

UNAOC CONVENES ANNUAL HIGH-LEVEL GROUP OF FRIENDS MEETING

The High Representative convened his second High-Level Meeting of the Group of Friends of UNAOC on the theme, “**Shaping a Better World: Building Cohesive and Inclusive Societies in a Challenging COVID-19 Environment**”. The event was held on the margins of the 75th Session of the UN General Assembly, coinciding with UNAOC’s fifteenth anniversary. The event was an opportunity to take stock of UNAOC’s accomplishments and present new activities and initiatives. (29 September)



“There is no alternative to standing together in unity and solidarity in cohesive and equitable societies. Fulfilling Goal 16 “Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies” of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is more imperative now than ever before. Showing compassion and kindness to the most vulnerable nations and people is what makes us all human belonging to One Humanity despite our many cultures and identities. It is the raison d’être of UNAOC.”

- H.E. Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos

High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

HIGHLIGHTS



The High-Level Meeting of the Group of Friends of UNAOC was followed by a **Youth Webinar** entitled “**An Intergenerational Conversation: The Future They Want**” featuring UNAOC programme alumni in conversation with senior officials, including **Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the UN Counter-Terrorism Office (UNOCT)**; **Ms. Diene Keita, Deputy Executive Director of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA)**; **Ms. Sima Sami Bahous, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Jordan to the UN**; **Ms. Corinne Momal-Vanian, Executive Director of the Kofi Annan Foundation**; and **Ms. Aya Chebbi, Africa Union Youth Envoy**. (29 September)

The Youth Webinar was followed by an interactive discussion on “**Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination: The Tearing of Our Societies**”. High-level panelists discussed pressing social issues related to UNAOC’s mandate. Speakers included **Ms. Pramila Patten, UN Acting Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide and Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict**; **Ms. Alexandria Walden, Global Head of Human Rights at Google**; **Dr. Ahmed Shaheed, Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief**; **Mr. Jason Isaacson, Chief Policy and Political Affairs Officer, American Jewish Committee**; and **Ms. Nayeli Chavez Geller, New York Correspondent for *Primer Impacto* (Univisión)**. (29 September)





As part of the High-Level Meeting of the Group of Friends of UNAOC, Mr. Moratinos launched a global call to action **#forSafeWorship** to safeguard religious sites and worshipers worldwide. This new UNAOC communications campaign is meant to engage the global youth and faith communities in taking concrete actions to contribute to implementing the UN Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites, developed by UNAOC and launched by the UN Secretary-General in September 2019. The call to action **#forSafeWorship** celebrates the universality of religious sites as symbols of our shared humanity, history, and traditions. UNAOC now invites people around the world to participate actively in the campaign by submitting multimedia stories about their personal connections to religious sites. For more information, visit **SafeguardReligiousSites.UNAOC.org** and follow **@forSafeWorship** on social media. (29 September)

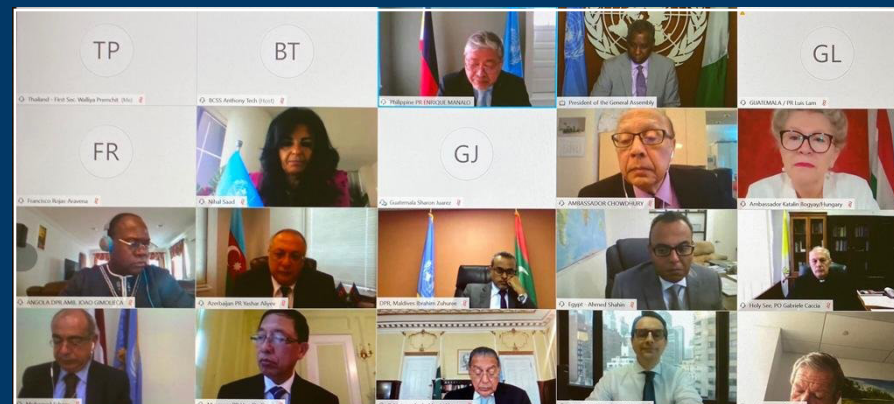
UNAOC, in partnership with the **UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT)**, the **UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI)**, and the **International Centre for Sport Security (ICSS)**, convened a High-Level Meeting on “Preventing Violent Extremism through Sport Values”, under the framework of the **UN Global Programme on Security of Major Sporting Events**, and



