad Erdan**, to discuss the priorities on the agenda of UNAOC as well as enhancing a system-wide response to combat antisemitism. (15 October)



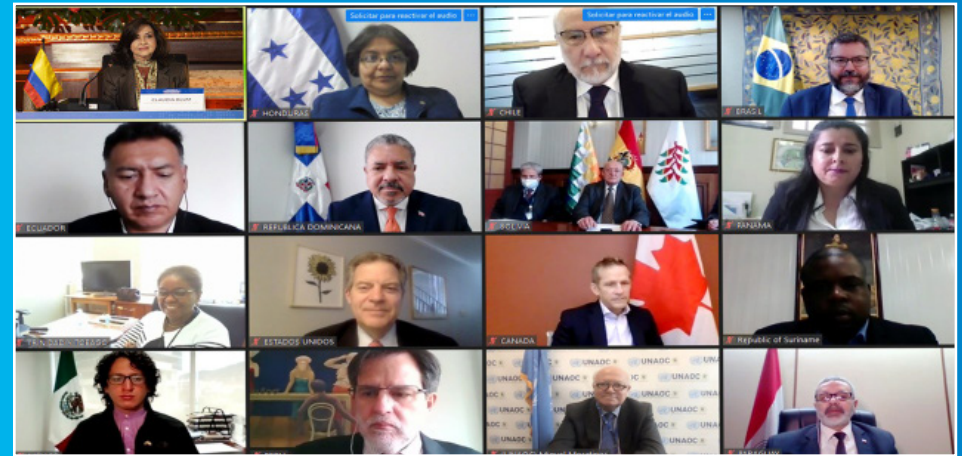
Mr. Moratinos also met with the **Permanent Representative of the Principality of Andorra to the UN, H.E. Ms. Elisenda Vives Balmaña**, to present the work of UNAOC and discuss issues of mutual interest. (27 October)



UNAOC and the **International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID)** signed a Memorandum of Understanding renewing their partnership and marking a new phase in their lasting relationship and commitment to address global challenges such as building peace and social cohesion in today’s challenging times. (27 October)



Mr. Moratinos paid tribute to Islamic philosopher Al-Farabi in the international online conference **"MIND for PEACE"**, organized by **Al-Farabi Kazakh National University**. The global event was dedicated to the 1,150th anniversary of Al-Farabi, as well as the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, the 15th anniversary of UNAOC, and the 10th anniversary of the UN Academic Impact program. In his video message, Mr. Moratinos stated, "Al Farabi's influence and teachings have closed many gaps and eliminated many misunderstandings between civilizations. Over the centuries, his work has symbolized the most valued humanistic qualities of love, tolerance, understanding and respect of the other no matter what belief or color." (23 October)



Mr. Moratinos addressed the **Hemispheric Forum for Freedom of Religion and Beliefs** organized by the **Foreign Ministry of Colombia**. In his remarks, he emphasized the role of UNAOC as an instrument of prevention and a platform for building bridges and strengthening relations between societies with different cultural and religious traditions. "I hope that we can strengthen the collaboration between UNAOC and the American continent with the common objective that unites us to build more just, inclusive and peaceful societies. We must all contribute to building peaceful societies that are more supportive, cohesive and egalitarian," Mr. Moratinos said. (23 October)

The High Representative for UNAOC participated in the **2020 Balkans Forum Against Anti-Semitism**, co-organized by the **Embassy of the Republic of Albania in Israel and Combat Anti-Semitism**. In his remarks, Mr. Moratinos reiterated his commitment to fighting antisemitism and working with multiple stakeholders to enhance efforts in combatting the spread of all forms of discrimination. The event included an impressive roster of high-level speakers, including US Secretary of State Mr. Mike Pompeo, the President of the European Parliament, Mr. David Maria Sassoli, and the Prime Minister of Albania, Mr. Edi Rama. (28 October)





H.E. Miguel Ángel Moratinos
High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

Following the launch of the United Nations #PledgeToPause communications campaign, the High Representative for UNAOC joined several UN officials, including the UN Secretary-General, in publishing a short video on social media to help combat the impact of viral misinformation. “I encourage you to join this United Nations initiative and, like me, to take the pledge to pause before sharing information on the internet” Mr. Moratinos said.



