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In bid to boost Africa ties, Israel to open embassy in Rwanda

Israel is opening a new embassy in Kigali, Rwanda, and is weighing direct commercial flights to the East African country, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced Tuesday. "This is part of the expansion of Israel's presence in Africa and of the deepening cooperation between Israel and African countries," Netanyahu said after a meeting with Rwandan President Paul Kagame in Nairobi. Netanyahu arrived in Kenya for a whirlwind visit to celebrate the inauguration of President Uhuru Kenyatta and for a marathon session of bilateral meetings with African leaders. In the last two years, four African countries have opened diplomatic missions in Israel, and he was inviting others to follow suit, Netanyahu added. In July 2016, Netanyahu became the first sitting Israeli prime minister to visit Rwanda. "I am deeply impressed with Rwanda," Netanyahu said at a joint press conference. A year later, Netanyahu hosted Kagame in Jerusalem. "To be here it's like coming home," the Rwandan president said. In recent years, Rwanda has been a staunch ally of Israel, notably abstaining in 2014 vote on a resolution advancing the Palestinian statehood bid at the United Nations Security Council.