

ADDRESS
by the Ambassador of Russia to Israel
H.E. Mr. Anatoly Viktorov
at the state reception on the occasion
of the Russia Day – the National Day of the Russian Federation
June 10, 2021, Herzliya

Your Excellency Minister Gila Gamliel,

Honorable guests, colleagues,

Dear compatriots, friends,

I am glad to welcome you at the state reception on the occasion of the Russia Day. On this holiday, we honor our country, which we love and are proud of.

For us, Russia is much more than just a place on the map. Even thousands of kilometers away from the Motherland, we feel an unbreakable bond with it, with our invaluable historical and cultural heritage, timeless spiritual values and moral foundations, unique traditions.

June 12, 1990 became a turning point in the development pattern of our country, marked pivotal changes. The path that has been passed was full of thorns. Through patriotism, unity, stamina and dedicated work of millions of people, we were able to overcome all difficulties and hardships with honor. Within a historically short period, we succeeded in forming a solid legal and socio-economic foundation of modern Russia, to ensure the inviolability of its sovereignty and democratic statehood, to preserve peace and harmony among the peoples of our huge multinational and multi-confessional family.

Sincere love for the Motherland, respect for its past, responsibility for its present and future, readiness to contribute to the securing of national objectives and to defend its strategic interests in the international arena – this is the key pillar of a strong and confident state, which is open to the international community, ready to establish mutually beneficial cooperation with all interested partners.

Based on its historical experience, Russia is pursuing an independent and multidimensional external course, a proactive foreign policy, which contemplates pragmatism and compromises, but, at the same time, is focused on the realization of

long-term national interests. Promotes a unifying agenda in strict accordance with the UN Charter.

Advocates the use of peaceful, political and diplomatic means in the settlement of all disputes, strengthening of the collective decision-making and legal basis of world affairs, consolidation and joining of efforts of states in addressing numerous challenges and threats of our time: from undermining international and regional security and stability, the outbreak of new and fuelling of simmering regional conflicts, the spread of international terrorism, economic instability to environmental risks and a pandemic. Russia is one of the guarantors of the emerging more just and democratic world order.

Dear friends,

For a long time, Middle East has remained high on a Russian foreign policy agenda. Israel, with whom we have very good, close ties, is an important partner of Russia in the region.

A large number of descendants from the former Soviet Union, who now live in Israel, is a significant factor in Russian-Israeli relations. It is fundamentally important for us that comprehensive solutions to regional problems clearly reflect Israel's legitimate security interests.

Russia has had traditionally friendly relations with the Arab world and with Palestinian people as well. We welcome the normalization of relations in the Middle East region between various states, including Arab countries and Israel.

At the same time, it is abundantly clear that it is hardly possible to achieve stable peace in this region without solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict – one of the most persistent in modern history, which serves as a source of tension throughout the whole Middle East and fuels radical sentiments far beyond its borders.

We presume that substantive issues, such as the creation of two states, should be resolved in accordance with the mutual interests of the peoples living in this region. And not to favor momentary timeserving political considerations, but to achieve the goal of ensuring peace and stability over the long-term historical perspective.

Russia and Israel are actively cooperating through their foreign affairs ministries. We are always open to work with Israeli partners on regional security and stability, and specifically within multilateral formats. Meaning, primarily, the Middle East Quartet – the only legitimate mechanism approved by UN Security Council resolutions, which can play an important role while cooperating closely with the parties to the conflict and key Arab countries. Russia is ready, together with all the participants in this process, to work actively and make its feasible contribution to the settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Dear friends,

This year marks the thirtieth anniversary of the renewal of full-fledged diplomatic relations between our countries. On October 18, 1991, we started a new chapter in our shared history.

Today, bilateral ties are actively developing and are characterized by diversity and vigorousness. A constructive political dialogue has been established, which makes it possible to carry out a reconciliation of approaches on topical international issues and to find common ground on a regular basis.

It includes inter-parliamentary ties, economics, science and technology, humanitarian contacts, healthcare and much more.

People-to-people contacts, common historical memory of the Second World War, countering attempts to rewrite history, glorify the Nazis and their henchmen, just as to deny the Holocaust are the backbone of Russian-Israeli relations, which is of paramount and unifying importance for the peoples of our countries.

It is crucial that this spiritual connection becomes stronger over the years. In May, we celebrated together the 76th anniversary of the Great Victory. More than 45 cities of the country hosted festive events and commemorative processions along with the Immortal Regiment campaign.

They were attended by tens of thousands of Israelis of all ages as well as Israeli officials. Not a single foreign country has ever known such a scale. I hope that this month, too, we will hold joint commemorative events timed to coincide with the 80th anniversary since the treacherous attack by Nazi Germany on the USSR.

Dear friends,

I am confident that the current stage of cooperation between our countries will pave the way for additional opportunities not only to continue, but also to enrich the actual positive experience of Russian-Israeli joint work.

My congratulations on the National Day of Russia!

Thank you for attention.