Promotion of Sport and Its Values as a Tool to Prevent Violent Extremism. The conversation included high-level representatives and leading experts from the fields of sport and security. Mr. Moratinos reiterated that sport is one of the new priority areas in UNAOC’s Action Plan covering the 2019-2023 period. “We have initiated new partnerships with renown soccer clubs and sports entities, such as launching the **#OneHumanity** Campaign in partnership with **Fundación Atlético de Madrid**, **La Liga**, and the **Global Association of Sports Federations**,” he noted. (18 September)

Ms. Nihal Saad, UNAOC Chief of Cabinet and Spokesperson, participated in the **UN High-Level Forum on the Culture of Peace** convened by the **President of the 75th Session of the UN General Assembly**.

“Now more than ever, UNAOC is committed to promoting intercultural and interreligious dialogue as a soft power tool to combat intolerance and discrimination globally,” she stated, pointing out the inequalities laid bare by the current health crisis. (10 September)





In his role as the **United Nations Focal Point to Monitor Antisemitism**, the High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), H.E. Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos, participated in a webinar organized by the **American Jewish Committee (AJC)** on “**The UN’s Increased Focus on Antisemitism**”. Mr. Moratinos spoke with AJC’s Chief Policy and Political Affairs Officer, Mr. Jason Isaacson, about the many challenges of tackling antisemitism and enhancing a UN system-wide response to combat it. (13 August)

Mr. Moratinos addressed the **5th Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact Meeting of the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT)** and highlighted UNAOC’s commitment to collaborating with state and non-state actors to implement strategies and plans launched by the UN Secretary-General, including the **UN Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites**.

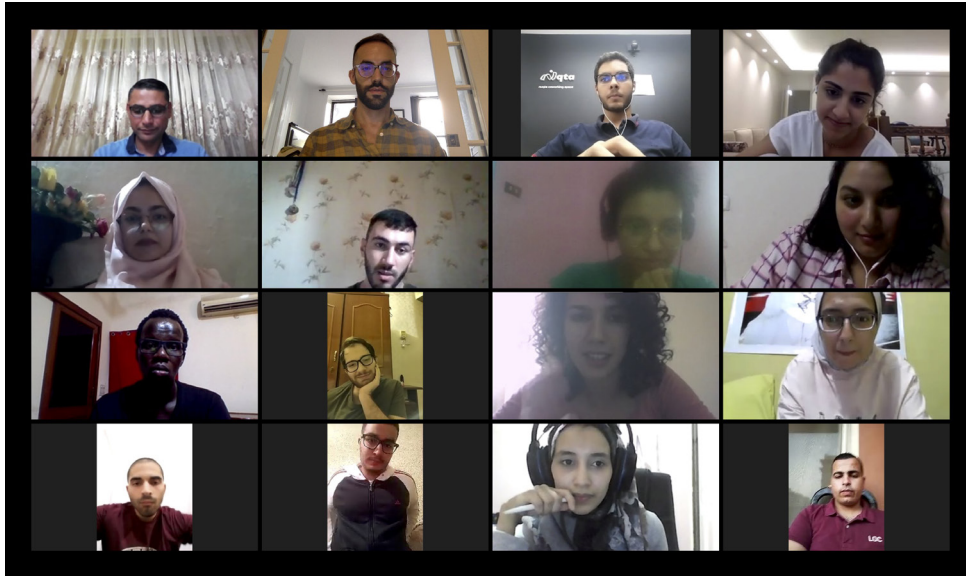
“In line with the Secretary-General’s report on the socio-economic impact of COVID-19, UNAOC is working to strengthen the engagement of faith actors and religious leaders in addressing the challenges of the pandemic,” he said. (28 August)



Ms. Nihal Saad, UNAOC Chief of Cabinet and Spokesperson, delivered remarks on behalf of Mr. Moratinos in a side event organized by the **US Mission to the UN** entitled, “**Answering the Call to Protect Religious Freedom**”. She spoke about the urgent need to end all forms of discrimination, including antisemitism, Christianophobia, and Islamophobia, particularly amid the current health crisis. “As One Humanity is facing a global human crisis, we must nurture mutual understanding. We all have a responsibility to look out for one another, to respect differences and promote peaceful coexistence,” she stated. (21 September)



