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**HEADLINE:** Swiss human rights campaigner turns down "Kadhafi" award

**BODY:**

Swiss rights campaigner Jean Ziegler has turned down a nomination for this year's Kadhafi human rights prize, which he would have shared with Holocaust denier Roger Garaudy, he told AFP on Tuesday.

**"I told my Libyan interlocutors that I could not accept an award or distinction from any country because of my responsibilities at the United Nations," he said.**

Ziegler is partly known for his campaign to force his country's legendary secretive banks to return billions of dollars in gold reportedly looted from World War II Holocaust victims by the Nazis.

Until last year a sociology lecturer at the University of Geneva, he is also special investigator for the UN commission on food rights and has undertaken several missions to Libya.

Ziegler was in Tripoli last week on a UN mission, he told AFP.

Libya on Monday awarded the 750,000-dollar (euro) prize, named after the maverick Libyan leader to 13 writers and public figures including the French writer and Holocaust denier, Roger Garaudy.

Garaudy was fined 120,000 francs (18,000 dollars) by a Paris court for his anti-Zionist work "The Founding Myths of Israeli Politics" which was found to have distorted the wartime deaths of an estimated six million Jews.

Other prize-winners included a string of writers such as Lebanon's Nadim Bitar, Libya's Ahmad Ibrahim Faqih, Khalifa Tlisi and Ali Fahmi Khasheim, and Sudan's Mohammad al-Fayturi.

The rights prize has been awarded every year since 1989 when it went to then South African opposition leader Nelson Mandela.

But this year's award comes just a month after a major diplomatic row over the prospect of Libya chairing the UN Commission on Human Rights in 2003.

Washington has expressed strong opposition to the likelihood that African states will use their turn to appoint the chair to name Libya.

Human Rights Watch, a US-based rights group, has also said it was unhappy with the situation.