



**UNAOC**  
United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

**#SpreadNoHate**

*Hate* ←

**Tracking Hatred:  
An International Dialogue on  
HATE SPEECH in the Media**

2 December 2015 | UN Headquarters New York  
[www.unaoc.org/hate-speech/](http://www.unaoc.org/hate-speech/) | [hatespeech@unaoc.org](mailto:hatespeech@unaoc.org)

## CONCEPT NOTE

### ***Tracking Hatred: An International Dialogue on Hate Speech in the Media***

*“Hate Speech shall be understood as speech covering all forms of expression which spread, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance, including: intolerance expressed by aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility against minorities, migrants and people of immigrant origin.”<sup>1</sup>*

In 2015, the world economy has continued to heal at a slow pace, and new challenges have emerged, including geopolitical conflicts and terrorist attacks. At the same time, the push to escape poverty and political conflicts has remained strong for immigrants globally. Once they arrive in host countries, migrants face adversity and are increasingly affected by anti-immigration attitudes. All over the world, there is a sharp rise in examples of both governments and individuals using hate speech against migrants and minority communities, blaming them for their nations’ struggles.

In this context, the media play a crucial role in the public’s perceptions of migrant populations and their integration by providing reporting and analysis that are objective, well researched and accurate. However, both deliberate and unintentional negative portrayals of immigrants and minority groups are often found in the media, thus negatively impacting people’s views of these communities.

Faced with intense competition, news organizations publish content as quickly as possible, often with less editorial oversight and fact checking, which results in more generalizations, dehumanizing language, and the mixing of facts and opinions. Hateful language is also found online in the comment section of articles, which are rife with abusive language. Social media too provide ideal ground for hate speech. Their immediacy, accessibility, relative anonymity and the difficulty of regulating them, have allowed many hate groups to speak and to have their messages heard.

Today’s world is witnessing mounting and palpable tensions between those who seek an unrestricted right to speech, and those who want to protect society from those who use the media as a tool to spread hate. Debates and discussions are needed, and creative solutions are critical.

### **INITIATIVE**

In keeping with its mission to promote dialogue between cultures, civilizations, faiths, and peoples, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) is creating a platform for constructive dialogue on hate speech and the sharing of best practices. Particular emphasis will be placed on engaging the global media space and journalists, particularly those who are well positioned to report, comment on, and investigate xenophobia, hate speech, violent extremism and prejudice. Other participants will include representatives of online social networking services, government officials, academics, representatives of United Nations entities and NGOs.

The UNAOC Hate Speech initiative will allow participants to examine the different measures that have been taken globally to curb hate speech, and discuss their limitations. They will explore the reasons why hate speech remains a pervasive element that contributes to violent extremism, and the link between hate speech and the treatment of migrants. They will also look at the root causes of hate speech, the impact of structural inequalities and the stigmatization of certain groups in society.

The UNAOC Hate Speech initiative consists of (1) a series of one-day symposia in different international locations, (2) a strategic media campaign to disseminate and share key messages, and (3) a complete report with concrete recommendations. At each symposium, UNAOC expects a group of 150 carefully selected participants, composed of international professionals (30 percent), and local participants in order to address the topic of hate speech from a global perspective while looking at local case studies and challenges.

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<sup>1</sup> Anne Weber: Manual on Hate Speech, Council of Europe Publishing, ISBN 978-92-871-6613-5 (2008)

**DISSEMINATION***1) Media Campaign #SpreadNoHate*

UNAOC is developing an intensive social media campaign to ensure maximum reach and greater impact of the cycle of symposia on hate speech. It will actively engage its global followers, before, during and after the symposia, on several social media platforms, including Facebook (over 80,000 followers across its various pages as of October 2015) and Twitter (close to 10,000 followers across its various accounts as of October 2015). Before each symposium, UNAOC followers will be invited to share their questions in preparation of the panels. During the symposium, the Alliance will keep its community involved by live tweeting the key messages shared during the various panels, posting photos, and by engaging directly with participants, partners and organizations. At the end of the cycle of symposia, UNAOC will use social media to advertise the findings of the report.

*2) Publication*

At the conclusion of the cycle of symposia, UNAOC will compile all the information shared during the various panels and draft a complete report of the proceedings, which will include a set of concrete policy recommendations. This publication will be made available for download on the UNAOC's new website, [www.unaoc.org](http://www.unaoc.org), and on the websites of partner organizations, in English, French, Spanish and Arabic. The Alliance will share the report with an international network of journalists, media organizations, UN Agencies and other international and regional bodies, NGOs, and institutions of higher education across the globe. Finally, the findings of the report will be presented by UNAOC at various international forums.

