

Russia wants to show who's the boss - Analysis

Israelis are furious that their taxes are funding vaccines for the enemy.

By Udi Shaham / Feb. 21, 2021

The current Israeli discourse revolves around two main issues regarding the saga of the civilian who crossed into Syria and was returned to Israel over the weekend.

The first question the public is asking is why the government invested its efforts to return a civilian who crossed into Syria within two weeks of the occurrence, while civilians and the bodies of soldiers who were sent by the country into war have been held for years in the Gaza Strip. And it doesn't see their return on the horizon.

[...]

Zvi Magen, former ambassador to Russia and currently a senior researcher at the **Institute for National Security Studies**, said it is not about money but about influence.

"People like [Russian President Vladimir] Putin and [Syrian President Bashar al] Assad, who have billions [of dollars] going around them, do not need that million and a half," he said. "We should look for another motive."

"That motive is probably international and diplomatic," Magen said. "Putin wants to appear like a person who mediates, coordinates, manages and dictates [to] Israel and Assad what should be the right arrangement."

Some suggest that to strengthen the effect of this mediation, the Russians even tried to humble both sides and make them appear as if they did something that they would never do otherwise.

Israeli commentators linked this matter to a September 2019 report when Netanyahu flew to Russia to meet Putin and was forced to wait hours until the Russian president was available to see him.

"[The Russians] wants to show who is boss – who manages those affairs in the region," Magen said.

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