

Israel supports India hook, line and sinker on terror: Official

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Jerusalem: Israel supports India "hook, line and sinker" on the issue of terrorism emanating from Pakistan and within the country, a top Israeli official has said while asserting that New Delhi has the right to defend itself against terrorists. Noting that both India and Israel suffer from the "evil" forces of terrorism, deputy director general of Israel's foreign ministry Mark Sofer said outfits like Lashkar-e-Taiba and Hamas were no different from each other and both countries have the right to defend themselves.

File pic of Benjamin Netanyahu and Narendra Modi

Ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Israel, the first by an Indian premier, Sofer said that Israel has never hidden the fact that it supports India "hook, line and sinker on the subject of terrorism".

"We are not asking for a quid pro quo. You have suffered from terrorism from inside India, and not just emanating from Pakistan, which has been seen in recent history," he said.

Condemning terrorism in all forms, the Israeli official said, "We feel that India has a right to defend itself against terrorists in the same way as Israel has a right to defend itself from terrorists."

"We are both suffering from the same scourge. I really don't see any difference between the Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Hamas. I never did and I don't today. A terrorist is a terrorist is a terrorist," said Sofer, who has served as ambassador to India.

"Killing people for some sort of spurious or inexplicable ideological aim is terrorism, however you look at it. And that is what is happening from outside into India and coming from outside into Israel as well. We both clearly share the same struggle against the forces of evil," he said.

Modi's three-day visit beginning today is aimed at commemorating 25 years of establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries and will also see discussions between him and his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu to explore ways to enhance cooperation in key strategic areas.

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