

NEWS FLASH 📅 Volume 16
#OneHumanity amid COVID-19



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United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

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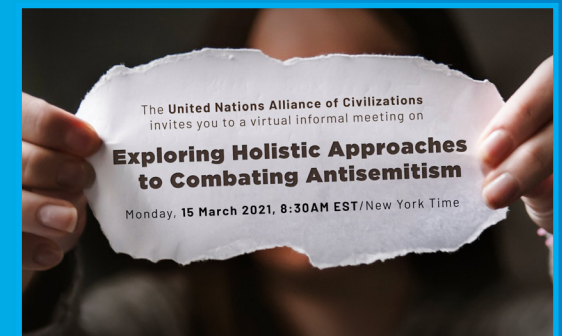
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The High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), Mr. Miguel Moratinos, convened a virtual informal meeting entitled “**Exploring Holistic Approaches to Combating Antisemitism**”. In his opening remarks as the UN Focal Point to monitor antisemitism and enhance a system-wide response, he stated: “Let us start first by recognizing antisemitism as a global problem that should be addressed internationally. It is not a Jewish problem or a European, Western problem. It is also a deep-seated threat to democratic values”.

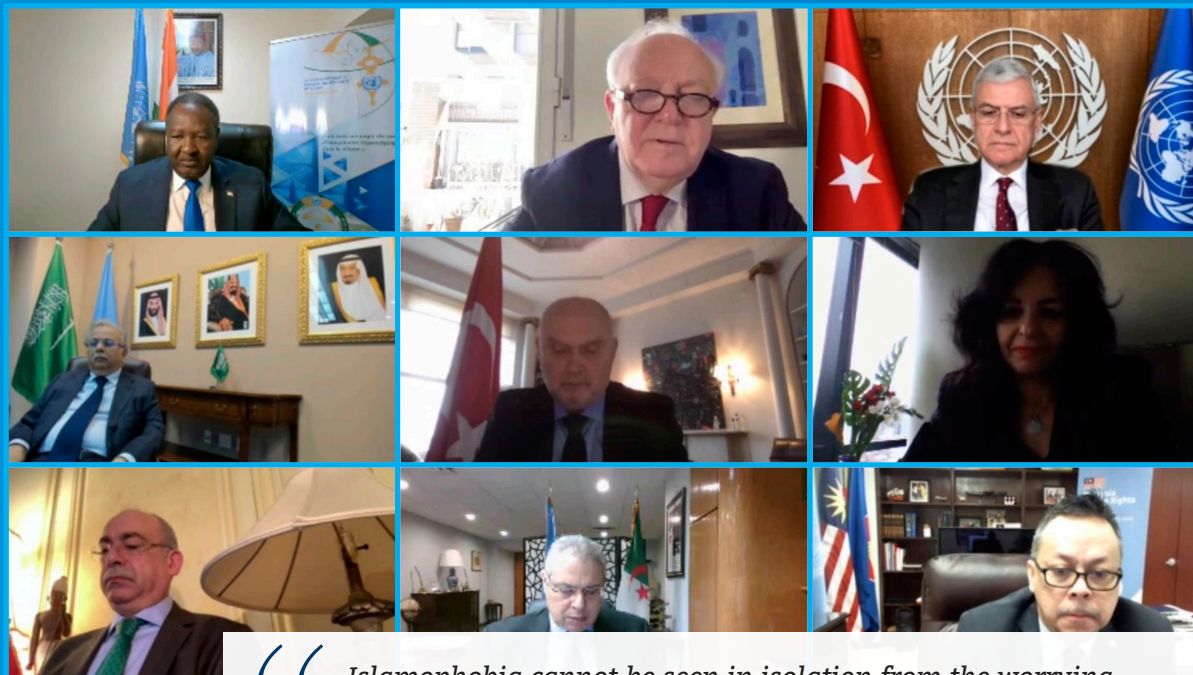
Distinguished speakers included **Rabbi Arthur Schneier, President and Founder of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation and Spiritual Leader of Park East Synagogue**, **Dr. Ahmed Shaheed, the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief**, **Ms. Katherina Von Schnurbein, Coordinator on Combating Antisemitism and Fostering Jewish Life at the European Commission**, as well as leaders of major Jewish organizations, faith actors, envoys and coordinators on combating antisemitism, and relevant UN entities. Participants explored synergies and shared good practices and recommendations on combating antisemitism. (15 March)



Mr. Miguel Moratinos addressed the High-Level Meeting in commemoration of the **International Day to Combat Islamophobia**, organized by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

“Despite progress made in building bridges of understanding through the promotion of intercultural and interfaith dialogue, manifestations of anti-Muslim hatred have persisted and morphed into different forms [...] Islamophobia cannot be seen in isolation from the worrying increase in xenophobia and hate speech against minorities, including immigrants and other faith communities,” Mr. Moratinos said.

