

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نپاشد تن من مباد بدین بوم و بر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

Mawadda Iskandar

09.06.2025

Israel's expanding shadow in Africa's Great Game

As Africa re-emerges as a battleground for global influence, Israel's deepening infiltration into the continent reveals an agenda aligned with western hegemony, exploitation, and the erosion of traditional pro-Palestinian solidarity.



Photo Credit: The Cradle

Africa is once again being carved up – not by maps and treaties, but through surveillance networks, military pacts, and covert alliances. At the heart of this renewed scramble lies the Israeli occupation state, which has methodically inserted itself into the continent's political, security, and economic veins.

Behind the rhetoric of development and partnership, Tel Aviv's African campaign is an extension of its settler-colonial project: to dismantle historic solidarities with Palestine, secure strategic footholds in a resource-rich continent, and weaponize African states in service of western and Zionist agendas.

Although Israeli–African relations have never commanded urgent attention, Operation Al-Aqsa Flood brought them back into sharp focus. The resistance operation, which redrew regional alliances and exposed long-standing complicity, also spotlighted the occupation entity’s entrenchment in Africa.

That same year, South Africa [filed a historic case](#) against Israel at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), accusing it of committing genocide in Gaza. The move not only underscored Pretoria’s commitment to the Palestinian cause, but also reaffirmed a continental legacy of resistance to settler-colonialism – now reawakened in the face of Tel Aviv’s expanding footprint.

For decades, Africa has been more than a peripheral interest for Tel Aviv. Behind the veneer of aid and agriculture in a continent home to 1.4 billion people and spanning more than 30 million square kilometers lies a concerted campaign of external political penetration and covert operations.

Yet Africa is not a monolith. The continent's patchwork of regimes, priorities, and foreign alignments has meant [Israeli incursions](#) have taken various forms, adjusted to the internal-external equations of each state, and often accelerated by external power struggles.

A calculated return

Following the 1948 Nakba, when Israel unilaterally declared itself a state, Africa was still gripped by colonialism. Early ties with the occupation state were limited to Ethiopia and Liberia. But the seismic shifts in the post-colonial order saw Tel Aviv recalibrate, seizing the opportunity to project power through aid, training, and security partnerships. This peaked in the mid-1960s – only to collapse after the 1973 October War and subsequent pan-African support for the Arab cause, reducing Israeli recognition to just three African states: Malawi, Lesotho, and Swaziland.

Despite that diplomatic collapse, Tel Aviv never fully withdrew. Instead, it adapted – funneling arms to separatist movements in places like South Sudan, offering intelligence services, and embedding itself in the military structures of states like Zaire, Angola, and Ethiopia.

By the 1980s, aided by the Camp David and Oslo Accords and the political fragmentation of the Arab world, Israel rebuilt its African presence. It moved discreetly, capitalizing on crises, debt, and diplomatic voids to rebrand itself not as a pariah, but as a partner in a by-then crowded landscape of international powers.

Diplomatic architecture of influence

Today, Tel Aviv maintains [full diplomatic relations](#) with some 44 out of 54 African countries and operates embassies in at least 11 of them, including Nigeria, Kenya, Ethiopia, Ghana, Angola, and South Africa – with non-resident ambassadors in the remaining 33 states. While it continues to seek normalization with additional countries, the occupation state's diplomatic footprint across Africa illustrates the strategic value it assigns to the continent.

Rwanda, Togo, and South Sudan have emerged as prime laboratories for Israeli experiments in influence and penetration. In West and Central Africa, Tel Aviv leverages military and intelligence alliances in Nigeria, Kenya, Ethiopia, Malawi, Zambia, Angola, and the Ivory Coast.

Equally notable is the steady normalization with Muslim-majority African states. The resumption of relations with Chad, normalization with Sudan and Morocco, and overtures to others aim to rupture the pro-Palestinian front within African institutions. The bid to regain “observer state” status at the African Union – lost in 2002 – encapsulates this push, but to date has been fiercely resisted by Algeria and South Africa.

