

# A New Zealand Embassy in Israel

**SIGN THE PETITION - We Support the idea of a NZ Embassy in Israel**



New Zealand was among the nations to vote in favour of a Jewish State at the United Nations in 1947. Since that time there has never been a New Zealand Embassy in Israel. We believe it is important that in the only Jewish State in the world (which happens to be the only true democracy in the Middle East), that our country should be represented properly. We have

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embassies in seven Arab/Muslim countries which have been historically hostile toward Israel, and to keep to our foreign policy of being “even-handed” and “balanced” it seems fair and logical that this should also mean an embassy in Israel.

**ISRAEL IS A LIBERAL DEMOCRACY**

The accusation that Israel is an apartheid state is false. In our opinion it is fabricated by people with a political agenda. There is no comparison between Apartheid South Africa in the last century to the Modern State of Israel today. Although there is tension in the region, part of that is due to Palestinian leaders refusing to recognise Israel as a Jewish State. Hamas still calls for the complete destruction of the State of Israel. However, there is still plenty which is fostering good relations between Jewish and Arab sectors of the population. Y. H. is an Arab citizen of Israel. He says:

*“How dare they say that I, an Arab Israeli who served along with Jewish soldiers in the Israel Defence Forces and managed hundreds of Jewish employees, live under an apartheid regime? How can anyone say our society is living under an apartheid regime when among us you will find doctors, judges, and even lawmakers. I am not here to claim that everything in Israel is perfect. Some things*

*need to be fixed, and now. But show me a country where everything is perfect. I look around at our neighbours in the region and thank God I was born in the State of Israel, the only democracy in the Middle East.”*

Salem Joubran was an Arab Supreme Court Justice in Israel and presided over the bench 2003-2017. Another Arab judge in Israel, George Karra, presided over the panel of judges which brought the gavel down on a former Israeli president for rape in 2011. The United Arab List (Ra’am), a political party led by Mansour Abbas, became part of the ruling coalition government in Israel after the March 2021 elections. There are Arab and Muslim diplomats, university professors, doctors, and politicians all serving the State of Israel today. These do not appear to be the occurrences of an apartheid state. Khaled Abu Toameh is an Israeli Arab journalist who calls himself an “Israeli-Arab-Muslim-Palestinian”. He says:

*“I am an Arab Muslim living in Jerusalem. I am also an Israeli citizen. . . we have no problem being Israeli citizens. I mean many of us are even proud to be Israeli citizens. If you go to Ramallah and Gaza once, and you come back into Jerusalem or Tel Aviv, you will see what I mean. Sometimes I say, ‘thank God we have Israel.’ Israel is a wonderful place to live, and*

*we are happy to be there. Israel is a free and open country. If I were given the choice, I would rather live in Israel as a second-class citizen than as a first-class citizen in Cairo, Gaza, Amman or Ramallah.”*

The sentiments of a Kuwaiti writer aired on a Kuwaiti TV channel in 2017, speak honestly of the historical record of the Middle East:

*“When the State of Israel was established in 1948, there was no state called ‘Palestine.’ Like it or not, Israel is an independent sovereign state. It exists, and it has a seat at the United Nations, and most peace-loving and democratic countries recognize it. The group of states that do not recognize Israel are the countries of tyranny and oppression. There is no occupation. There is a people returning to its promised land. Are you aware that the history of the Israelites is ancient, predating Islam? Therefore, we Muslims must acknowledge that the Israelites have a right to that land, and that they have not plundered it.”*

In a Twitter poll run by an Al Jazeera television host in 2020, Faisal al-Qassem asked Twitter users to vote on whether they thought Israel, or the Arab regimes were more democratic. Eighty-two percent voted that Israel was more democratic than the Arab regimes. The poll was run in Arabic.

## ISRAEL FACES REAL SECURITY THREATS

It is important to understand the threats facing the only Jewish State in the world so we can appreciate Israel’s need to exercise its right to defend itself.

**IRAN** – For many years Iranian leaders (religious, military, and political) have been promising to wipe Israel off the map. One year into the 2015 Nuclear agreement (JCPOA) which aimed at stifling Iran’s chances of manufacturing nuclear weapons, Iran tested a ballistic missile capable of reaching Israel. This was in contravention of the JCPOA agreement. Reports stated that two of the test missiles had “Israel must be wiped off the earth” written on them. This was simply an echo of former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad who had said that Israel is a “disgraceful blot” that should be “wiped off the face of the earth”. These threats have not diminished since Ahmadinejad’s comment in 2005 but are heard regularly from leaders of the Iranian regime.

People who would class such threats as mere political rhetoric should understand that the Jewish people learned from Adolf Hitler to take such rhetoric seriously.

**HAMAS (Islamic Resistance Movement)** – As a radical jihadist group, Hamas states in its charter: “Israel will rise and will remain erect until Islam eliminates it”. In Article 13 of its charter Hamas declares: “There is no solution to the Palestinian problem except by Jihad.” Article 25 states, “Hamas is a movement of Jihad”.

