

ADDRESS
by H.E. Ambassador of Russia to Israel
Anatoly Viktorov
at the state reception on the occasion
of the National Day of the Russian Federation – Russia Day

June 12, 2025, Herzliya

Your Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III of Jerusalem,
Your Right Reverence Archimandrite Vassian,
Your Right Reverence Archimandrite Roman,
Your Excellency Minister for Social Equality and Advancement of the Status
of Women Ms. May Golan,

Your Excellencies,

Dear colleagues, compatriots, friends,

I am glad to welcome you to the state reception in honor of Russia Day.

With over a thousand years of history, our country has become home to many nations, made outstanding geographical discoveries, launched the space age of mankind, has given the world brilliant scientists, artists, and writers. During World War II, the Soviet Army saved Europe from enslavement and destruction by breaking the back of Nazi Germany and putting an end to the horrors of the Holocaust, defeated militaristic Japan. Today, Russia is a nuclear power, takes the leading stand in industry, agriculture, military affairs, education, and science.

Given its role in shaping the contemporary system of international relations and its status of a permanent member of the UN Security Council, Russia acts as one of the sovereign centers of global development. Russia's foreign policy is peaceful, open, predictable, and pragmatic, is based on the desire for equitable international cooperation.

Grounded in traditional spiritual and moral values as well as a sense of justice, our people have built a self-sufficient and at the same time an outward-looking state. We do not engage in messianism, we do not lecture others. Even so we believe it is important to defend the right of people to speak their native language, manifest

their faith freely, we oppose any form of discrimination, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, we condemn neocolonial practices and the desire for dominance and hegemony.

Dear friends,

Russia has withstood more than its fair share of harsh trials, including invasions, wars and revolutions. We remember the past well and know that our people have never backed down from challenges.

Today, a carefully planned hybrid war is being waged against us. This time, our Western adversaries, who have dreams of inflicting a "strategic defeat" on Russia, are using the illegitimate Kiev regime as an anti-Russian battering ram.

We will not allow any direct threats to the security and sovereignty of the country to remain on our borders. We will stay loyal to achieving all the goals of the special military operation in Ukraine by all available means. At the same time, we leave the door open for a diplomatic solution, which is impossible without eliminating the root causes of the conflict.

Dear friends,

The Middle East is one of the priority areas of our country's foreign policy. In this region, cooperation with Israel takes a special place for us.

The complex geopolitical situation cannot but affect Russian-Israeli ties at the current stage. However, the solid foundation of bilateral cooperation laid over the past decades enables us to face the future with optimism. We are open to contacts and are ready for further constructive work with the Israeli side. We fully take into account Israel's security interests and have the right to expect reciprocity.

The peoples of Russia and Israel are bonded by a common historical memory. We note the consistent position of the Israeli leadership in condemning attempts to glorify the Nazis and their accomplices, in countering the falsification of history. This year, our countries celebrated the 80th anniversary of the Great Victory extensively and solemnly.

On May 6, during a telephone conversation between President of Russia Vladimir Putin and Prime Minister of Israel Benjamin Netanyahu, the mutual determination in defending the truth about the World War II was reiterated. On May 8, in a video address to the guests of the Russian Embassy reception

on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the Victory, President of Israel Isaac Herzog emphasized the heroism and contribution of the Red Army and the entire Soviet people to the defeat of Nazism. On May 9, on Red Square, President of Russia Vladimir Putin warmly welcomed a delegation of Israeli veterans.

We will always remember what a high price our peoples paid for the Great Victory – the most significant event in modern history. We will never accept attempts to belittle or distort the role of the Red Army soldiers, and more than 500 thousand Jews who fought in its ranks. This is our historical duty.

Russian-speaking compatriots of Israel, as well as graduates of Soviet and Russian universities, have traditionally made a significant contribution to strengthening Russian-Israeli ties. Today, about two million people here speak Russian to a certain extent.

Jews take a worthy place in the family of peoples of Russia, and with the state support, they have ample opportunities to participate in socio-political, religious and cultural life. The Russian authorities are pursuing a firm policy of counteracting anti-Semitism.

Dear friends,

Russia has always welcomed the establishment of good-neighborly relations in the Middle East. This also applies to the Abraham Accords. We recognize the tragedy of the events taking place in and around Israel since October 7, 2023, and condemn terrorism in all its manifestations. At the same time, we are confident that it is eventually impossible to achieve sustainable peace and stability in the region without stopping the bloodshed, resolving humanitarian problems as well as reaching a political and diplomatic settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

We highly appreciate the dedicated efforts of the Patriarch of Jerusalem to preserve and strengthen the unity of world Orthodoxy, protect believers from the threats of religious bigotry, preserve a genuine Christian presence, the fragile status quo and interreligious balance in the Holy City. We are grateful for his efforts to build trust and mutual understanding between peoples, as well as for caring for the spiritual needs of numerous pilgrims and the Russian-

speaking Orthodox community of the Holy Land. We will continue to support the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem as a symbol and successor of the centuries-old Russian church and cultural presence in the region.

Dear guests,

I congratulate you on Russia Day!

Thank you for your attention.