

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's speech at the UN General Assembly in New York

27 September 2024

"Mr. President, Ladies and gentlemen, I didn't intend to come here this year. My country is at war, fighting for its life.

But after I heard the lies and slanders leveled at my country by many of the speakers at this podium, I decided to come here and set the record straight. I decided to come here to speak for my people.

To speak for my country, to speak for the truth. And here's the truth: Israel seeks peace. Israel yearns for peace. Israel has made peace and will make peace again. Yet we face savage enemies who seek our annihilation, and we must defend ourselves against them.

These savage murderers, our enemies, seek not only to destroy us, but they seek to destroy our common civilization and return all of us to a dark age of tyranny and terror. When I spoke here last year, I said we face the same timeless choice that Moses put before the people of Israel thousands of years ago, as we were about to enter the Promised Land. Moses told us that our actions would determine whether we bequeath to future generations a blessing or a curse.

And that is the choice we face today: the curse of Iran's unrelenting aggression or the blessing of a historic reconciliation between Arab and Jew. In the days that followed that speech, the blessing I spoke of came into sharper focus.

A normalization deal between Saudi Arabia and Israel seemed closer than ever. But then came the curse of October 7th. Thousands of Iranian-backed Hamas terrorists from Gaza burst into Israel in pickup trucks and on motorcycles, and they committed unimaginable atrocities.

They savagely murdered 1,200 people. They raped and mutilated women. They beheaded men. They burned babies alive. They burned entire families alive—babies, children, parents, grandparents. It seems reminiscent of the Nazi Holocaust.

Hamas kidnapped 251 people from dozens of different countries, dragging them into the dungeons of Gaza. Israel has brought home 154 of these hostages, including 117 who returned alive. I want to assure you, we will not rest until the remaining hostages are brought home too, and some of their family members are here with us today. I ask you to stand up.

With us is Eli Shtivi, whose son Idan was abducted from the Nova music festival. That was his crime—a music festival. And these murderous monsters took him. Koby Samerano, whose son Jonathan was murdered, and his corpse was taken into the dungeons, into the terror tunnels of Gaza—a corpse held hostage.

Salem Alatrash, whose brother Mohammad, a brave Arab Israeli soldier, was murdered. His body, too, was taken to Gaza. And so was the body of Ifat Haiman's daughter, Inbar, who was brutally murdered at that same music festival.

With us is Sharon Sharabi, whose brother Yossi was murdered, and who prays for his older brother Eli, who is still held hostage in Gaza. And with us too is Yizhar Lifshitz from Kibbutz Nir Oz, a kibbutz that was wiped out by the terrorists.

Thankfully, we achieved the release of his mother, Yocheved, but his father, Oded, is still languishing in the underground terrorist hell of Hamas. I again promise you, we will return your loved ones home. We will not spare that effort until this holy mission is accomplished.

Ladies and gentlemen, the curse of October 7th began when Hamas invaded Israel from Gaza, but it didn't end there. Israel was soon forced to defend itself on six more war fronts organized by Iran. On October 8th, Hezbollah attacked us from Lebanon. Since then, they have fired over 8,000 rockets at our towns and cities, at our civilians, at our children. Two weeks later, the Iran-backed Houthis in Yemen launched drones and missiles at Israel, the first of 250 such attacks, including one yesterday aimed at Tel Aviv. Iran's Shiite militias in Syria and Iraq have targeted Israel dozens of times over the past year as well.

Fueled by Iran, Palestinian terrorists in Judea and Samaria perpetrated scores of attacks there and throughout Israel. And last April, for the first time ever, Iran directly attacked Israel from its own territory.

Firing 300 drones, cruise missiles, and ballistic missiles at us. I have a message for the tyrants of Tehran: If you strike us, we will strike you. There is no place—there is no place in Iran—that the long arm of Israel cannot reach. And that's true of the entire Middle East.

Far from being lambs led to the slaughter, Israel's soldiers have fought back with incredible courage and with heroic sacrifice. And I have another message for this assembly and for the world outside this hall: We are winning.

Ladies and gentlemen, as Israel defends itself against Iran in this seven-front war, the lines separating the blessing and the curse could not be more clear. This is the map I presented here last year. It's a map of a blessing.

