JNF to UN Chief: I hope you put an end to UN's hatred of Israel

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UN Secretary-General H.E. António Guterres arrived on Monday to the the Grove of Nations in Jerusalem, as a guest of KKL-JNF World Chairman, Mr. Daniel Atar.

Together with Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations Danny Danon and Atar, Guterres planted a tree in a formal ceremony.

This marks the first visit of Secretary General Guterres [since taking office on January 1](http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/221645), and follows the words of support he expressed last April in front of the General Assembly of the World Jewish Congress where he said that, “The modern form of anti-Semitism is the denial of the existence of the state of Israel”.

The Grove of Nations was established by KKL-JNF and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2005 in the Jerusalem Forest. It is part of the Olive Tree Route, an initiative led by UNESCO and the Council of Europe to establish an olive tree route around the entire Mediterranean basin, expressing the common desire for peace and co-existence.

Since its establishment, over 100 world leaders have planted a tree in the Grove of Nations as a symbol of peace, cooperation, friendship, life and continuity. Among the world leaders who took part in the planting ceremony in the past are Former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Italian President Sergio Mattarella, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and others.

During the ceremony, Atar, praised the friendship and positive stance Guterres holds towards Israel, but criticized the one-sided and [hostile position held by the different UN bodies.](http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/234637)

"The tree you plant here today, Your Excellency, will join the trees that have been planted here over 2,000 years ago," Atar said. "Those same trees also supplied part of the First Temple that sat on the Temple Mount, which, according to the body that you lead, is a holy site only for Muslims."

"This remains an absurd decision which attempted to rewrite history at the expense of the Jewish people and the state of Israel. I hope that, along with this tree, a new spirit will grow within the UN organizations – one that will put an end to anti-Israel hatred and anti-Semitism."

Guterres said, "After visiting [Yad Vashem](http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/234624), the site that commemorates the worst crimes committed in humankind, planting this tree serves as a symbolic act of life and peace."

"KKL-JNF contributes greatly to the fight against climate change and desertification. Its plan to plant trees around the world is important to global solidarity, and I am proud to be part of these efforts. I thank you for the opportunity to plant a tree here, which represents my honest commitment to life and peace."

The Secretary General’s full last name is "de Oliveira Guterres." Oliviera, means "olive tree" in Portuguese. Guterres explained that after he was born, his grandfather planted an olive tree in his name.

"that tree remains standing, meaning we have many things in common," he concluded.