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**TINUBU'S PACT WITH ISREAL:  
A BETRAYAL OF NIGERIA'S PRINCIPLED STAND AGAINST OPPRESSION AND  
INJUSTICE.**

On the eve of the reported United States military strike on Nigeria on Christmas Day, Nigerians awoke to yet another deeply troubling development—this time from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. In a statement that provoked widespread alarm, Netanyahu publicly pledged Israel's commitment to "protect Christians in Nigeria," a declaration that implicitly undermines Nigeria's constitutional secularism and its long-standing multi-religious, pluralistic identity. This pronouncement did not occur in isolation. It followed no fewer than six high-level engagements between Israeli officials and the Nigerian government under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu between May 2023 and December 2025. These engagements reportedly centred on security cooperation, surveillance technologies, intelligence sharing, and counter-terrorism collaboration.

On 22 August 2025, Nigeria's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Bianca Ojukwu, formally signed a Security Cooperation Agreement with Israel's Deputy Foreign Minister, Sharron Haskel-Harpaz. The agreement provides for intelligence exchange, counter-terrorism training, and expanded military cooperation. A year earlier, First Lady Senator Oluremi Tinubu received Israel's Ambassador to Nigeria, Michael Freeman, who announced plans to establish thirty "innovation centres" for Nigerian women. While framed in the language of partnership and goodwill, such initiatives also function as strategic soft-power instruments aimed at rehabilitating Israel's severely tarnished global image.

These developments raise a fundamental question: what moral or strategic convergence now binds Nigeria and the State of Israel—two countries that historically were poles apart on major International issues both morally and diplomatically? For Nigeria to deepen ties with Israel at this historical moment is not merely a strategic miscalculation; it is a profound moral failure. Nigeria has historically projected itself as a defender of religious freedom, plural coexistence, and anti-colonial justice. Israel, by contrast, has faced sustained international criticism for discriminatory practices, including documented restrictions on Christian worship, attacks on clergy, and the destruction of Christian heritage sites in Jerusalem and Gaza. The growing intimacy between Abuja and Tel Aviv is therefore not merely puzzling—it is deeply troubling

Since October 2023, Israel's military campaign in Gaza has produced catastrophic humanitarian devastation, never seen or heard of since the Second World War. Entire neighbourhoods have been obliterated; hospitals, schools, mosques, and churches reduced to rubble; and nearly ninety per cent of Gaza's population displaced. At least 71,266 Palestinians have been killed and over 171,000 wounded, the overwhelming majority of them women and children. What is unfolding is collective punishment on a massive scale.

Statements by senior Israeli officials have reinforced this genocidal policy, part of which is the use of starvation as a weapon of war. Former Defence Minister Yoav Gallant referred to Palestinians as "human animals" while announcing a "complete siege—no food, no water, no fuel." Foreign Minister Israel Katz openly threatened to deny Palestinians even "a drop of water." These declarations, coupled with the atrocities committed by the Israeli Defence Forces against Palestinians in Gaza, have led prominent genocide scholars—including Israeli academics—to argue that Gaza represents a textbook case of genocidal violence. Genocide scholar, Omer Bartov, himself Israeli, put it thus, "I know genocide when I see it. My inescapable conclusion is that Israel is committing genocide against the Palestinian people." Despite repeated claims of ceasefire, Israel has continued lethal operations and has banned more than three dozen humanitarian organisations, including Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), thereby worsening what aid agencies already describe as an "unimaginable humanitarian catastrophe."

Nigeria's foreign policy was once anchored on moral leadership. The country stood firmly against apartheid South Africa, supported liberation movements across Africa, and earned global respect by aligning with the oppressed rather than the oppressor. That legacy, it seems belongs to the dustbin of history. Since President Tinubu assumed office on 29 May 2023, Israel's engagement with Nigeria has intensified markedly. Diplomatic visits are routinely accompanied by promises of intelligence sharing, counter-terrorism training, and military cooperation. This raises a deeply unsettling question: what security doctrine is Israel exporting to Nigeria? Indiscriminate bombardment? Siege warfare? The targeting of journalists? The destruction of cultural and historical heritage?

At a time when South Africa is leading proceedings at the International Court of Justice against Israel for genocide against Palestinians, and when much of Africa, Asia, and Latin America have been condemning Israel's actions, Nigeria has instead chosen deeper alignment with Tel Aviv. This shift coincides disturbingly with renewed rhetoric from U.S. President Donald Trump portraying Nigeria's internal security crisis as a religious genocide against Christians—a dangerous oversimplification that distorts Nigeria's complex realities.

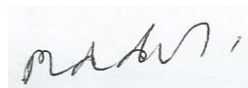
Reducing Nigeria's security challenges to a narrative of religious persecution, as President Trump and Prime Minister Netanyahu have done, is profoundly dishonest. It is a geopolitical manoeuvre that risks inflaming sectarian tensions for external strategic advantage. The bombing of locations in Sokoto—the seat of the Caliphate and an overwhelmingly Muslim state—underscores the danger of such framing. The prospect of President Trump who claims to defend "persecuted Christians," with the active collaboration of Israeli and some Western actors, legitimising external military action on Nigerian soil on Christmas Day carries immense symbolic and destabilising consequences. Such actions risk deepening

Nigeria's ethno-religious fractures and importing foreign conflicts into an already fragile domestic landscape.

Not surprisingly, these developments have intensified public suspicion surrounding the evolving triangular relationship between the Tinubu administration, the United States, and Israel, despite repeated official denials. A careful examination of the chronology of events suggests a disturbing trajectory—one in which external powers appear to exercise disproportionate influence over Nigeria's security and foreign-policy decisions.

Nigeria today is already burdened by religious polarisation, ethno-regional mistrust, insurgency, and declining public confidence in the state. Importing external conflicts and coercive security philosophies risks further destabilisation of the polity. Rather than strengthening sovereignty, these alliances weaken it considerably rendering it negotiable—subject to approval from Washington and Tel Aviv. Ultimately, Nigeria's current global posture reflects a convergence of moral retreat, compromised sovereignty, domestic vulnerability, and strategic short-sightedness.

**The Centre for Democratic Development Research and Training (CEDDERT)** therefore calls, in the strongest possible terms, on President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to urgently reconsider—and reverse—this dangerous course, and to restore Nigeria's historic role as a principled, sovereign, and respected actor in the international community.



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