It shows Israel and its Arab partners forming a land bridge connecting Asia and Europe. Between the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, across this bridge, we will lay rail

lines, energy pipelines, and fiber optic cables, and this will serve the betterment of 2 billion people.

Now look at this second map. It's a map of a curse. It's a map of an arc of terror that Iran has created and imposed from the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean. Iran's malignant arc has shut down international waterways.

It cuts off trade, it destroys nations from within, and inflicts misery on millions. On the one hand, a bright blessing—a future of hope. On the other hand, a dark future of despair. And if you think this dark map is only a curse for Israel, then you should think again.

Because Iran's aggression, if it's not checked, will endanger every single country in the Middle East, and many, many countries in the rest of the world, because Iran seeks to impose its radicalism well beyond the Middle East.

That's why it funds terror networks on five continents. That's why it builds ballistic missiles for nuclear warheads to threaten the entire world. For too long, the world has appeased Iran. It turned a blind eye to its internal repression. It turned a blind eye to its external aggression. Well, that appeasement must end. And that appeasement must end now.

Nations of the world should support the brave people of Iran who want to rid themselves of this evil regime. Responsible governments should not only support Israel in rolling back Iran's aggression, but they should join Israel. They should join Israel in stopping Iran's nuclear weapons program.

In this body and the Security Council, we're going to have a deliberation in a few months. And I call on the Security Council to snap back UN Security Council sanctions against Iran because we must all do everything in our power to ensure that Iran never gets nuclear weapons. For decades, I've been warning the world against Iran's nuclear program. Our actions delayed this program by perhaps a decade, but we haven't stopped it. We've delayed it, but we haven't stopped it. Iran now seeks to weaponize its nuclear program. For the sake of the peace and security of all your countries.

For the sake of the peace and security of the entire world, we must not let that happen. And I assure you, Israel will do everything in its power to make sure it doesn't happen.

So, ladies and gentlemen, the question before us is simple: Which of these two maps that I showed you will shape our future? Will it be the blessings of peace and prosperity for Israel, our Arab partners, and the rest of the world?

Or will it be the curse in which Iran and its proxies spread carnage and chaos everywhere? Israel has already made its choice. We've decided to advance the blessing. We're building

a partnership for peace with our Arab neighbors while fighting the forces of terror that threaten that peace.

For nearly a year, the brave men and women of the IDF have been systematically crushing Hamas's terror army that once ruled Gaza. On October 7th, the day of that invasion into Israel, that terror army numbered nearly 40,000 terrorists. It was armed with more than 15,000 rockets. It had 350 miles of terror tunnels—an underground network bigger than the New York subway system—which they used to wreak havoc above and below ground.

A year later, the IDF has killed or captured more than half of these terrorists, destroyed over 90% of their rocket arsenal, and eliminated the key segments of their terror tunnel network.

In measured military operations, we destroyed nearly all of Hamas's terror battalions—23 out of 24 battalions. Now, to complete our victory, we are focused on mopping up Hamas's remaining fighting capabilities.

We are taking out senior terrorist commanders and destroying remaining terrorist infrastructure. But all the while, we remain focused on our sacred mission: bringing our hostages home, and we will not stop until that mission is complete.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, even with Hamas's greatly diminished military capability, the terrorists still exercise some governing power in Gaza by stealing the food that we enable aid agencies to bring into Gaza.

Hamas steals the food, and then they hike the prices. They feed their bellies, and then they fill their coffers with money they extort from their own people. They sell the stolen food at exorbitant prices, and that's how they stay in power. Well, this too has to end, and we're working to bring it to an end.

And the reason is simple: because if Hamas stays in power, it will regroup, rearm, and attack Israel again and again and again, as it has vowed to do. So, Hamas has got to go.

Just imagine, for those who say Hamas has to stay, it has to be part of a post-war Gaza—imagine, in a post-war situation after World War II, allowing the defeated Nazis in 1945 to rebuild Germany? It's inconceivable. It's ridiculous. It didn't happen then, and it's not going to happen now.

This is why Israel will reject any role for Hamas in a post-war Gaza. We don't seek to resettle Gaza. What we seek is a demilitarized and de-radicalized Gaza. Only then can we ensure that this round of fighting will be the last round of fighting.

We are ready to work with regional and other partners to support a local civilian administration in Gaza, committed to peaceful coexistence.