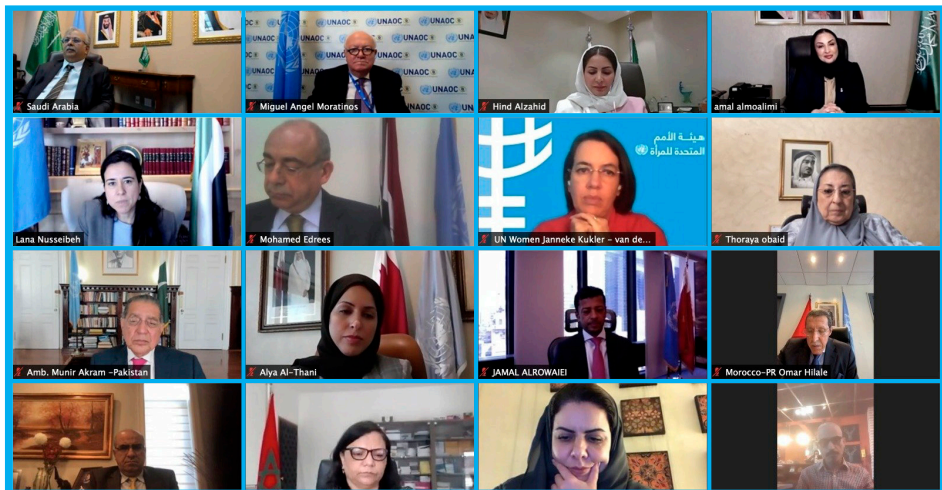
He added that mutual respect, interfaith harmony and peaceful co-existence can be achieved “when there is broad space for everyone to practice the rituals of their religions or beliefs freely and safely”. Mr. Moratinos also pledged his support for the decision by the Council of Foreign Ministers of the OIC to designate **15 March** as the **International Day to Combat Islamophobia**. “As we strive to re-build cohesive and inclusive societies, we all have a responsibility to speak out and act against Islamophobia and anti-Muslim bigotry,” he stated. (17 March)



“Islamophobia cannot be seen in isolation from the worrying increase in xenophobia and hate speech against minorities.

H.E. MIGUEL MORATINOS
High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

HIGHLIGHTS



The High Representative for UNAOC participated in the **High-Level Meeting on the Commemoration of the International Day for Women** entitled “**Women’s Participation in Decision-Making: Reforms and Best Practices**”, co-organized by the **Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the UN and UN Women**.

In his remarks, Mr. Moratinos highlighted the commitment of UNAOC in strengthening the role of **women as mediators in conflicts** with a sociocultural and religious dimension: “I added a fifth pillar to the work of UNAOC to strengthen the role of women as peace mediators. This pillar will contribute to the implementation of SDG 5 to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”. (8 March)



Mr. Moratinos with H.E. Ms. Vanessa Frazier, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Malta to the UN



The High Representative for UNAOC met with H.E. Ms. Vanessa Frazier, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Malta to the UN. He presented the work of UNAOC and they discussed areas of synergy and cooperation. (11 March)



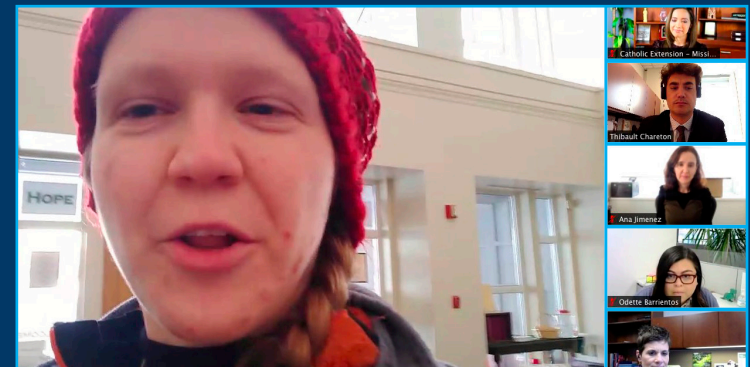
The High Representative for UNAOC participated in a virtual discussion at the closing plenary of the **11th Bosphorus Summit** entitled “**Alliance of Civilizations**”. **Former Minister of State and EU Affairs and Ambassador of Turkey to the Czech Republic, H.E. Mr. Egemen Bağış**, chaired the discussion.

