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## Following alleged Dubai mess, the Mossad chief must go

By [Amir Oren](#)



Tags: Mossad, Dubai Assassination

An important figure with many followers goes overboard and gets exiled to a faraway village in the north. That creative solution comes courtesy of the rabbinical forum "Takana." But the sanction meted out to Rabbi Mordechai Elon should also be applied to another gentleman, who anyway already resides in the north: Maj. Gen. (ret.) Meir Dagan, the belligerent, heavy-handed chief of the Mossad.

The State of Israel did not claim responsibility for the assassination of Mahmoud al-Mabhouh in Dubai. The entire matter is treated as AFMR - According to Foreign Media Reports. We can still argue both sides of the broader issue at hand: assassinating senior officials in hotels (see under Rehavam Ze'evi) and in public (Imad Mughniyeh, Fathi Shkaki, Abbas Mussawi, Ali Hassan Salameh, and the list goes on). But we could also narrow the question to the quality of the performance in Dubai. And what must have seemed to its perpetrators as a huge success is now being overshadowed by enormous question marks.

If the perpetrators were from the Mossad (AFMR, of course), Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu must be walking around with an acute sense of déjà vu. Once again, an assassination of a senior Hamas leader in a friendly Arab country; once again, an operation designed to kill someone quietly and inconspicuously; once again, a diplomatic mess; and once again, it is all happening on Netanyahu's watch. In 1997, it was Khaled Meshal in Jordan. This time, it's Mabhouh in Dubai.

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The anticipated diplomatic crisis is not, so far, with Dubai, but with the countries whose passports were used by the assassins. The United Kingdom and Ireland were used once again, and this time, a French connection topped it off. It is as if Israeli governments had never apologized to London for using British documentation; as if they had not promised solemnly, when passports of Her Majesty's subjects were found in a certain phone booth, that this would never happen again.

This time, they didn't mess with feisty New Zealand. But other countries also do not tend to be forgiving of such insolent violations of their sovereignty. Italy, for instance, has engaged for the last few years in a merciless attack on the CIA, which abducted a suspected Egyptian terrorist on Italian soil (Mordechai Vanunu's abduction came decades too early), as well as on its own intelligence agencies, which assisted the American one. As soon as the abducted man's wife filed a complaint, the Italian judiciary ruled that it could not possibly avoid investigating and pressing charges. In Italy, like in Dubai, meticulous work was invested in collecting evidence against the suspects, mostly by going through cellular communications data and tracing credit card trails in hotels and other businesses.

But even if whoever carried out the assassination does reach some kind of arrangement with the infuriated Western nations, it still has an obligation to its own citizens.

This obligation was violated, thanks to the Mossad - AFMR - and the attorney general, whether through action or inaction.

Using the identities of real, living, innocent Israelis for operational documentation is against the law. This kind of abuse also causes innocent civilians to suffer the evil that already plagues ministers and officers: being prevented from traveling abroad for fear of being arrested by Interpol on suspicion of being the Dubai assassins.

Former Mossad chief Efraim Halevy pushed for a Mossad Law to be legislated that would enshrine the state's obligation to defend its agents caught breaking laws abroad. The initiative never got off the ground: A state can't legitimize illegality. But neither can it allow one of its institutions to arbitrarily harm civilians not the police, not the tax authority, not the Shin Bet security service and not the Mossad.

Attorney General Yehuda Weinstein was asked yesterday whether an investigation will be opened following the public complaints of those whose identities were stolen from them, and whose lives and liberty are therefore now threatened. Weinstein has not yet had time to study the issue. He has some superficial knowledge of Dagan's character, but no prejudice.

Netanyahu played deaf to the warnings and extended Dagan's tenure for an eighth year, a decision as hasty as it was unnecessary. But the Mossad, like the Jerusalem District Attorney's Office, cannot hinge upon one man, without whom everything would collapse.

What is needed now is a swift decision to terminate Dagan's contract and to appoint a new Mossad chief - one of the current department heads, one of their predecessors, or a talented Israel Defense Forces general. There's no disease (AFMR) without a cure: An easel in Rosh Pina is yearning for pensioner Dagan to come home.

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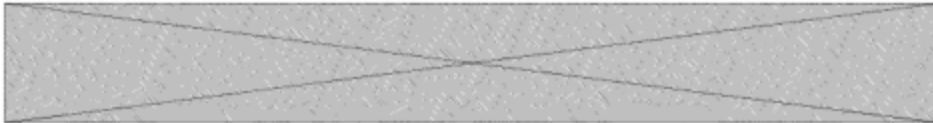
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