As for the hostages, I have a message for the Hamas captors: Let them go. Let them go. All of them. Those alive today must be returned alive, and the remains of those whom you brutally killed must be returned to their families. Those families here with us today and others in Israel deserve to have a resting place for their loved ones. A place where they can grieve and remember them.

Ladies and gentlemen, this war can come to an end now. All that has to happen is for Hamas to surrender, lay down its arms, and release all the hostages. But if they don't, we will fight until we achieve victory. Total victory. There is no substitute for it.

Israel must also defeat Hezbollah in Lebanon. Hezbollah is the quintessential terror organization in the world today.

It has tentacles that span all continents. It has murdered more Americans and more Frenchmen than any group except Bin Laden. It's murdered the citizens of many countries represented in this room. And it has attacked Israel viciously over the last 20 years.

In the last year, completely unprovoked, a day after the Hamas massacre on October 7th, Hezbollah began attacks against Israel, which forced more than 60,000 Israelis on our northern border to leave their homes, becoming refugees in their own land.

Hezbollah turned vibrant towns in the north of Israel into ghost towns. So I want you to think about this in equivalent American terms. Just imagine if terrorists turned El Paso and San Diego into ghost towns.

Then ask yourself: How long would the American government tolerate that? A day, a week, a month? I doubt they would tolerate it even for a single day.

Yet Israel has been tolerating this intolerable situation for nearly a year. Well, I've come here today to say enough is enough.

We won't rest until our citizens can return safely to their homes. We will not accept a terror army perched on our northern border, able to perpetrate another October 7th-style massacre.

For 18 years, Hezbollah brazenly refused to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1701, which requires it to move its forces away from our borders. Instead, Hezbollah moved right up to our border. They secretly dug terror tunnels to infiltrate our communities and indiscriminately fired thousands of rockets into our towns and villages.

They fire these rockets and missiles not from military sites—they do that too—but they fire those rockets and missiles after they place them in schools, in hospitals, in apartment

buildings, and in the private homes of the citizens of Lebanon. They endanger their own people. They put a missile in every kitchen.

A rocket in every garage. I said to the people of Lebanon this week: Get out of the death trap that Hezbollah has put you in. Don't let Nasrallah drag Lebanon into the abyss. We're not at war with you. We're at war with Hezbollah, which has hijacked your country and threatens to destroy ours.

As long as Hezbollah chooses the path of war, Israel has no choice. And Israel has every right to remove this threat and return our citizens to their homes safely, and that's exactly what we're doing.

Just this week, the IDF destroyed large percentages of Hezbollah's rockets, which were built with Iran's funding for three decades. We took out senior military commanders who not only shed Israeli blood but American and French blood as well.

And then we took out their replacements. And then the replacements of their replacements. And we'll continue degrading Hezbollah until all our objectives are met.

Ladies and gentlemen, we're committed to removing the curse of terrorism that threatens all civilized societies. But to truly realize the blessing of a new Middle East, we must continue the path we paved with the Abraham Accords four years ago. Above all, this means achieving a historic peace agreement between Israel and Saudi Arabia.

And having seen the blessings that we've already brought with the Abraham Accords, the millions of Israelis who have already flown back and forth across the Arabian Peninsula over the skies of Saudi Arabia to the Gulf countries, the trade, the tourism, the joint ventures, the peace—I say to you, what blessings such a peace with Saudi Arabia would bring.

It would be a boon to the security and economy of our two countries. It would boost trade and tourism across the region. It would help transform the Middle East into a global juggernaut.

Our two countries could cooperate on energy, water, agriculture, artificial intelligence, and many, many other fields. Such a peace, I am sure, would be a true pivot of history. It would usher in a historic reconciliation between the Arab world and Israel, between Islam and Judaism, between Mecca and Jerusalem.

While Israel is committed to achieving such a peace, Iran and its terror proxies are committed to scuttling it. That's why one of the best ways to foil Iran's nefarious designs is to achieve the peace.

Such a peace would be the foundation for an even broader Abrahamic alliance, and that alliance would include the United States, Israel's current Arab peace partners, Saudi Arabia, and others who choose the blessing of peace.

It would advance security and prosperity across the Middle East and bring enormous benefits to the rest of the world. With American support and leadership, I believe this vision can materialize much sooner than people think. And as the Prime Minister of Israel, I will do everything in my power to make it happen. This is an opportunity that we and the world should not let go by.