Photo from 2019 archives

The High Representative for UNAOC and the Secretary General of the Higher Committee of Human Fraternity (HCHF), Judge Mohamed Abdel Salam, held a virtual meeting in which they discussed joint actions to implement the principles of the Human Fraternity document. They both reaffirmed their strong condemnation of the recent terrorist attacks on innocent civilians in France. (31 October)



Ms. Nihal Saad, UNAOC Chief of Cabinet and Spokesperson, and Mr. Bram Van Haver, UNAOC Project Management Specialist – Youth and Education, addressed the **UN Roundtable on Media and Information Literacy** organized by UNESCO as part of the **2020 Global Media and Information Literacy Week** under the theme “**Resisting Disinformation: Media and Information Literacy for Everybody and by Everybody**”. In her remarks, Ms. Saad emphasized that media and information literacy is one of the priority action areas of the High Representative for UNAOC, Mr. Moratinos. “Media literacy is the bulwark against radicalization in social media. At UNAOC, we see Media Information Literacy as the long-term strategy,” she stated. (28 October)



Mr. Moratinos addressed the **Second Conference on Silk Roads and Women in Mediterranean Cultures** under the theme “**The Covid-19 Crisis: Repercussions on Gender Equality**”, organized by the Foro Pensamiento y Acción, Instituto Seda España, Fundación Cultura de Paz and the University of Alicante. In his video message, Mr. Moratinos reiterated his commitment to gender equality. “One of my first actions as the High Representative for UNAOC was the inclusion of a fifth pillar focused on the role of Women as Mediators in the fields of intercultural and interreligious dialogues,” he noted. (28 October)



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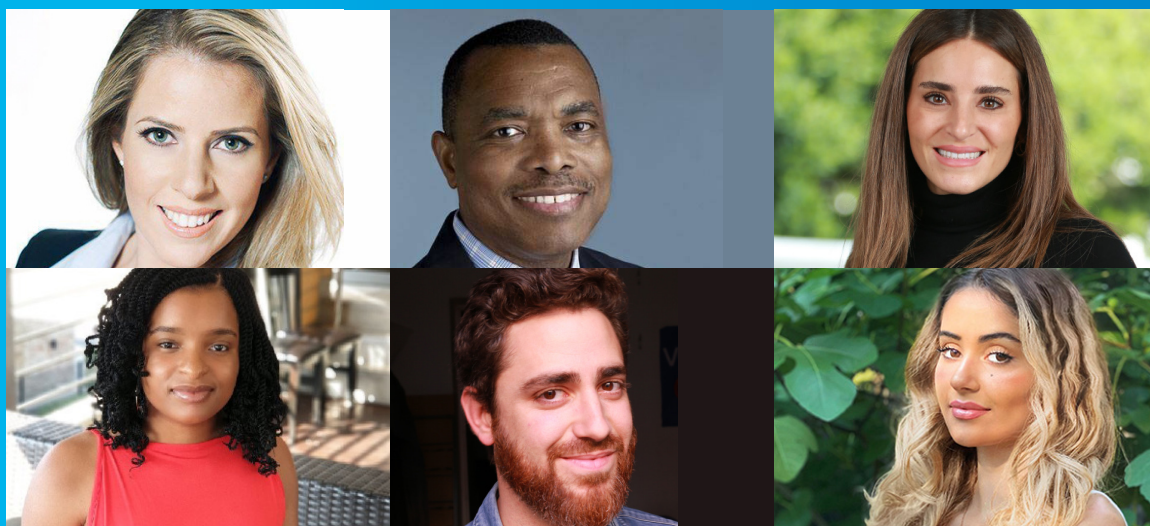
Mr. Moratinos participated in a new cycle of **L'H Espai de Debat** to discuss the founding of the **European Union, its past, current, and future challenges**. Speakers included Mr. Jaume Duch, Director-General of Communication and Spokesperson of the European Parliament, and Ms. Cristina Gallach, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and for Ibero-America and the Caribbean of Spain. In his remarks, Mr. Moratinos focused on the unprecedented impact of COVID-19 on the global community and people's livelihoods. (29 October)



UNAOC and BMW Group organized a webinar as part of their joint initiative, the Intercultural Innovation Award (IIA), in partnership with Accenture. IIA recipients were mentored online on “Designing and Cultivating an Organizational Culture of Commitment and Performance”, which provided them with the tools to enhance their organizational strength and motivation within their respective work. (29 October)



Despite COVID-19, the recipients of the Youth Solidarity Funds of UNAOC have continued to work on their local projects in Kenya, Sri Lanka, Lebanon, the Kingdom of Eswatini, and Uganda, using innovative approaches to intercultural dialogue and interfaith harmony. Their projects are scheduled to conclude in late 2020/early 2021 and are testaments of youth resilience and adaptability amid challenging times.

