

I am grateful for the honor and privilege of addressing this distinguished gathering of AIPAC, an organization that, through its historic and holy work, makes the world safer for us all.

A few days ago, gunmen from the Islamic State, stormed a school in the town of Kuriga in Nigeria, the west African regional powerhouse, and kidnapped 287 children from the morning assembly. The terrorists rode through the school on motorbikes firing their weapons rounding up students aged 8-15.

The horror is unspeakable, and unending. A decade after the 2014 mass kidnappings by Boko Haram from the Chibok village, in northern Nigeria, when 276 young girls were kidnapped, about 100 of them are still missing today.

These kinds of atrocities are widespread across the continent. Just last week gruesome images emerged of a group of village elders being beheaded by ISIS in Mozambique, a country on South Africa's northern border.

Sources such as the European Institute for Security Studies, the Global Terrorism Index, the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) have been warning of the spread of violent Islam across Africa. And yet, the terror onslaught perpetrated against Africans is one of the most unnoticed stories in the world today - it seems as if Black lives do not matter if they are taken by Jihadists in Africa.

But we cannot turn the other way. As God said to Cain, in the Book of Genesis, "the blood of your brother calls out to me from the ground". And, the world must take note that Israel's war with Hamas - and by extension Iran - is against the same enemy raping and pillaging its way through African villages. The ideology of

al-Shabaab and Boko Haram and ISIS is the same ideology espoused, funded and propagated, by Iran and its proxies, Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis.

And, just as Hamas serves as an armed proxy for Iran, the South African government serves as its diplomatic proxy, as it did at the ICJ, the diplomatic equivalent of the October 7 attacks.

The different kinds of wars they fight are intertwined – Hamas with bombs and guns to kill and maim as many people as possible, and South Africa with words and arguments to delegitimize Israel, and turn Western opinion against the Jewish state, forcing it into self-destructive negotiations with its enemies through which it might be slowly dismembered or, left without the means or support to defend itself, simply overrun. This makes the diplomatic war of delegitimization, ultimately, the most serious national security threat facing Israel.

The way to counter the diplomatic war against Israel is to build alliances, as the Talmud teaches us - when righteous people come together they make the world a better place. And Africa, a continent with more than 50 votes on global fora, with a young and growing population, with huge potential economic growth, where 600 million Christians, the largest such community in the world on one continent, who understand first hand what it means to be attacked by Jihadi terror groups - can, in the long run, become a more reliable ally for Israel and America, than even Europe.

Now is the time to build much stronger institutional ties between communities of faith in Africa and their counterparts in Israel and her supporters in America. When it comes to South Africa, a superpower of the continent, don't judge the country by

its government, sinking under the weight of corruption and ineptitude that, according to latest opinion polls, has long since lost the support of the majority South Africans, and with upcoming elections the country will enter a new era of coalitions and change. And, even, as you may have heard, the country's banks have been implicated in terror funding - it is something that my office has taken up and I will stamp it out.

According to a survey carried out by one of our premier think tanks, the Social Research Foundation, when asked what alternative country they would choose for their children to grow up in, the vast majority chose America, and similar free democracies, and not Russia and China and the other tyrannies of the world. And other polls show that, on balance, the government's pro-Hamas position makes voters less - rather than more - likely to vote for the ruling party.

South Africa has the potential to be one of the most steadfast partners and allies of Israel and the United States. Now is the time to make this happen - not the time to disengage from South Africa. This is the message that I delivered to President Herzog and Foreign Minister Katz on my recent visit to Israel.

In this spirit, I would like to invite an AIPAC delegation to visit South Africa. When you come, you will find a vibrant constitutional democracy with an independent judiciary and a fiercely critical press. You will find a vast and abundant land, from the south with the breathtaking beauty of the Cape and its majestic mountains set against the deep blue of the Atlantic, to the African bush in the north, all declaring, in the words of the Talmud, "there is no artist like God".

You will find millions of hard-working, fair-minded, politically centrist and moderate, men and women, people of good will, who aspire to the same values cherished in America and Israel.

You will find a nation, 60 million strong, the vast majority of whom are people of faith, who appreciate the historical legacy of the promised land, and who will proudly quote the famous words of Genesis 12 - God's promise to Abraham that those who bless Israel will themselves be blessed.

You will find a nation of heroes who have endured the suffering of apartheid, and emerged from it without bloodshed, with a spirit of forgiveness and compassion that has inspired the world, a nation who knows in its soul "these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, amongst them the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness". May God bless Israel. May God bless the United States of America, and may God bless South Africa and Africa, Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika.