

Brazilian President Says He 'Loves Israel,' Announces Jerusalem Trade Mission

The Israeli prime minister warmly received Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro on Sunday, touting newfound amity between the two countries.

Benjamin Netanyahu's red-carpet welcome for Bolsonaro comes days ahead of Israeli elections on April 9.

During his first state visit to Israel, the Brazilian leader is also expected to decide whether to follow President Donald Trump's lead and move the Brazilian Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, a move that he has repeatedly promised.

During a press conference late Sunday, Bolsonaro said that Brazil would open a trade and innovation office in Jerusalem but stopped short of announcing a formal embassy move.

While Brazil, like other Latin American countries, has sided with the Palestinians at the United Nations and other global bodies in the past, Bolsonaro has found common ground with Netanyahu, a policy that is also popular with the Brazilian president's evangelical base.

After landing, Bolsonaro opened his speech with the words "I love Israel" in Hebrew. "My government is firmly decided to strengthen the partnership between Brazil and Israel," he added.

Netanyahu returned the praise, addressing Bolsonaro as a "good friend."

"We are pleased that after years of relations that were a little hesitant, you have decided—we decided together—to open a new era of partnership and cooperation in all areas," he

said.

The two leaders signed several agreements on Sunday pledging defense, cybersecurity and police cooperation between their countries.

For the remainder of his 4-day trip, Bolsonaro is set to visit Israeli security forces and pay his respects at the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial. {eo}

This article originally appeared at .