

Kremlin Spokesman Denies Russian Meddling in Israel Elections

By [Reuters](#)

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Benjamin Netanyahu / Kremlin.ru

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov has denied reports of Russian meddling ahead of Israel's April election after state censors suppressed a speech by Israel's domestic intelligence chief accusing a foreign power of planning to hack the vote.

Under a gag order described as a security precaution, media in Israel were barred from naming the country that Shin Bet chief Nadav Argaman, addressing a by-invitation audience at Tel Aviv University on Monday, said was trying to interfere.

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Israeli newspaper commentators speculated that he had pointed the finger at Russia, which Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's own intelligence minister, Israel Katz, told local media

last month could potentially want to replicate in Israel an alleged online influence campaign and email hacking to help Donald Trump win the U.S. ballot in 2016.

In Moscow, Peskov said: "Russia has not interfered, does not interfere and doesn't intend to interfere in any election in any country in the world."

Netanyahu, asked by reporters about the Argaman flap, offered a general reassurance. "Israel is braced to foil cyber interference. We are ready for any scenario. There is no country better prepared than us," he said.

The censor's edict, newspaper commentators said, appeared to be an attempt to avoid friction with Russia, the main backer of Syria, where Israel has carried out dozens of air strikes on suspected Iranian and Lebanese Hezbollah guerrilla targets.

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