**OBJECTIVES AND IMPACT**

The work completed through the UNAOC Hate Speech initiative will benefit journalists of all nationalities, advocates, policy-makers and the general public by providing them with a more complete and nuanced understanding of the topic of hate speech, which in turn will contribute to a richer public debate. The program will also significantly contribute to a better integration of immigrant communities and the establishment of a global standard and legal framework for improved treatment of immigrants.

*For any questions related to the UNAOC Hate Speech initiative, please contact: [HateSpeech@unaoc.org](mailto:HateSpeech@unaoc.org)*

**SPEAKERS**



**H. E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser** @UNAOC  
High Representative, UNAOC



**Dr. Moustafa Bayoumi**  
@BayoumiMoustafa  
Professor of English, Brooklyn College



**Dr. Agnès Callamard**  
@AgnesCallamard  
Director, Global Freedom of Expression & Information



**Ashraf El Nour** @IOMatUN  
Permanent Observer for the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to the United Nations



**Cristina Gallach**  
@cristinagallach  
UN Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information



**David Gura** @davidgura  
Reporter, Bloomberg Television



**Widad Ketfi** (France)  
@widadk  
Journalist, Bondy Blog



**Wilson Liévano** @wlievano  
Journalist/Editor, News animator, The Wall Street Journal Americas



**Michelle Mittelstadt**  
@MittelWorld Director of Communications and Public Affairs, Migration Policy Institute



**Eric Newton** @EricNewton1  
Innovation Chief, Professor of Practice, The Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication



**Dr. Andre Oboler** (Australia)  
@oboler  
CEO, Online Hate Prevention Institute



**Mirta Ojito** @MirtaOjito  
Director, News Standards, Telemundo network



**Michael Oreskes**  
@MichaelOreskes  
Senior Vice President for News, Editorial Director, NPR



**Nihal Saad** @nsaad777  
Chief of Cabinet & Spokesperson for the High Representative for UNAOC



**Jane Sasseen** @janesasseen  
Executive Director, McGraw Center, CUNY Graduate School of Journalism



**Kai Wright** @kai\_wright  
Features Editor, The Nation



**John Yearwood**  
@john\_yearwood  
World Editor, *The Miami Herald*; Chairman, International Press Institute



DRAFT AGENDA (as of November 11, 2015)

*Tracking Hatred: An International Dialogue on Hate Speech in the Media*

**Wednesday, December 02, 2015**

United Nations Headquarters, Secretariat Building, Conference Room 4  
09:00 – 18:00

**@UNAOC #SpreadNoHate**

**09:00 – 09:30            REGISTRATION**

**09:30 – 10:00        OPENING SESSION**

– *Opening Statements:*

- H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, High Representative for the UN Alliance of Civilizations
- Ms. Cristina Gallach, UN Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information

**10:00 – 11:30        PANEL 1: UNDERSTANDING HATE SPEECH IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT AND ACROSS CULTURES**

The rise of the Internet and the instantaneous global communications that it enables have raised a number of questions about how to handle hate speech when it can be read, viewed, and heard by all types of audiences around the world. A country's approach to hate speech is informed by its history and traditions. Content that is considered acceptable in one place may be considered offensive, discriminatory or even illegal in other places that have different sets of values, beliefs and laws. People's understanding of hate speech is also impacted by race, religion, socio-economic background, structural inequalities in society, and many other factors. Hate speech does not have a universally accepted definition<sup>1</sup>, which leads domestic laws and international agreements to vary widely on the topic.

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<sup>1</sup> Factsheet on Hate Speech, European Court of Human Rights (June 2015)  
[http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/FS\\_Hate\\_speech\\_ENG.pdf](http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/FS_Hate_speech_ENG.pdf)

***Questions for discussion:***

- What are sensible approaches to hate speech in a global context?
- What are ways to approach the question of hate speech in different contexts and cultures?
- How can a reporter learn about local “red lines” when reporting on controversial issues at home and abroad?
- What to do with one’s sets of values and beliefs when studying other societies and cultures?
- What are ways to learn about the various understandings, sensitivities and perceptions of what constitutes hate speech? How can one contextualize them?

