

**Rabbi Arthur Schneier Joined United Nations Secretary General  
António Guterres in Address to United Nations General Assembly In  
Historic Video Conference: The Role of Religious Leaders in Addressing the  
Challenges of COVID-19**

*Hosted by Ambassador Omar Hilale, Permanent Representative of the  
Kingdom of Morocco to the United Nations*

Rabbi Arthur Schneier, President and Founder of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation, Senior Rabbi of Park East Synagogue and a member of the High Level Group and Ambassador of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) addressed the role that faith leaders must play in the world's common battle to defeat COVID-19 in a video conference hosted by Omar Hilale, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Morocco to the United Nations. He was joined by United Nations Secretary General António Guterres; Tijjani Muhammad-Bande, President of the United Nations General Assembly. The conference was attended by representatives of all United Nations member states.

"I would like to pay tribute to His Majesty King Mohammed VI of Morocco for His Majesty's leading role in promoting interfaith dialogue and cooperation, said Rabbi Arthur Schneier. "The holding of our meeting today is another example of Morocco's unwavering commitment, under His Majesty's leadership, to the promotion of the values of dialogue among religions and cultures, mutual respect, solidarity, unity and human dignity."

Rabbi Arthur Schneier stated, "I am honored to participate with Cardinal Miguel Angel Ayuso (President, Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue), addressing us on behalf of His Holiness Pope Francis, known for his love and inclusive embrace of all, and Mr. Ahmed Abbadi, Secretary General of the Rabita Mohammadia of Oulémas of the Kingdom of Morocco. Miguel Angel Moratinos, High Representative of the UNAOC and United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications, Melissa Fleming.

According to Rabbi Arthur Schneier, "During this tragic pandemic, it is essential that faith leaders help raise universal awareness about the multifaceted challenges facing each and every nation. Religious leaders must create messages of hope, optimism, and solidarity by teaching the need to embrace the importance of working together not only to fight this pandemic, but also to emerge stronger in the post-COVID era."

Rabbi Arthur Schneier told the world leaders that he came to them not only as a religious leader but as a survivor of the Holocaust, "After my liberation in January 1945, on Allied Victory Day May 9th the world awoke to the realization of a Europe in shambles with the loss of over 50 million people including 6 million of the Jewish people including my grandparents and family members who perished in Auschwitz. At that time, the world was left with heavy losses and scars but with the aid of the Marshall Plan and the generosity of the victors, Europe was rebuilt. With hope the United Nations was established seventy-five years ago, a classic example of

mankind's history: destruction, devastation, loss of life, rebuilding, restoration as a result of united action and ultimately rebirth."

"Once again we have an opportunity to build a better world together. United we prevail – divided we fail," stated Rabbi Arthur Schneier. "COVID 19 has shown no mercy; there is no immunity – no borders, no denominations, the young – the old, the rich – the poor; the have nots most of all, but not exclusively. Together we must be a source of comfort and strength to our children, the lost and the infirmed."

Rabbi Schneier added, "As People of Faith we must be in the forefront of countering the hatemongers in our midst who have invaded social media to disseminate xenophobia, anti-Semitism, bias against minorities and conspiracy theories exploiting this tragic time for hatred and division. We must also shield our children from the transmission of division and hatred. By example we must serve as their moral compass to educate them of our commitment **love your neighbor as yourself and respect for the other** in a concerted effort to unite our divided human family. "

Rabbi Arthur Schneier stated that, "As faith leaders we must fervently denounce and stem the scapegoating, the finger pointing and blaming others. We must isolate the lepers of bias, heal the divisions and strengthen those forces committed to uniting **a divided human family through mutual acceptance and respect and peaceful co-existence.** "

"Rabbi Arthur Schneier concluded, "We all have responsibility to come together with all sectors of society in an alliance of civilization to establish a 21<sup>st</sup> Century recovery plan to repair and improve our wounded world."

###