Its very constitution calls for the destruction of Israel. It is therefore not surprising when violent confrontations take place on the border of Gaza and Israel. Hamas will without reason or provocation send volleys of rockets and incendiary balloons in Israel’s direction, and Israel has no option but to retaliate in defence of its territory and citizens—a right that any state in the world would exercise. Of grave concern to the Israelis are the “terror tunnels” constantly being constructed with the intention to send jihadist fighters into Israel to carry out terrorist attacks. Hamas spends hundreds of millions of

dollars constructing such tunnels with money that could be spent helping the people of Gaza.

**HEZBOLLAH (Party of God)** – In the latest conflict between Hamas and Israel in May 2021, Hamas and its allies fired over 4,300 rockets toward Israel in eleven days. This was from an estimated inventory of 14,000 rockets. However, this is just in the southern part of Israel. In the north at the Lebanese border the threat is greater. The terrorist organisation Hezbollah possesses an estimated 130,000 rockets which could be used against Israel when the opportune time arises. Terror tunnels have been discovered also on the Lebanese border.

The military wings of Hamas and Hezbollah are designated as terrorist entities by New Zealand because they engage in terrorist activities. Israel faces these threats on two different fronts.



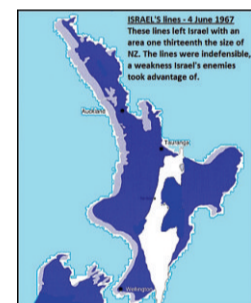
**WEST BANK BORDERS** – The threats to Israel’s borders in the north and south presents the Israel Defence Forces with ongoing challenges every day. The challenges to Israel’s security would be exacerbated if Israel returned to its “1967 lines” with an armed Jihadist army at that border. If Hamas were to take control of the West Bank as they did in Gaza this would pose a new and extremely dangerous threat right in the heart of Israel. The “1967 border” at Tulkarim is only 15 kilometres from the Mediterranean Sea and a concerted and effective attack from a determined military force could cut the State

of Israel in two at this point. For this reason alone, Israel could never return to the “1967 lines”; not when jihadist groups intent on Israel’s destruction are waiting for the day to pounce. Israel learned the importance of having a decent geographical buffer between itself and its enemies when it faced unprovoked threats to its sovereignty in 1948, 1967 and 1973. These were serious military threats and attacks to its existence.

When the closest New Zealand diplomats to Israel are situated in Ankara Turkey, in our opinion they are too far removed from the reality just outlined and as a result cannot fully appreciate these and other major and genuine concerns Israel has for its security. This author believes that the disconnect results in New Zealand voting in favour of UN resolutions demanding Israel return to those borders, not appreciating the reality on the ground. An Embassy in Israel would allow our diplomats to have first-hand knowledge of the situation without relying on other sources, which according to this writer are sometimes biased against Israel. An Embassy in Israel would not only give New Zealand a clearer picture of genuine Israeli needs, but it could also open greater opportunities for trade between our two countries.

**ISRAEL HAS A LOT TO OFFER NEW ZEALAND**

We should have proper representation in a country that has a western style democracy like ours; believes in values like ours; and seeks genuine peace with her neighbours as we do. Despite the rhetoric often heard from Israel’s detractors, Israel desperately seeks to defend its citizens from unprovoked terror attacks while at the same time seeking dialogue with the Palestinian Authority, which has refused to come to the negotiating table for more than a decade now. Despite challenging security threats Israel continues to lead the world in technology, medicine, counterterrorism, land reformation, irrigation, and other areas. The spin off for New Zealand could be great in education, science, technology, viticulture, horticulture, agriculture, and increased trade.



Both countries are small, advanced economies, and have a lot in common.

Israel reopened its embassy in Wellington in 2010, and despite some turbulent times in the relationship

it has remained. We believe it is time for New Zealand to reciprocate. Please sign the online petition for the establishment of an Embassy in Israel:

[https://www.parliament.nz/en/petitions/sign/PET\\_111792](https://www.parliament.nz/en/petitions/sign/PET_111792)

**Pastor Nigel Woodley Ph.D.**  
**FOR THE PROTECTION OF ZION TRUST**  
[www.fortheprotectionofzion.com](http://www.fortheprotectionofzion.com)

**Article writer:**  
As well as being Chief Advocate for The Protection of Zion Trust, Nigel Woodley is the Senior Pastor of the Flaxmere Christian Fellowship Church in Hastings. He also sits on several faith boards within New Zealand and overseas. His petition in 2015, calling for the New Zealand Government to cease pressuring the State of Israel to give up its rightful and God-given land, was signed by 11,685 people.

**Article Sponsor:**  
**FOR THE PROTECTION OF ZION TRUST** was established to administer public advocacy for the right of Israel and the Jewish people to live on their historical and indigenous land. The Trust is grateful for the generous support of its donors, which allows it to publish articles like this one.

**Quoted sources:**  
Testimonies quoted in this article can be cited and come from genuine sources. Some names of those who are quoted have been initialised to protect them from hate crime.