Ladies and gentlemen, Israel has made its choice. We seek to move forward to a bright age of prosperity and peace. Iran and its proxies have also made their choice. They want to move back to a dark age of terror and war.

And now I have a question, and I pose that question to you: What choice will you make? Will your nation stand with Israel? Will you stand with democracy and peace? Or will you stand with Iran, a brutal dictatorship that subjugates its own people and exports terrorism across the globe?

In this battle between good and evil, there must be no equivocation. When you stand with Israel, you stand for your own values and your own interests. Yes, we're defending ourselves, but we're also defending you against a common enemy that, through violence and terror, seeks to destroy our way of life. So there should be no confusion about this, but unfortunately, there is a lot of it in many countries and in this very hall, as I've just heard.

Good is portrayed as evil, and evil is portrayed as good.

We see this moral confusion when Israel is falsely accused of genocide when we defend ourselves against enemies who try to commit genocide against us. We see this too when Israel is absurdly accused by the ICC Prosecutor of deliberately starving Palestinians in Gaza.

What an absurdity. We help bring in 700,000 tons of food into Gaza. That's more than 3,000 calories a day for every man, woman, and child in Gaza. We see this moral confusion when Israel is falsely accused of deliberately targeting civilians.

We don't want to see a single innocent person die. That's always a tragedy. And that's why we do so much to minimize civilian casualties, even as our enemies use civilians as human shields.

And no army has done what Israel is doing to minimize civilian casualties. We drop flyers. We send text messages. We make phone calls by the millions to ensure that Palestinian civilians get out of harm's way. We spare no effort in this noble pursuit.

We see yet another profound moral confusion when self-described progressives march against the democracy of Israel. Don't they realize they support the Iranian-backed goons in Tehran and in Gaza, the goons who shot down protesters, murder women for not covering their hair, and hang gays in public squares? Some progressives.

According to the U.S. Director of National Intelligence, Iran funds and fuels many of the protesters against Israel. Who knows, maybe some of the protesters or even many of the protesters outside this building now?

Ladies and gentlemen, King Solomon, who reigned in our eternal capital, Jerusalem, 3,000 years ago, proclaimed something that is familiar to all of you. He said: There is nothing new under the sun.

Well, in an age of space travel, quantum physics, and artificial intelligence, some would argue that's a debatable statement. But one thing is undeniable: there is definitely nothing new at the United Nations.

Take it from me. I first spoke from this podium as Israel's ambassador to the UN in 1984. That's exactly 40 years ago. And in my maiden speech here, I spoke against a proposal to expel Israel from this body. Four decades later, I find myself defending Israel against that same preposterous proposal.

And who's leading the charge this time? Not Hamas, but Abbas.

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas. This is the man who claims he wants peace with Israel, yet he still refuses to condemn the horrific massacre of October 7th. He's still paying hundreds of millions to terrorists who murdered Israelis and Americans.

It's called Pay for Slay. The more you murder, the more you get paid.

And he still wages unremitting diplomatic warfare against Israel's right to exist and against Israel's right to defend itself. And by the way, they amount to the same thing, because if you can't defend yourself, you can't exist. Not in our neighborhood, certainly. And maybe not in yours.

Standing at this podium 40 years ago, I told the sponsors of that outrageous resolution to expel Israel: Gentlemen, check your fanaticism at the door. Today, I tell President Abbas and all of you who would shamefully support that resolution: Check your fanaticism at the door.

The singling out of the one and only Jewish state continues to be a moral stain on the United Nations. It has made this once-respected institution contemptible in the eyes of decent people everywhere. But for the Palestinians, this UN house of darkness is home

court. They know that in this swamp of antisemitic bile, there's an automatic majority willing to demonize the Jewish state for anything. In this anti-Israel flat-earth society, any false charge, any outlandish allegation can muster a majority.

In the last decade, there have been more resolutions passed against Israel in this hall, in the UN General Assembly, than against the entire world combined. Actually, more than twice as many. Since 2014, this body condemned Israel 174 times.

It condemned all the other countries in the world 73 times. That's more than 100 extra condemnations for the Jewish state. What hypocrisy. What a double standard. What a joke.

So, all the speeches you heard today, all the hostility directed at Israel this year—it's not about Gaza; it's about Israel. It's always been about Israel. About Israel's very existence. And I say to you, until Israel, until the Jewish state, is treated like other nations, until this antisemitic swamp is drained, the UN will be viewed by fair-minded people everywhere as nothing more than a contemptuous farce.

