



NEWS FLASH / 2019 In Review

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MEETING WITH MORE THAN 60 HEADS OF STATES, HEADS OF GOVERNMENTS,
FOREIGN MINISTERS, GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND PROMINENT FIGURES
IN MORE THAN 35 COUNTRIES



The High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), H.E. Mr. Miguel Moratinos, had an audience with **His Holiness Pope Francis at the Apostolic Palace**. Mr. Moratinos presented the work and activities of UNAOC, as well as the main components of the UN Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites. (December, Vatican City)

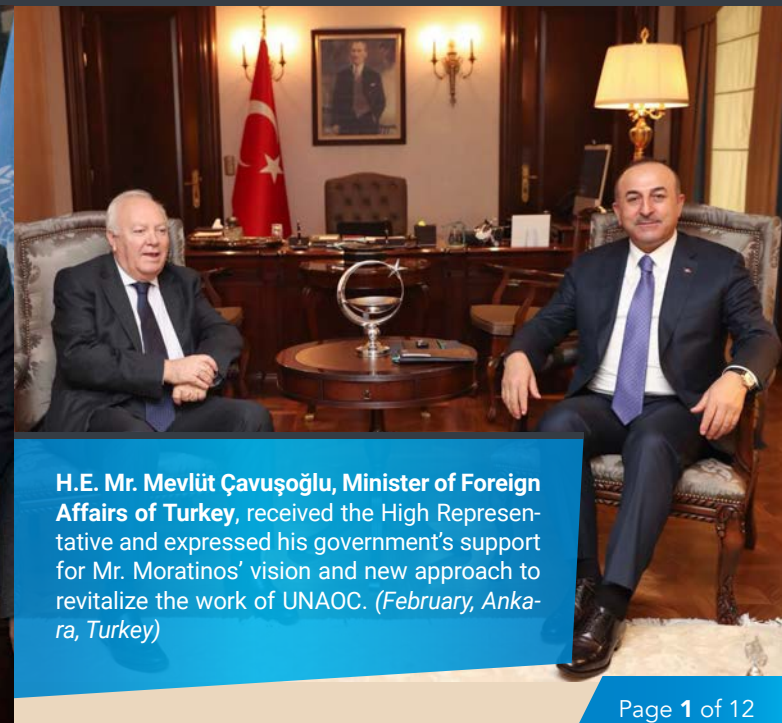
His Eminence, the **Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Dr. Ahmed Al-Tayeb**, received the High Representative to discuss the work of UNAOC, including the UN Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites. (May, Cairo, Egypt)



The High Representative had an audience with **His Majesty King Felipe VI of Spain** at the Zarzuela Palace (February, Madrid, Spain)



The High Representative met with **H.E. Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of Turkey**, in the presence of **UN Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. António Guterres**, during a signing ceremony to announce a new collaboration between UNAOC and Turkish Airlines. (September, New York, USA)



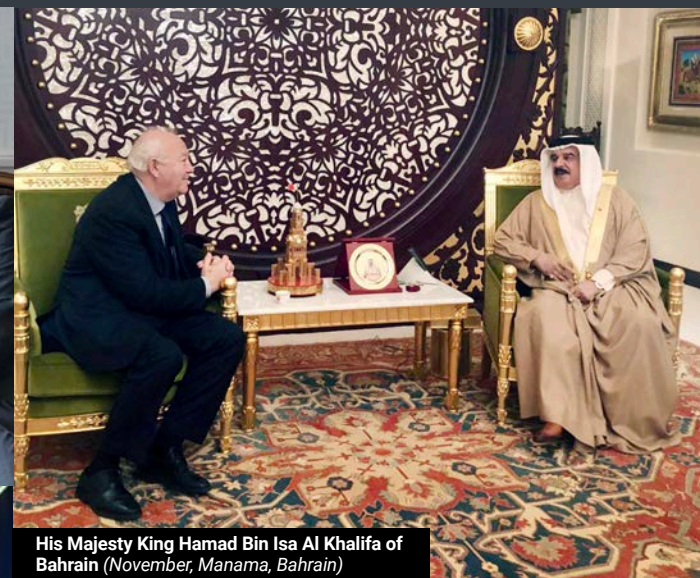
H.E. Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, received the High Representative and expressed his government's support for Mr. Moratinos' vision and new approach to revitalize the work of UNAOC. (February, Ankara, Turkey)



His Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques
(July, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia)



H.E. Mr. Nasser Bourita, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Morocco
(April, Rabat, Morocco)



His Majesty King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa of Bahrain
(November, Manama, Bahrain)



H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev, President of Azerbaijan
(November, Baku, Azerbaijan)



H.E. Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, President of Kazakhstan
(September, New York)



H.E. Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, President of the State of Palestine
(November, Ramallah, State of Palestine)



H.E. Mr. Sameh Hassan Shoukry, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt
(December, Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt)



H.E. Mr. Emmanuel Macron, President of France
(October, Strasbourg, France)



H.E. Mr. Michel Aoun, President of Lebanon
(September, New York)



H.E. Mr. Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, President of Portugal (November, Lisbon, Portugal)



H.E. Mr. Sultan bin Saad Al-Muraikhi, State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar



Dr. Anwar Gargash, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates (December, UAE)



H.E. Mr. José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, former Prime Minister of Spain (September, New York)



Sri Lankan political and religious leaders, civil society representatives, and UN Country Team (30 April, Colombo, Sri Lanka)



H.E. Mr. Elmar Mammadyarov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, H.E. Mr. Abulfas Garayev Minister of Culture of Azerbaijan (November, Baku, Azerbaijan)



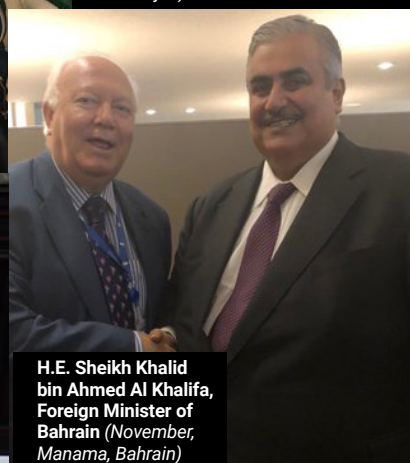
H.E. Mr. Mohamed Ali Alhakim, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iraq (September, New York)



H.E. Mr. Ibrahim bin Abdulaziz bin Abdullah Al-Assaf, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia (September, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia)



His Eminence Shaykh Abdullah Bin Bayyah, President of the Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies (July, Abu Dhabi, UAE)



H.E. Sheikh Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Foreign Minister of Bahrain (November, Manama, Bahrain)



H.E. Mr. Carmelo Abela, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malta (July, New York)



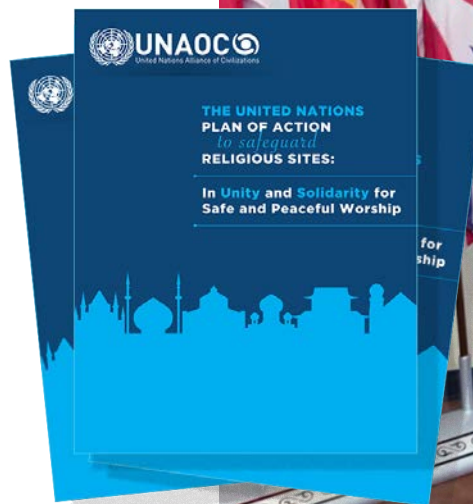
H.E. Mr. Simeón Oyono Esono Angué, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Equatorial Guinea and H.E. Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cuba (September, New York)



The High Representative convened his **first High-Level Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Friends of UNAOC** and presented the Action Plan of UNAOC for 2019-2023. During the meeting, H.E. Mr. Nasser Bourita, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Morocco, announced that his government would host the **ninth Global Forum of UNAOC in 2020**, marking the first time a UNAOC Global Forum takes place on the African continent. (September, New York)

