Herzog says upcoming UN racism conference promotes hate

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The upcoming United Nations conference on racism in Durban, South Africa will promote “hate and diatribe of the worst kinds,” President Isaac Herzog said Tuesday at the opening of the Global Forum to Combat Antisemitism in Jerusalem.

Herzog called for countries to join together to fight against anticipated antisemitism at the Durban IV conference by “using all means available to democracies.”

Herzog pointed to recent events like the COVID-19 pandemic and May’s 11-day conflict in Gaza as contributors to the recent wave of attacks on Jews.

“The costs of antisemitism were always horrific,” Herzog said.

This year’s two-day Global Forum, organized by the Foreign Ministry in collaboration with the Diaspora Affairs Ministry, is held under the slogan “collective efforts for collective impact.”

Speaking after Herzog, Diaspora Affairs Minister Nachman Shai said the government must recognize how events within Israel, like conflicts in Gaza, affect world Jewry.

“Our military decisions impact Jewish communities globally,” said Shai, calling the Gaza conflict a “turning point” on antisemitism.

“Violence in Israel immediately turns Jewish communities into global targets,” he added.

Shai also expressed serious concern over the way in which the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is being linked to other liberal causes around the world.

Left-wing groups, including Black Lives Matter, are increasingly linking the Palestinian cause to their own issues, arguing they are all victims of the same oppressive system, of which Israel is a part.

The minister compared antisemitism to a global pandemic that demands a global approach.

“Antisemitism not a Jewish or Israeli problem,” Shai emphasized. “It’s a global problem, and it must be treated as such.”

The Global Forum to Combat Antisemitism was established in 2007 to bring together those involved in the fight against antisemitism around the globe.

This year’s forum was attended by 180 guests from around the world, joined by hundreds who attended virtually.

The conference is focusing on social media and the rise in antisemitism after Operation Guardian of the Walls in May. It seeks to create an action plan for fighting hatred of Jews.

Foreign Minister Yair Lapid is giving the keynote address Wednesday at 11:00 a.m.