

**Address by the Ambassador Gianluigi Benedetti  
on the occasion of the dinner in honor of Gen. SA Giovanni Fantuzzi  
September 9, 2019**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of my wife Sabina, and myself: Welcome to the Residence of the Embassy of Italy in Israel!

I am very pleased to greet to Israel the outstanding delegation of the Italian Air Force led by Gen. Giovanni Fantuzzi, Commander of the Italian Air Force Logistic Command.

I acknowledge with great pleasure the presence of Dr. Avivit Keinan, Director of the Central European Unit at SIBAT.

I also would like to give my warm welcome to former Israeli Ambassador to Italy, my dear friend Ofer Sachs, who just came back to Israel and I'm sure he will continue working towards an even stronger partnership between Italy and Israel.

Let me then express my deep gratitude to our distinguished representatives of the private sector, ELTA and Almaviva, the leading ICT group in Italy and a strong global reality. In particular, let me welcome Mr. Yoav Tourgeman and Mr. Antonio Amati, who I know since many years, and who is always very active in promoting and supporting the bilateral cooperation in the industrial and innovation sector.

I would like to take this chance to mention the growing friendly relationship between Italy and Israel. One of the proofs of our deep and strategic bilateral cooperation is indeed the military sector, which is today an area where our two countries enjoy a very successful cooperation. Both at strategic level, where we work side by side to ensure peace and stability in the Mediterranean basin (it this regards let me greet Colonel Calisti, who is leading a Carabinieri training mission in Jericho) and at industrial level, where we managed to develop deep bilateral programs such as the one between Leonardo and IAI-ELTA that allowed the exchange of very advanced military platforms, such as the Italian training plane M346 and the Israeli "mini AWACS", the CAEW.

Most of you might know that this year we are celebrating the 70th anniversary of our diplomatic relations and I cannot see a better moment to push this friendship to higher levels. Let me stress, indeed, the importance of this mission for the further development of the cooperation between Italy and Israel, not only in the military field, but also in the industrial sector.

Our Embassy, as well as the Defence Attaché Col. Guido Cerioni and the Air Attaché, Col. Vincenzo Sicuso, that I want to thank for having contributed in the front line to organize this visit, are at your complete disposal for any kind of support you may need in your future interactions.

I wish you an enjoyable evening. Long life to the friendship between Israel and Italy, Viva l'Italia! Mazal Tov Israel!