The High Representative bid farewell to Special Adviser of the UN Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, Mr. Adama Dieng, in a virtual event organized by Dr. Mohamed Elsanousi, Director of the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers. Mr. Adama Dieng is the architect of the UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech. (26 August)



As 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 third and fourth sessions of its COVID-19 “Sunnyside” Workshop. These online webinars trained participants from the Middle East and North Africa in emotional and critical thinking skills, provided them with knowledge in conflict resolution and allowed them to analyze and put into practice the dynamics of intercultural and interfaith dialogue. (28 August - 18 September)

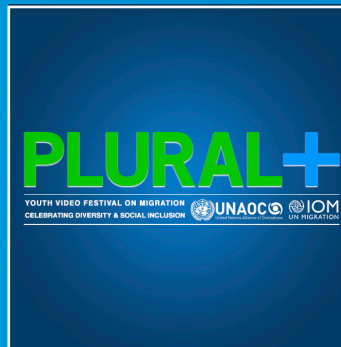


This year, the **Fellowship programme of UNAOC** will take place virtually for the very first time. UNAOC has worked all summer with a team of expert trainers to prepare a programme focusing on the theme, “Building peace in the age of new media.”

In October, twenty UNAOC Fellows from Europe, North America, the Middle East, and North Africa will learn about global trends and good practices in the fields of intercultural and interreligious dialogue.

UNAOC and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) are currently reviewing the 500+ video submissions they received for their joint initiative, the **PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival**.

They will announce the names of the winning filmmakers during the annual **PLURAL+ Awards Ceremony**, which will take place online for the very first time on **4 December**.

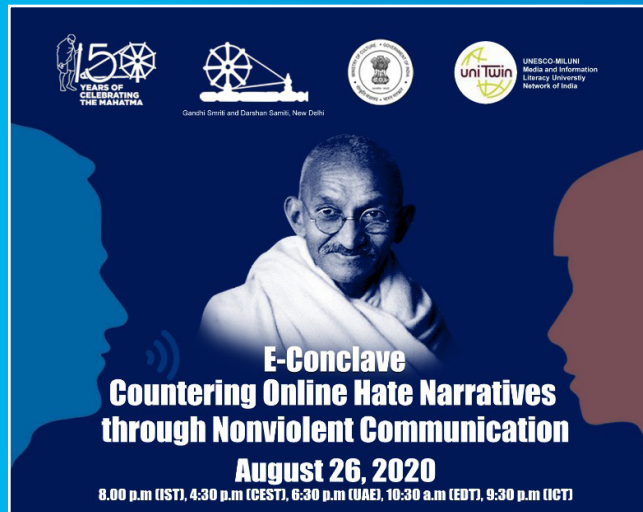


PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS



Following the **High-Level Meeting on “Preventing Violent Extremism through Sport Values”** (18 September), UNAOC, in partnership with the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), the UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), and the International Centre for Sport Security (ICSS), organized an **International Expert Group Meeting**.

Representatives from governments, international and regional organizations, sport entities, academia, and civil society organizations shared experiences and discussed actionable good practices of sports-based interventions aimed at preventing and countering violent extremism. (21-23 September)



Mr. Bram Van Haver, UNAOC Project Management Specialist, Youth and Education, participated in the e-conclave on **“Countering Online Hate Narratives through Nonviolent Communication,”** organized by Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti and the UNESCO Media and Information Literacy University Network of India. The panel featured international experts in the fields of hate speech and media and information literacy. (26 August)



Mr. Thibault Chareton, UNAOC Project Management Specialist, Media and Migration, participated in a webinar entitled, **“Global hate crisis,”** organized by the Jewish Community Center in Krakow, Poland, Otzwarta Rzeczpospolita (Open Republic), an association working against antisemitism and xenophobia, the Goethe Institute, and the Austrian Consulate in Krakow. The panel featured human rights experts and historians. Mr. Chareton presented UNAOC’s #SpreadNoHate initiative against hate speech in the media and its various activities to foster intercultural and interfaith dialogue, build bridges of understanding, and counter stereotyping and polarization. (17 September)

With the call to action **#forSafeWorship**, we are building a stream of inspiring stories shared by people just like you! Selected videos will be featured on our website, in news stories, YouTube channel, social media, and other platforms.

Join the movement. Submit your multimedia stories at **SafeguardReligiousSites.unaoc.org**