LAUNCH OF THE UN PLAN OF ACTION TO SAFEGUARD RELIGIOUS SITES

The **UN Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. António Guterres**, launched the **UN Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites**, entitled “**In Unity and Solidarity for Safe and Peaceful Worship**” during an event at the UN Headquarters. The UN Plan of Action was developed by UNAOC in close consultations with UN entities, religious leaders, faith-based organizations, civil society, and youth, among others. It provides an action-oriented framework with recommendations to support stakeholders in preventing attacks against places of worship and guaranteeing the safety of the faithful. (September, New York)





The High Representative was featured in the **daily press briefing** of the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General at the UN Headquarters to present his vision as he took on his new functions as the head of UNAOC. (January, New York)



The High Representative participated in the **Global Conference of Human Fraternity** and delivered remarks during a session on **"The Principles of Human Fraternity."** (February, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates)



The High Representative received the **League of Arab States Award** for his role in **strengthening Arab-Spanish relations through dialogue.** (March, Madrid, Spain)



The High Representative visited **Morocco** and was received by **Prime Minister Mr. Saad-Eddine El Othmani, Minister of Culture and Communication Mr. Mohamed El Aaraj, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Nasser Bourita**, to discuss areas of collaboration. (April, Rabat, Morocco)



UNAOC organized a **side event** during the **ECOSOC Youth Forum** focusing on data-driven and evidence-based approaches to investing in youth-led organizations for advancing the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda, in partnership with the Permanent Missions of Spain and Finland to the UN, UNFPA/PBSO, and Search for Common Ground. (April, New York)



The High Representative visited **Sri Lanka** after the terrorist attacks of Easter Sunday. He was received by **President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickramasinghe**, and met with religious leaders, civil society, and the UN Country Team to discuss efforts to restore unity and peace. (April, Colombo, Sri Lanka)



The High Representative participated in the **Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation** and addressed the session on **"People to People Exchange."** (April, Beijing, China)



The High Representative met with the **President of FC Barcelona, Mr. Josep Maria Bartomeu**, to speak about the power of sports as a tool for social inclusion and preventing violent extremism. (June, Barcelona, Spain)



The High Representative participated in the **Open Briefing of the Counter-Terrorism Committee** on **"Protection of soft targets through local engagement and public private partnerships."** (June, New York)



UNAOC co-organized the **5th World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue**, in partnership with the Government of Azerbaijan, UNESCO, UNWTO, the Council of Europe, and ISESCO on the theme, **"Building dialogue into action against discrimination, inequality and violent conflict."** (May, Baku, Azerbaijan)



The High Representative inaugurated the **"Ring for Peace"** sculpture at a launching ceremony on the margins of the **10th World Assembly of Religions for Peace**. (August, Lindau, Germany)



The High Representative participated in the **second Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom** convened by **US Secretary of State Mr. Mike Pompeo**. (July, Washington, D.C.)



The High Representative addressed the **High-Level Forum on the Culture of Peace** convened by the **President of the General Assembly, H.E. Mrs. María Fernanda Espinosa**. (September, New York)



The High Representative addressed a delegation from **Claremont Graduate University** led by its President, Leonard Jessup, and Amb. Sallama Shaker, Professor of Middle East & International Studies (October, New York)



UNAOC Chief of Cabinet Ms. Nihal Saad participated in the **Quarterly Briefing to Member States of the UN Global Counter Terrorism Coordination Compact Entities and the Third Committee Meeting**. (July, New York)



UNAOC convened its first **High-Level Round Table Luncheon at the Yale Club**, marking the launch of a series of consultations with key stakeholders to explore ways to **revive the global dimension of the work of UNAOC**. (September, New York)



The **President of Bahçeşehir University, Mr. Enver Yücel**, invited the High Representative to hold a **lecture about the UN Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites**. (October, Istanbul, Turkey)



The High Representative addressed a hearing of the **US Commission on International Religious Freedom** and presented the new **UN Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites**, developed by UNAOC. (October, Washington, D.C.)



