

His Excellency Mr. Antonio Guterres  
Secretary-General  
The United Nations  
New York, NY 10017

Zeid Ra'ad al Hussein  
High Commissioner for Human Rights  
Palais Wilson  
52 Rue des Paquis  
CH-1201 Geneva  
Switzerland

1 December 2017

**Re: Blackface Photo Posted by UN Human Rights Official**

Dear Secretary General and High Commissioner,

We have received disturbing information alleging that UN Human Rights Council official Alfred de Zayas has [posted](#) on his blog a photo of himself [in blackface](#), which he termed “in colonial identity.”

Given that your own United Nations Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent has determined that the practice of blackface perpetuates a negative stereotype and derogatory image of Africans and people of African descent, who consider that this practice is rooted in unacceptable, colonial attitudes that they find racist and offensive— with elements linked to enslavement—we urge you to (a) investigate the allegation, and, if proven true, condemn Mr. de Zayas’ actions; (b) demand that the photo be removed immediately from his website, and that he apologize to people of African Descent.

Excellencies, this latest racial allegation underscores grave concerns we have [raised repeatedly](#) over Mr. de Zayas’ [revisionist history](#) of World War II which has made him a [hero to Holocaust deniers](#), and over his [support](#) for oppressive regimes such as Iran, Cuba, and Venezuela, where he is now on an official UN visit—orchestrated by the Maduro regime, but [supported](#) by your funds and officials—which he is using to post [propaganda photos](#) of well-stocked stores, when in fact millions are hungry. Mr. de Zayas discredits the United Nations. We urge you to call on him to go—immediately.

Yours sincerely,



Hillel C. Neuer  
Executive Director