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Dear Sirs,

The Embassy of Israel to South Africa is distressed that once again the lies of the radical BDS hate movement have hurt the people of South Africa. This time, they falsely claim that the Mail & Guardian group felt compelled to cancel a symposium on water management due to the involvement of the Israeli Ambassador. While the Mail & Guardian have confirmed, in writing, that this is not the case, the actions of the BDS hate activists reveals a total disregard for the interests and needs of South Africa. For BDS hatred is far more important than helping South African citizens.

Just last week, in his SONA 2016 address, President Zuma clearly articulated the dire water situation for South Africa by saying, in Zulu, “Isomiso sixakile impela ezifundazweni eziningi”. The drought that is currently taking place in most of our provinces is truly devastating.

Israel, an arid country, has faced these dilemmas since biblical times. Through careful national management, policies such as public awareness, coordinated water planning, desalination, recycling and innovations such as drip irrigation and careful protection of water infrastructure, Israel has resolved its drought dilemmas. It has increased water supply for its own public and for its neighbours in the Palestinian territories and in Jordan. It has been proud to share its experiences with friends across the world from China to California, from Uganda to India.

Shockingly, the BDS hate activists would prefer that South Africans suffer the effects of a severe drought rather than utilize Israel’s unique patented technology, technology that is not available anywhere else in the world and to which there are no alternative solutions. BDS haters would rather that no water symposium take place than to allow an Israeli official share Israel’s experiences and techniques with South Africa. What does that say about these activists and their concerns for fellow South Africans? They would prefer that South Africa finds no solution to this dilemma and that South Africans continue to suffer the effects of drought rather than seek answers from Israelis. This is not the first time that they have acted to violently shut down exchanges in culture, trade or academia with Israel. They directly threaten politicians, journalists and anyone with a different point of view.



The Embassy of Israel will not cower before such hateful behavior. The Embassy has decided to dedicate its 2016 national day programmes in Gauteng and the Western Cape to host water management seminars. Instead of National Day receptions, it will hold public events inviting leading experts and companies from Israel, in early June, to speak and interact with South African decision makers on best practices in water management techniques and offer to the people of this country its lessons learned and experiences to help play a positive role in facing the challenges of the current drought.

Today Israeli companies are meeting in the Western Cape with members of Parliament and local government as well as hundreds of local farmers and business leaders to share Israeli experience and knowledge in the areas of water management and food security.

The BDS haters will continue to hate and work against the interests of South Africa. We will continue to look for ways to help South Africa and provide solutions to the crippling drought being experienced by all South Africans.

A central lesson South Africa's rainbow nation heritage is dialogue and compromise. That is what inspired the world by the actions of Madiba and millions of South Africans during the 1990's. It is our hope that people of our region can follow those lessons for peace. It is our hope that South Africans remember their own history and truly reject the language of hate, bias and prejudice that the BDS movement promotes.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Freeman  
Deputy Ambassador  
Embassy of Israel in South Africa