UNAOC co-sponsored an **International Seminar on the Revitalization of the Euro-Med Cooperation**, with the Mediterranean Perspectives, the Italian Network for Euro-Mediterranean Dialogue, Ana Lindh Foundation, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy. (December, Rome, Italy)



The High Representative participated in the **Second Baku Summit of World Religious Leaders**. (November, Baku, Azerbaijan)



The High Representative attended the **25th Lisbon Forum** and participated in a session entitled **"An International and Regional Organization Perspective."** (November, Lisbon, Portugal)



The High Representative visited the **UN Office at Geneva (UNOG)** and delivered an **executive briefing to Member States** focusing on the **UN Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites**. (November, Geneva, Switzerland)



The High Representative participated in the **6th Istanbul Mediation Conference** and the **3rd OIC Member States Conference on Mediation**. (November, Istanbul)

GLOBAL AND REGIONAL CONFERENCES



The High Representative received **H.E. Judge Mohamed Abdel Salam, Secretary-General of the Higher Committee of Human Fraternity**, to follow up on a meeting their members had with the UN Secretary-General to discuss the implementation of the **joint document on Human Fraternity**. (December, New York)



The High Representative delivered remarks on the occasion of the **International Day of Tolerance** in the audience of **His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa of Bahrain**. (November, Manama, Bahrain)



The High Representative participated in the **World Youth Forum** in a session entitled, “**Mediterranean Countries: Ancient Civilizations & Common History.**” (December, Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt)



Mr. Moratinos was a keynote speaker in the **UNOCT Regional High-Level Conference** on “**Empowering Youth and Promoting Tolerance: Practical Approaches to Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism.**” (December, Abu Dhabi, UAE)



The High Representative participated in the **Doha Forum** on the theme, “**Reimagining Governance in a Multi-Polar World**”. He also met with H.E. Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar. (December, Doha, Qatar)

NEW COLLABORATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

In the span of a year, UNAOC signed seven Memorandums of Understanding with:



Turkish Airlines, to announce their collaboration on a new initiative “**Sports for Peace**” (September, New York, USA)



Mayor Eric Garcetti of the City of Los Angeles, to explore joint collaborations to promote diversity and pluralism (May, Los Angeles, USA)



The French city of La Courneuve to promote multiculturalism and interfaith understanding at the community level (December, La Courneuve, France)



Fundación Mujeres Por Africa to establish the **Women's Alliance for Peace** (November, New York)



The State of Qatar, to pursue joint efforts and cooperation towards the promotion of new initiatives (December, Doha, Qatar)



