

UNOCT First 2021 Ambassadorial-level Quarterly Briefing to Member States

Remarks by the High Representative of the UN Alliance of Civilizations

Delivered on his behalf by Ms. Nihal Saad, Chief of Cabinet

Thursday, 28 January 2021

Under-Secretary-General Voronkov,

Distinguished delegates,

Excellencies,

On the occasion of the annual high-level meeting of UNAOC's Group of Friends last September, a global call to action under the hashtag #forSafeWorship was launched to mobilize young people to share multimedia stories about their connection with religious sites. On a dedicated video, we continue to receive videos and testimonies stressing the importance of religious sites as part of the intrinsic fabric of our societies.

On the mapping of religious sites recommended by the UN Plan of Action, a phased approach developed together with the UN Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT) will be rolled out in the coming months. The objective is to start capturing the universality of religious sites and contribute to fostering respect and understanding of their profound significance.

In accordance with the multi-stakeholder approach of the UN Plan of Action, and as far as religious actors and faith-based organizations are concerned, in the context of the implementation of the Global Pledge for Action by religious actors and faith-based organizations to address the COVID-19 pandemic in collaboration with the United Nations, a webinar with those stakeholders will be held at the end of February to explore the issue of hate speech in the context of attacks against religious sites.

Last but not least, we continue to monitor major attacks against religious sites. According to open sources, there were ten of those during 2020.

We also look forward to working closely with UNOCT, UNCTED, UNICRI and INTERPOL in the implementation of the Global Programme on Countering Terrorist Threats against Vulnerable Targets, which was launched last week, and that will help strengthen Member States' capacity to develop comprehensive and collaborative strategies in the protection of religious sites.

2. In the spirit of partnership with members of the UN Counter-Terrorism Global Compact, **UNAOC led the first Online Youth Consultation on Preventing Violent Extremism through Sport** on 20-21 January, within 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 implementation of the Programme is led by UNOCT in partnership with UNICRI, ICSS, UNCTED and ourselves, and with the participation of INTERPOL.

The online consultation, which brought together 50 youth leaders from 38 countries in the five continents, contributed to advance the role of sport and its values for the prevention of violent extremism and advocated for the meaningful and integral engagement of youth in sustainable peace and development.

3. Together with UNOCT and UNCCT, the face-to-face part of the twelve-month joint project entitled **-to-peer capacity-building training Between young religious** was launched 2 weeks ago . Our teams continue to coordinate together as well with the participants from different faiths and their media makers peers.

4. As the **United Nations Focal Point to monitor antisemitism and enhance a system-**

I look forward to continuing our fruitful partnership with UNOCT and other entities of the UN Counter-Terrorism Global Compact.

Thank you very much.