- Moderator: Kai Wright, Features Editor, *The Nation*
- Panelist 1: Dr. Agnès Callamard, Director, Global Freedom of Expression & Information, Columbia University
- Panelist 2: John Yearwood, World Editor, *The Miami Herald*; Chairman, International Press Institute Committee
- Panelist 3: Dr. Moustafa Bayoumi, Professor of English, Brooklyn College; Author of “How Does It Feel To Be a Problem? Being Young and Arab in America” (Penguin Press)

*At the end of the session, participants are invited to ask questions and share comments with the panel. They are also invited to join the conversation online using #SpreadNoHate.*

**11:30 – 11:45            *Coffee Break***

**11:45 – 13:15            **PANEL 2: THE MEDIA AS A VEHICLE FOR HATE SPEECH****

Hate speech in the media adopts many forms. It can be found in the content published and aired by traditional media. Faced with intense competition, news organizations have had to publish content faster, often with less editorial oversight and fact checking. This can result in more generalizations, more labeling, divisive language, etc. Increasingly, hate speech is also found in the comment sections of online articles. While online comments offer readers an important space to express themselves and to sometimes provide additional information to reporters and fellow readers, they are also ideal ground for hate speech, especially on articles covering “sensitive” topics such as race or religion. Finally, social media platforms have also become rife with abusive language. Their immediacy, accessibility, and relative anonymity have allowed many hate groups to spread their ideologies.

***Questions for discussion:***

- What constitutes hate speech in the media, and how to balance the right to freedom of expression with a need to prevent the spread of dangerous rhetoric?

- How can reporters avoid fueling hatred, especially when reporting on religious, cultural and political tensions?
  - How are media organizations addressing the issue of hate speech?
  - What role should media organizations play in monitoring hate speech coming from their audience? Should they play a role?
  - Should space be given to hateful voices in reporting? What are the risks of fueling tensions and inciting more hate?
- Moderator: David Gura, Reporter, Bloomberg Television
  - Panelist 1: Widad Ketfi (France), Journalist, Bondy Blog
  - Panelist 2: Michael Oreskes, Senior Vice President, Editorial Director, National Public Radio (NPR)
  - Panelist 3: Eric Newton, Innovation Chief, Professor of Practice, Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Arizona State University

*At the end of the session, participants are invited to ask questions and share comments with the panel. They are also invited to join the conversation online using #SpreadNoHate.*

**13:15 – 14:15**

**LUNCH BREAK**

*Lunch and refreshments will be provided to participants*

**14:15 – 15:45**

**PANEL 3: MONITORING, REGULATING, AND LIMITING HATE SPEECH**

The anonymity, immediacy and global nature of the Internet have made it an ideal tool for hatemongers, racists and extremists. Often, it has enabled previously diverse and fragmented groups to connect, propagate their rhetoric, recruit, and organize. This rise in hate speech online is compounded by difficulties in policing such activities, and the Internet remains largely unregulated. More nations have sought to combat hate speech. The regulation of hate speech online depends on the different laws around the globe and the enforcement policies of the governments. It also largely depends on the definitions of hate speech adopted by the leading Internet service providers and the leading social media platforms, and how they choose to intervene in instances of hate speech.

***Questions for discussion:***

- What are the best practices to curb hate speech?
- Whose role is it to combat hate speech?
- Where do you draw the line between hate speech and freedom of expression?
- What are steps news organizations can take to uphold freedom of expression when moderating sensitive or controversial comments?

- Moderator: Nihal Saad, Chief of Cabinet and Spokesperson, United Nations Alliance of Civilizations
- Panelist 1: Guy Berger, Director, Division of Freedom of Expression and Media Development, UNESCO (TBC)
- Panelist 2: Dr. Andre Oboler (Australia), CEO, Online Hate Prevention Institute
- Panelist 3: TBD

*At the end of the session, participants are invited to ask questions and share comments with the panel. They are also invited to join the conversation online using #SpreadNoHate.*

**15:45 – 17:15**

**PANEL 4 - THE IMPACT OF HATE SPEECH ON MINORITIES: THE CASE OF IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES**

- Moderator: Jane Sasseen, Journalist; Executive Director, McGraw Center, CUNY Graduate School of Journalism; Author, *A Clash of Cultures: Hate Speech, Taboos, Blasphemy, and the Role of the News Media* (Center for International Media Assistance)
- Panelist 1: Ashraf El Nour, Permanent Observer for the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to the United Nations
- Panelist 2: Mirta Ojito, Director of News Standards, Telemundo; Assistant Professor, Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism; Author of *Hunting Season: Immigration and Murder in an All-American Town* (Beacon Press, 2013)
- Panelist 3: Wilson Liévano, Journalist/Editor, News animator, *The Wall Street Journal Americas*

**17:15 – 18:15**

**CLOSING SESSION: CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND WAY FORWARD**

- Keynote Speaker: Mr. David Kaye, UN Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression (TBC)



- Rapporteur: Ms. Michelle Mittelstadt, Director of Communications and Public Affairs, Migration Policy Institute; Director of Communications, MPI Europe
- Closing Remarks: H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, UN High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations

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*A full report of the day's discussions will be made available on the website of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations ([www.unaoc.org](http://www.unaoc.org)). For any questions related to the UNAOC Hate Speech initiative, please contact: [HateSpeech@unaoc.org](mailto:HateSpeech@unaoc.org).*