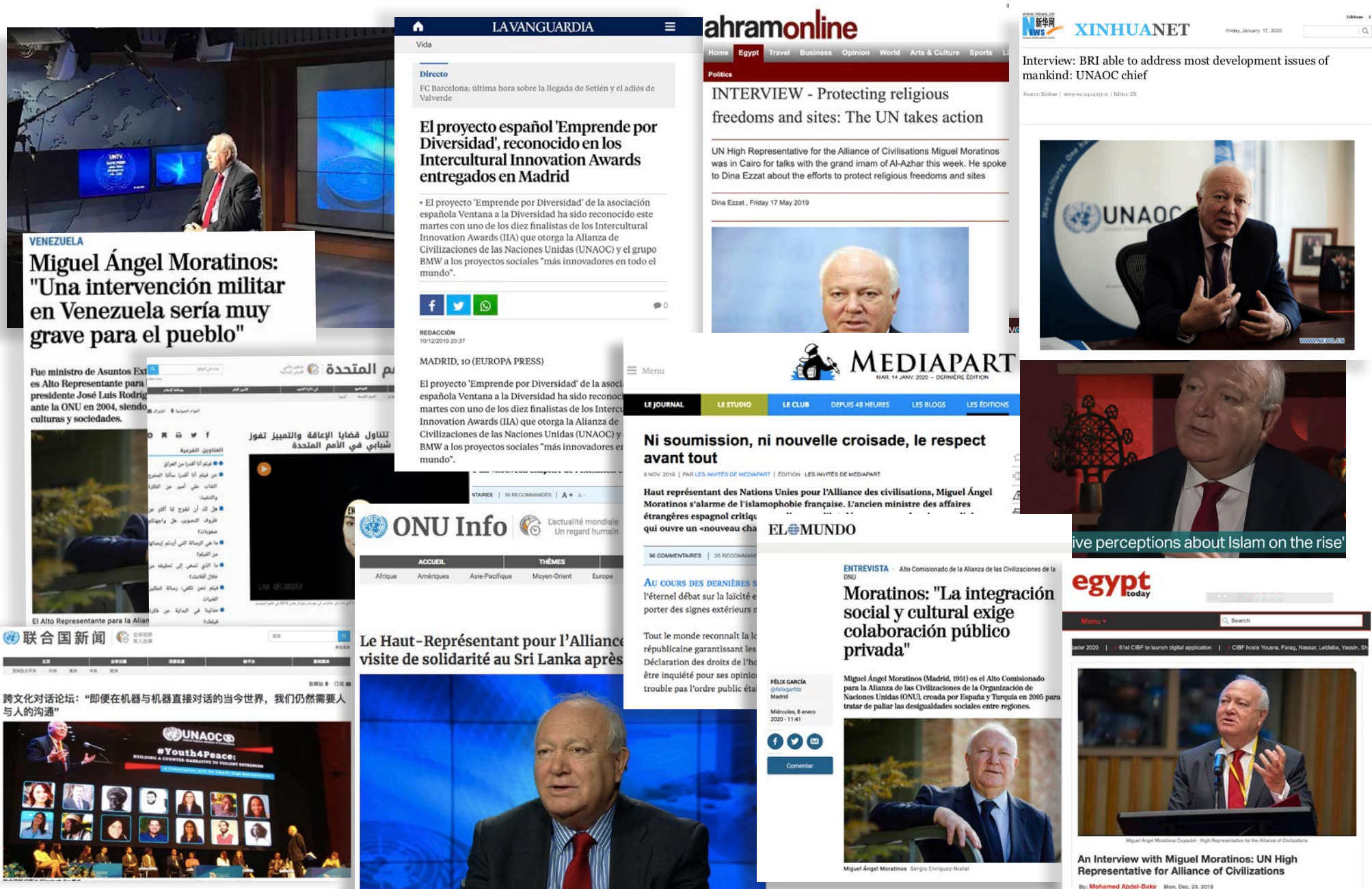
The Global Council for Tolerance and Peace to deepen their mutual interest in promoting intercultural and interfaith dialogue (December, Abu Dhabi, UAE)

The **N. Nazarbayev Center for Development of Interfaith and Inter-Civilization Dialogue** to pursue joint efforts and cooperation in their mutual objectives (3 December, New York)



The Pharos Arts Foundation to promote understanding and reconciliation through art, culture and sustainable development (June 2019)

In 2019, UNAOC was featured in leading media outlets around the world, including *El Mundo* and *La Vanguardia* (Spain), *Al-Ahram* and *Egypt Today* (Egypt), *Mediapart* (France), *UN News*, *TV5Monde* (France), *UN Radio*, *UN Web TV*, *Al Jazeera* (Qatar), *Al Arabiya* (Saudi Arabia), *TRT World* (Turkey), *EFE* (Spain), *ANSA* (Italy), *Xinhua* (China), and many others about its programmes, activities, and the UN Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites.





INTERCULTURAL INNOVATION AWARD: In April, UNAOC, in partnership with BMW Group, hosted a workshop in Berlin, Germany, for the alumni of their joint programme, the **Intercultural Innovation Award**. Participants were selected from different editions of the programme and came from all around the globe. The workshop was designed to be an interactive learning experience during which participants shared experiences about their work in the field of intercultural dialogue, as well as best practices, challenges, and success stories, and reflected upon the future of the alumni network of the Intercultural Innovation Award. Later in the year, UNAOC and BMW Group announced the ten projects that were selected for the 2019 edition of the Intercultural Innovation Award and revealed the final ranking during a ceremony in December at the Royal Theatre in Madrid, Spain. The projects were selected among 1,200+ applications from 128 countries, and are all innovative grassroots projects fostering intercultural dialogue and cooperation. They will receive financial support and mentoring from UNAOC and BMW Group to help them expand and replicate. To learn more about the selected projects, visit interculturalinnovation.org, and follow #iiaward.



