

WIESENTHAL CENTER: LVIV MAYOR COVERS UP ANTISEMITISM (Ukraine)

Reported by JTA News

12/6/2012- The Simon Wiesenthal Center has strongly condemned a statement by the mayor of Lviv, Ukraine, in which he said that in his city "there has never been anti-Semitism and there will never be." Mayor Andriy Sadovyi made the statement June 10 at a news conference. Efraim Zuroff, Israel director for the Simon Wiesenthal Center, told JTA Monday that the mayor's statements were "a hopeless attempt to cover up very strong manifestations of antisemitism." Zuroff noted the existence of a restaurant in Lviv which encourages patrons to dress up like haredi Jews and haggle over prices. Another restaurant celebrates the legacy of the Ukrainian Nazi collaborators led by Stefan Bandera. His men actively participated in the murder of thousands of Jews in 1941.

The Lviv municipality is set on June 30 to award a prize named after Bandera to individuals who "helped develop Ukrainian statehood." Many Ukrainians view Bandera and his troops as anti-Soviet freedom fighters. Zuroff called the prize "another display of gross insensitivity by the Lviv municipality, which continues to countenance antisemitism." He reiterated his organization's call to tourists to avoid Lviv's controversial restaurants. Lviv, in western Ukraine, is one of the host cities of the European 2012 championship games. The Bandera prize is "part of a whitewashing campaign" in Ukraine, according to researcher Irena Cantorovich. She published a study this month on Ukrainian commemoration issues at Tel Aviv University's Kantor Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry.

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