Other participants included **H.E. Mr. Shaukat Aziz, Prime Minister of Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Dimitris Avramopoulos, European Commissioner for Migration in Greece, and H.E. Mr. Mosud Mannan, Bangladeshi Ambassador to Turkey.** (11 March)



As part of its **Global Call to Action “#forSafeWorship”** to safeguard religious sites and worshippers worldwide, UNAOC participated in a webinar organized by Catholic Extension, a non-profit organization working with faith communities in poor and remote areas across the United States.

UNAOC presented the **UN Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites** and the campaign **#forSafeWorship**, encouraging participants to submit their multimedia stories about their special places of worship. The event also featured a series of videos produced by members of the Catholic Extension network about various religious sites around the country and the need to protect them. (23 March)



PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS

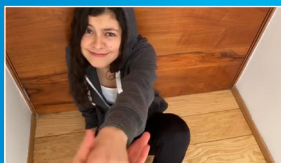


PLURAL+

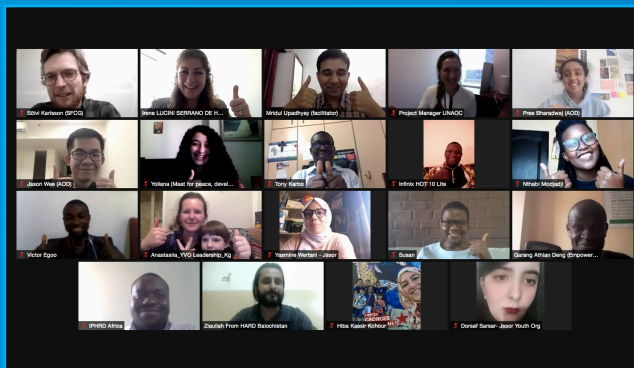
YOUTH VIDEO FESTIVAL ON MIGRATION
CELEBRATING DIVERSITY & SOCIAL INCLUSION



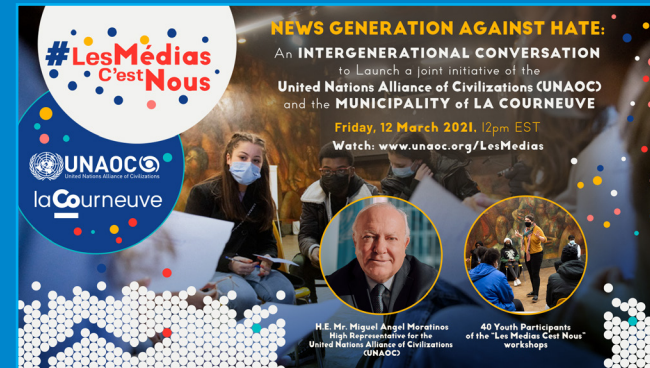
UNAOC and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) launched the **2021 call for submissions** for their joint initiative, the **PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival**. The two organizations encourage youth worldwide to submit short films and make their voices heard about the topics of migration, diversity, social inclusion, and other pressing social issues. For the first time this year, an **Award for Solidarity amid COVID-19** will recognize a film that explores the impact of COVID-19 and related stigma on minority groups and the need for unity and solidarity to ensure that no one is left behind. To learn more, visit pluralplus.unaoc.org.



UNAOC, together with the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and the UN Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCT), launched a pilot project entitled **“Peer-to-Peer Capacity-Building Training Between Young Religious Leaders and Young Media Makers”**. A group of **22 young media makers, young religious leaders, and representatives of faith-based organizations** received training in a series of practical workshops covering the topics on interreligious and intercultural dialogue, preventing violent extremism through strategic communications, hate speech and demystifying digital violence, peace and conflict resolution. Following the workshops, participants will implement their social media campaigns to defuse interethnic and interreligious tensions, prevent and counter extremist and hateful narratives, and promote social cohesion, tolerance, and mutual respect.



UNAOC, in partnership with Search for Common Ground, has started organizing a series of workshops to help shortlisted applicants of the **Youth Solidarity Fund** refine and strengthen their project proposals. **16 organizations from 16 countries** are currently participating in a structured and facilitated learning journey to master their project development skills and build a community of young peacebuilders.



UNAOC and the French Municipality of La Courneuve organized an event to launch their joint initiative, **News Generation Against Hate**. The High Representative for UNAOC engaged in a conversation with some of the project's youth participants, facilitators and elected officials of La Courneuve about the relevance of the programme and its various activities. As part of the new project, **forty young people aged 15 to 25** are engaging in intercultural and interreligious dialogue as they participate in a series of capacity-building training workshops to deconstruct stereotypes, fake news and hate speech by building alternative narratives through media. (10 March)



As part of **#YouthWagingPeace: The Whole Community Approach to PVE**, a programme implemented by the UNESCO Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (MGIEP) in collaboration with UNAOC, a group of young people are currently leading the drafting of a report on the state of PVE in South Asia with the support of **three academic authors**. The report will be published later this year.