PLURAL+: The High Representative for UNAOC and the Director General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Mr. António Vitorino, announced the winners of their joint initiative, the PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival, during an Awards Ceremony at the UN Headquarters in November. Selected for their coverage of migration, diversity, and social inclusion, the winning videos were chosen among 1,200+ submissions from 70+ countries – a record number of entries. An international jury composed of Athar Ahmad (BBC News), Axel Caballero (HBO), Aya Chebbi (African Union Youth Envoy), Lula Dualeh (Digital Advocacy Strategist), Maha Jaafar (YouTube Creator for Change), Chaker Khazaal (Author and Journalist), Tania Safi (Video Journalist and Producer), and Arun Venugopal (WNYC) helped select the winners. UNAOC also worked to raise the visibility of PLURAL+ videos by featuring them in several events, including the ECOSOC Youth Forum and the Forum on Indigenous Issues in April.



FELLOWSHIP: UNAOC selected 24 young civil society leaders from Europe, North America, the Middle East, and North Africa for the 11th edition of its Fellowship programme. In the summer, the EUNA cohort traveled to Morocco, Egypt, and Qatar, and the MENA group visited Germany, Spain, and the USA in the fall. They met with representatives of international institutions, governments, civil society, and media to discuss the 2019 theme, “The role of women in peace-making and conflict prevention.” In December, UNAOC organized an event at the Permanent Mission of Germany to the UN, which featured 15 UNAOC Fellows who shared recommendations on the inclusion of women in mediation efforts and PVE. The Fellowship Programme of UNAOC is made possible by the financial contributions of the governments of Azerbaijan, Germany, and Spain, and the support of the governments of Morocco and Qatar and the League of Arab States.



YOUNG PEACEBUILDERS: UNAOC selected 40 young women and men from the Middle East and North Africa for the 3rd and 4th editions of Young Peacebuilders, a peace education initiative supported by AEXCID (Agencia Extremeña de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo) that helps grow and strengthen the global movement of young peacebuilders. The two 2019 editions supported participants in gaining competencies to address negative stereotypes while bringing visibility to their projects towards the promotion of intercultural and interfaith dialogue. In July, the Young Peacebuilders of the third edition participated in an online preparatory phase followed in October by a one-week in-person workshop in Merida, Spain, to practice peacebuilding skills. They are now back in their communities around the MENA region implementing their own peace initiatives under the guidance of UNAOC, and the Young Peacebuilders of the 4th edition started their online preparation phase in December 2019.



YOUTH SOLIDARITY FUND: UNAOC selected five youth-led organizations out of more than 600 applications from over 70 countries for the 8th edition of its Youth Solidarity Fund. Selected candidates come from the Kingdom of Eswatini, Kenya, Lebanon, Sri Lanka, and Uganda and all work to foster inclusive societies through improved understanding and collaboration across cultures, faiths, and beliefs. Starting in November 2019, UNAOC will provide them with seed funding and capacity-building support over one year to implement projects that utilize innovative approaches to intercultural and interfaith dialogue. Throughout the year, UNAOC also worked to raise the visibility of Youth Solidarity Fund recipients and their work, by featuring them in several events, including the ECOSOC Youth Forum in April. The current edition of the Youth Solidarity Fund is made possible thanks to the support of the Governments of Finland, Malta, and Azerbaijan.



9th Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations to take place in Morocco in 2020

During the **UNAOC Group of Friends Ministerial Meeting** at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, **H.E. Mr. Nasser Bourita, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Morocco**, announced that his government will host the **ninth Global Forum of UNAOC in 2020**. The announcement was welcomed with applause by Members of the UNAOC Group of Friends, especially as it will be the first time a UNAOC Global Forum takes place on the African continent. Previous UNAOC Global Forums were organized in Europe, Asia, and Latin America. *(September, New York)*



*We look forward to welcoming you
to the **9th UNAOC Global Forum**
in Morocco in 2020.*