And given the antisemitism at the UN, it should surprise no one that the prosecutor at the ICC, one of the UN's affiliated organs, is considering issuing arrest warrants against me and Israel's defense minister, the democratically elected leaders of the democratic state of Israel.

The ICC prosecutor's rush to judgment, his refusal to treat Israel with its independent courts the way other democracies are treated, is hard to explain by anything other than pure antisemitism.

Ladies and gentlemen, the real war criminals are not in Israel. They're in Iran. They're in Gaza, in Syria, in Lebanon, in Yemen. Those of you who stand with these war criminals, those of you who stand with evil against good, with the curse against the blessing, those of you who do so should be ashamed of yourselves.

But I have a message for you: Israel will win this battle. We will win this battle because we don't have a choice.

After generations in which our people were slaughtered, remorselessly butchered, and no one raised a finger in our defense, we now have a state. We now have a brave army, an army of incomparable courage, and we are defending ourselves.

As the book of Samuel says in the Bible:

"נֶצַח יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יִשְׁקָר"

"The eternity of Israel will not falter".

In the Jewish people's epic journey from antiquity, in our odyssey through the tempest and upheavals of modern times, that ancient promise has always been kept and it will hold true for all time.

To borrow a great poet's phrase: Israel will not go gently into that good night. We will never need to rage against the dying of the light because the torch of Israel will forever shine bright.

To the people of Israel and to the soldiers of Israel, I say: Be strong and of good courage.

"חֲזַקוּ וְאַמְצוּ אֶל-תִּירָאוֹ וְאֶל-תַּעֲרָצוֹ מִפְּנֵיהֶם כִּי ה' אֱלֹהֵיךָ הוּא הַהֹלֵךְ עִמָּךְ לֹא יִרְפֶּךָ וְלֹא יִעֲזָבֲךָ"

עם ישראל חי!

The people of Israel live now, tomorrow, forever".

Source: Official Facebook of the Prime Minister of Israel

<https://fb.watch/uSL1ykUIpY/>

The screenshot displays the official Facebook page of the Prime Minister of Israel. The page header includes the profile picture (the State of Israel emblem), the name "The Prime Minister of Israel" with a verified badge, and follower/following counts (1.4M followers, 162 following). Navigation tabs for Posts, About, Mentions, Followers, Photos, Videos, and More are visible. The "Intro" section welcomes visitors to the Israeli Prime Minister's Office Facebook Page and provides a link to the official website (pmo.gov.il/English). The "Photos" section shows a grid of images related to the UN speech. The "Posts" section features a post from 3 hours ago by "The Prime Minister of Israel" (verified), which is a transcription of Benjamin Netanyahu's speech at the UN General Assembly. The speech text is in English and discusses Israel's commitment to peace and its stance against Iran's aggression.

The Prime Minister of Israel • 1.4M followers • 162 following

Posts About Mentions Followers Photos Videos More

Intro

Welcome to the Israeli Prime Minister's Office Facebook Page!

Page · Government organization

pmo.gov.il/English

Photos See all photos

Posts Filters

The Prime Minister of Israel • 3h •

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's speech at the UN General Assembly in New York:

"Mr. President, Ladies and gentlemen, I didn't intend to come here this year. My country is at war, fighting for its life.

But after I heard the lies and slanders leveled at my country by many of the speakers at this podium, I decided to come here and set the record straight. I decided to come here to speak for my people.

To speak for my country, to speak for the truth. And here's the truth: Israel seeks peace. Israel yearns for peace. Israel has made peace and will make peace again. Yet we face savage enemies who seek our annihilation, and we must defend ourselves against them.

These savage murderers, our enemies, seek not only to destroy us, but they seek to destroy our common civilization and return all of us to a dark age of tyranny and terror. When I spoke here last year, I said we face the same timeless choice that Moses put before the people of Israel thousands of years ago, as we were about to enter the Promised Land. Moses told us that our actions would determine whether we bequeath to future generations a blessing or a curse.

And that is the choice we face today: the curse of Iran's unremitting aggression or the blessing of a historic reconciliation between Arab and Jew. In the days that followed that speech, the blessing I spoke of came into sharper focus.