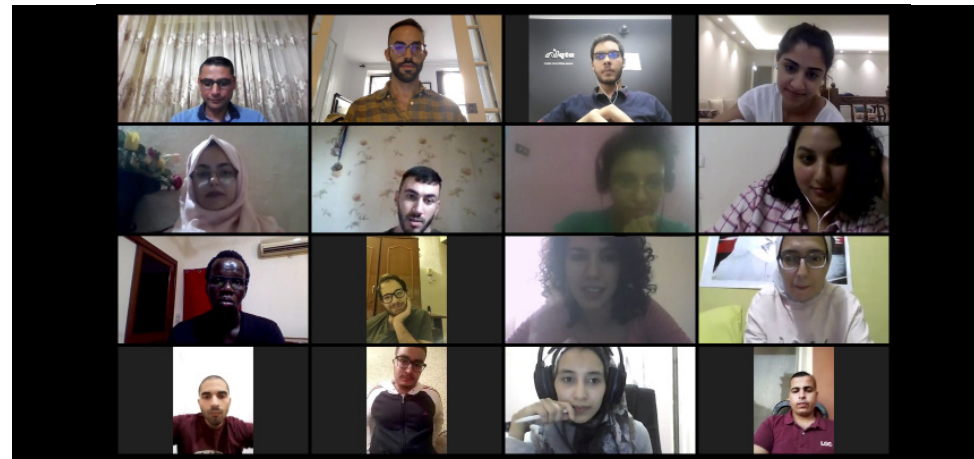


UNAOC and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) revealed the names of this year’s International Jury of their joint initiative, the PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival. The jury includes Ms. Nayeli Chavez-Geller (New York Correspondent, Primer Impacto, Univisión), Mr. John Yearwood (Deputy Editor, Politico), Ms. Thuraya Ismail (Secretary General, Mentor Arabia), Ms. Louise Kanza (Co-Founder, Sophie A. Kanza Foundation), Mr. José Antonio Bautista (Investigative Journalist), and Ms. Sophia Kianni (UN Youth Advisor on Climate Change). They are currently reviewing a selection of films submitted to the festival, and the names of the winning filmmakers will be announced during the virtual PLURAL+ Awards Ceremony on 4 December.

PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS



UNAOC Fellows participated in the **first-ever virtual implementation of the Fellowships programme of UNAOC**. After two weeks of online engagement learning about key concepts and global trends in the fields of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, media, and peacebuilding, they met with stakeholders from twelve countries in Europe, North America, the Middle East, and North Africa. UNAOC Fellows then participated in online capacity-building activities to work on collective projects addressing current issues and global challenges related to interreligious and intercultural dialogue, media, and peacebuilding.



As a part of the fourth edition of its **Young Peacebuilders Programme**, UNAOC, with the generous support of **AEXCID (Agencia Extremeña de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo)**, organized the fifth and sixth sessions of its **COVID-19 “Sunnyside” workshop**. These online webinars trained participants from the Middle East and North Africa in the basics of the “Theatre of the Oppressed” as a tool for conflict transformation and included a facilitated discussion about peaceful revolution. (2 October; 23 October)



UNAOC organized a webinar on **“Youth and Leadership and Action for a Better World,”** providing participants with advocacy tools and best practices to engage with the United Nations. The session was part of the **Young Leaders Conference – Perú 2020**, coordinated by Mohamed Ghanem from MCW Global, a participant in the third edition of the Young Peacebuilders Programme of UNAOC. (31 October)



UNAOC and UNESCO MGIEP organized an online meeting with the participants of the second phase of the initiative **“#YouthWagingPeace - The Whole of Community Approach to PVE”**. Participants updated both organizations on the progress of their projects and worked together on a Youth-led Report on the State of PVE-E in South Asia. Stay tuned for more details about this new initiative! (October 15)