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# UN secretary-general receives WJC Theodore Herzl Award

• By ALAN ROSENBAUM

UN Secretary-General António Guterres accepted the World Jewish Congress' highest honor, the WJC Theodor Herzl Award on Monday, November 9.

In his acceptance remarks, he acknowledged that “a steady stream of prejudice has continued to blight our world: antisemitic assaults, harassment and vandalism; Holocaust denial... With COVID-19, another virus has spread – antisemitism and hatred of many kinds.” He called the WJC’s work to fight such hatred “more important than ever.”

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, this year’s award was presented during a virtual gala. With the online event held on the anniversary of Kristallnacht, WJC President Ronald S. Lauder emphasized the dangers of indifference to antisemitism and divisiveness among the Jewish people, calling for action from political leaders, university administrations and social media companies.

Lauder highlighted the WJC’s successful engagement with Facebook, leading to the company’s recent announcements augmenting its policy prohibiting Facebook and Instagram users from posting



WJC PRESIDENT Ronald S. Lauder called UN Secretary-General António Guterres the ‘voice of fairness and equity that the State of Israel and the Jewish people have been hoping for at the UN for a long, long time.’ (Noa Grayevsky)

hate speech to their platforms. “We are at the forefront of the fight against antisemitism on social media. In a major policy change, after our close work with Facebook, the internet giant is now removing posts with antisemitic stereotypes and Holocaust denial.”

In honoring Guterres, Lauder said, “The World Jewish Congress’ highest honor, our Theodor Herzl Award, comes with our deepest appreciation to you for being the voice of fairness and equity that the

State of Israel and the Jewish people have been hoping for at the UN for a long, long time... I want to express our gratitude to you for calling out antisemitism and anti-Zionism and refusing to bow to the pressure of those who seek to isolate, demonize and delegitimize the only Jewish state in the world – Israel.. Through your words and deeds over many years, you have shown that you are a true and devoted friend of the Jewish people and of the State of Israel.”