

Ex-IDF Intelligence official: Russian cyber, disinformation trends converge with vaccine

Russian President Vladimir Putin is interested in depicting his country as winning the vaccine race.

By Yonah Jeremy Bob / August 17, 2020

Russia is using cyber and disinformation to bolster its standing regarding everything surrounding the issue of a coronavirus vaccine, former IDF Intelligence officer Lt.-Col. (ret.) **Daniel Rakov** said at a recent cyber and intelligence conference.

Russian President Vladimir Putin is interested in depicting his country as winning the vaccine race and is using hacking and social-media campaigns to discredit competing vaccines, he said during the video conference organized by the Israeli Intelligence and Heritage Commemoration Center (IICC).

Russia is hacking vaccine research from the US, Canada and England while acting as if it is ahead, said **Rakov**, who is an **Institute for National Security Studies (INSS)** fellow. All three countries have accused Moscow of hacking.

"Russia does not view cyber as a sphere that stands on its own, but rather as a part of the information realm" where it is operating to achieve broader aims, he said.

Moscow's declaration that it was the first to produce a vaccine was "an attempt to present itself as the victor in the vaccine race," **Rakov** said. "There is significant criticism worldwide regarding the registration of the vaccine, which it appears does not meet the accepted standards."

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