

Israeli Military Blames Syria for Downing Russian Warplane

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Maxim Kuzovkov / TASS

The Israeli military has blamed Syria and Iranian-backed forces for the downing of a Russian warplane near Syria's Mediterranean coast — an incident that Russia had blamed on Israel earlier on Tuesday.

The Russian Defense Ministry confirmed that 15 of its personnel aboard the Il-20 reconnaissance aircraft were killed in friendly fire from Syrian anti-aircraft systems late Monday. It accused Israel on Tuesday of putting the plane in danger of being caught in the crossfire of Israeli airstrikes and Syrian anti-aircraft systems, and the Russian Foreign Ministry summoned Israel's ambassador in Moscow.

Related article: [Syrian Forces Shot Down Russian Plane, Killing 15 Servicemen, Ministry Says](#)

“Israel holds the Assad regime, whose military shot down the Russian plane, fully responsible

for this incident,” the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) [said](#) in a Twitter statement.

The IDF said its fighter jets had targeted a Syrian facility overnight that it said was about to transfer weapons to Lebanon’s Hezbollah on behalf of Iran, another key ally of the Syrian regime. It said the Israeli jets “were already within Israeli airspace” when Russia’s Il-20 was hit.

The IDF said Syrian anti-aircraft batteries had fired “indiscriminately” in response to Israeli airstrikes and “did not bother” to ensure that no Russian planes were in the air.

An Israeli diplomatic source told Reuters that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was expected to speak with Russian President Vladimir Putin “shortly.”

Earlier on Tuesday, Russia's Defense Ministry said it held Israel responsible for the deaths of the 15 servicemen and promised to retaliate.

Reuters contributed reporting.

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