

Zimbabwe opposition pledges \$100bn economy, ties with Israel, if it wins



A sign language anchor, right, gestures as Zimbabwe's opposition leader, Nelson Chamisa delivers his speech, during the launch of the party's election manifesto in Harare

Originally published in [San Francisco Chronicle](#)

Zimbabwe's main opposition party announced on Thursday it will create a \$100-billion economy within a decade and re-establish ties with Israel – a major foreign policy shift – if it wins July 30 elections.

The MDC-T, which has re-energised under 40-year-old leader Nelson Chamisa, launched its election manifesto while the state broadcaster, which is closely aligned with the ruling party, provided rare live coverage.

President Emmerson Mnangagwa, who took power in November when longtime leader Robert Mugabe stepped down under pressure from

the military and ruling party, has promised free and fair elections in a country with a history of disputed polls. This will be the first vote without Mugabe since independence from white minority rule in 1980.

Both Mnangagwa and the opposition are pledging to improve the once-prosperous economy, which collapsed under Mugabe, and attract foreign investors put off by years of international sanctions over alleged human rights abuses.

The opposition promised a leaner government, more transparency and business-friendly laws.

Deepening political ties with Israel by opening an embassy there would mark an important shift for Zimbabwe, which enjoys close relations with the Palestinians, who have maintained a diplomatic mission in the southern African country since 1980.

The opposition said it wanted to get closer to Israel "for spiritual renewal".

Chamisa also pledged to re-engage the West, which has indicated that a free and fair election is a key step toward lifting sanctions.

"We will not look West or East, but we will look everywhere following the dollar," he said.