

UNITED NATIONS PRESS RELEASE



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United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide welcomes the adoption by the General Assembly of an International Day for Countering Hate Speech

(New York, 26 July 2021) The United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Alice Wairimu Nderitu, welcomed the adoption by the General Assembly on 21 July of resolution A/75/L.115 on “Promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue and tolerance in countering hate speech”. The resolution marks an important milestone in advancing interreligious and intercultural dialogue and tolerance and countering hate speech globally. The resolution raises concern over the exponential spread and proliferation of hate speech worldwide, in particular online, something which has been further exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic. It recognizes the need to counter discrimination, xenophobia and hate speech and calls on all relevant actors, including Member States, to increase their efforts to address this phenomenon, in line with international human rights law. The resolution further proclaims 18 June as the International Day for Countering Hate Speech and requests the President of the General Assembly to organize a high-level meeting on countering hate speech to mark the commemoration of the first such international day in 2022.

“The rise in hate speech represents a threat to the values and principles that we as the United Nations are working towards. The impact of hate speech on communities and on individuals can be devastating. Hate speech makes those targeted more vulnerable to violence, exposes them to exclusion and discrimination, exacerbating underlying social and economic inequalities, and undermining social cohesion. In some circumstances, hate speech can also be a precursor to the commission of atrocity crimes,” the Special Adviser noted. “We all need to join hands to tackle this phenomenon. Addressing hate speech requires a multi stakeholder approach involving Government, civil society, academia, media, tech and social media companies, the private sector, faith actors, as well as the victims and communities affected by hate speech. The UN Strategy and Plan of Action for Hate Speech set out a strong framework for this work, emphasizing the need to counter hate holistically and in full respect of freedom of opinion and expression. I remain committed to supporting Member States and all other actors in these endeavors”, the Special Adviser concluded.

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