

Tanzania opens embassy in Israel



Tanzania's Minister for Foreign Affairs Augustine Phillip Mahiga addresses the United Nations General Assembly in the Manhattan borough of New York, September 26 2016. (PHOTO: Reuters)

Originally published in [The Jerusalem Post](#)

Tanzania opened an embassy in Ramat Gan on Tuesday, the 15th African state to open an embassy in Israel, and the fourth to open one in the last three years.

Tanzanian Foreign Minister Augustine Mahiga, on his first visit to Israel and the highest level visit here by a Tanzanian official, said the embassy signifies the importance his country attaches to its “renewed” friendship with Israel.

Tanzania established diplomatic ties with Israel in 1963, and – like most other African states – severed them under intense Arab pressure after the Yom Kippur War in 1973. The ties were re-established in 1995.

The election of President John Magufuli in 2015 led to a distinct uptick in ties between the two countries. Magufuli, a devout Christian, replaced his Muslim predecessor. When Netanyahu met Mahiga at a mini-summit with six African leaders at Entebbe in 2016, he received a promise that Tanzania would open an embassy in Israel.

Tanzania's Ambassador to Israel Job D Masima took his position here nine months ago and has worked until now out of temporary offices.

Asked by The Jerusalem Post why Tanzania elected to open its embassy in Ramat Gan [instead of Jerusalem](#), Masima replied that the important thing was to open it somewhere inside Israel.

Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked, who attended the official opening of the Tanzanian Embassy and who visited that country two weeks ago, said at the ceremony that she hoped one day to see the Tanzanian flag fly in Jerusalem. She said Israel was grateful to Magufuli for opening the embassy and hoped the new embassy will signify an upgrade of Israeli-Tanzanian cooperation.

Israel does not have an embassy in Tanzania and is represented there by its embassy in Nairobi.