Security and surveillance as Trojan horses

Over the past two decades, Israel has actively embedded itself in Africa's security matrix. Under the guise of “counterterrorism,” it has installed [espionage and surveillance](#) regimes from Kenya to Nigeria. Institutions like [MASHAV](#), ostensibly promoting development, serve dual purposes: extending soft power while embedding Israeli frameworks of control.

The Galilee Institute, for instance, recruits African officials into programs that blend management training with intelligence paradigms, creating elite networks groomed to favor the Israeli worldview.

Israel's cyber firms, especially NSO Group, have exported invasive spyware like [Pegasus](#) to repressive governments to track dissidents and activists. Post-Operation Al-Aqsa Flood, these operations have intensified, with reports of intelligence centers tracking Palestinian diaspora and Axis of Resistance movements across Africa.

Economic gateways to strategic dominance

Israeli economic activity in Africa is not mere trade. It is a strategic tool of control. In East Africa, Tel Aviv dominates the infrastructure, agriculture, and health sectors. In West Africa, its companies penetrate irrigation, mining, and logistics.

This economic expansion serves multiple objectives. It allows Israel to erode its international isolation by fabricating legitimacy through African alliances. It strengthens the occupation state's security by facilitating Jewish immigration from Africa and helping monitor resistance factions operating in the region.

Geostrategically, it ensures Israeli access to strategic maritime corridors, especially the [Bab al-Mandab Strait](#), the Horn of Africa, and eastern Africa, which borders the Red Sea and Indian Ocean. Finally, it facilitates the exploitation of Africa's abundant natural resources – including [diamonds](#), uranium, and agricultural land – while simultaneously disrupting historic Arab–African solidarity, particularly in the Nile Basin region.

Africa's new scramble: Old powers, new agendas

While Tel Aviv fortifies its grip, it faces fierce competition. Africa's Horn remains the continent's geopolitical pressure point. It is the entry to the Red Sea, the lifeline of Persian Gulf states, and a conduit for 40 percent of global oil trade.

Russia is expanding its influence from Ethiopia to Sudan. In Eritrea, it invests in joint military capacities and naval access. In Somalia and South Sudan, it leverages resource extraction and political vacuums. Moscow's – and even Tehran's – growing [support in Sudan](#) and [Eritrea](#) is anchored in Khartoum and Asmara's ruptures with Washington.

China has entrenched itself through trade, which reached \$167.8 billion in the first half of 2024, as well as infrastructure projects and a naval base in Djibouti. In Ethiopia, it funds energy mega-projects like the Grand Renaissance Dam. Beijing's quiet diplomacy combines mineral exploitation in Eritrea with oil ventures in South Sudan.

Persian Gulf states, led by the [UAE](#), weaponize port investments and farmland acquisitions in Nigeria and Liberia under the banner of food security. Post-Abraham Accords, Emirati–Israeli coordination has intensified, particularly in the Horn, where both seek to contain Iranian and [Turkish](#) influence.

Turkiye, for its part, has established a firm foothold in Somalia through military training bases and port development, and continues to leverage soft power tools such as humanitarian aid, Muslim solidarity, and construction contracts to expand its presence across East and West Africa.

Iran, though less visibly, has steadily built security and economic links from [Eritrea](#) to the Sahel. Its outreach to Algeria and Tunisia signals a strategic pivot in North Africa, aligned with its broader Axis of Resistance agenda.

Africa's balancing act in a multipolar world

Africa today resembles a chessboard on which [foreign powers](#) seek checkmate. Tel Aviv's multifaceted penetration – diplomatic, military, economic – is not isolated. It intersects with, and is often buoyed by, Persian Gulf, western, and even Chinese interests.

But this presence remains fragile, dependent on pliant regimes and normalization trajectories. African states, for their part, are not passive. They are [recalibrating](#), balancing between old

allegiances and new opportunities, aware that in a rapidly reconfiguring world order, their sovereignty is the ultimate prize.

JUN 6, 2025