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private military company

Alternate titles: PMC, PMF, private military firm

private military company (PMC), independent corporation that offers [military](#) services to national governments, international organizations, and substate actors. Private military companies (PMCs) [constitute](#) an important and deeply controversial element of the privatized military [industry](#). PMCs specialize in providing combat and protection forces. Their work ranges from running small-scale training missions to providing combat units composed of up to several hundred highly trained soldiers equipped with powerful weapons platforms, including [tanks](#) and attack [helicopters](#).

The use of military force by private-sector organizations is not new. The [East India Company](#), for example, had at its disposal a large army during the 18th and 19th centuries. Private-sector actors also have long helped to maintain the hardware of armies. Yet, for much of the 20th century, the outsourcing of combat functions was [disparaged](#), and the employment of military power was restricted largely to the agencies of the state. This began to change in the post-[Cold War](#) era. At the end of the Cold War, the market was flooded with military specialists and surplus equipment. The Cold War also was followed by the eruption of numerous small wars, especially in Africa. It was in such conflicts that a number of PMCs, including Sandline International (United Kingdom) and Executive Outcomes (South Africa), made their name.

Nonetheless, PMCs are highly controversial. Since 2001, for instance, the United Nations [Mercenary](#) Convention has banned the use of [mercenaries](#) (individuals who engage in conflict on behalf of any state without regard to political interests or issues) in armed conflict, with the services provided by PMCs considered [mercenary](#) activity. The [United States](#), however, rejected the notion of PMC activities as mercenary, and along with other countries with sizeable military forces, including China and Russia, did not ratify the convention. Adding to the controversy was the fact that PMC personnel and support services were not easily distinguished from state or national military forces. As a result, the use of PMCs provided an opportunity for deniability, allowing states or countries to carry out otherwise criminal warfare activities while holding PMCs accountable for those crimes. PMCs, especially those operating in Africa, had been held responsible for abuses of [human rights](#).

From <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/private-military-firm>>

SPECIAL REPORTS

Date: 20 August 2020

The Awakening Of Private Military Companies

Private military companies, or PMCs, are independent corporations that trade military services through a wide range of opportunities they have due to their corporate nature. Private-sector organizations hold military power for a variety of reasons, including shifts in the world order and a security gap for PMCs to fill, globalization-related phenomena — whether these be linked to new technologies or novel social approaches to warfare — as well as the 1990s privatization trend.

- **Through military force, state actors can accomplish both military and economic goals. By outsourcing combat, they are also able to go ahead with undemocratic feats while senior state officials or governments might evade responsibility.**
- **Private military companies are efficient; this arises from their better readiness to run some missions, compared to regular armies. Another factor refers directly to the economy, as actors could mobilize extra resources to boost their capabilities therein.**
- **What the privatized military sector offers is in line with both the needs and strategies of leading defense groups or any other firms that hire corporate warriors to shield their foreign investments.**
- **With the use of private military companies come strained ties within state actors, while those being politically and economically weak are closely tied to players outside. There is also much room left for illegal missions as well as those lacking a democratic mandate.**
- **In the future, the use of private military force will expose deeper rifts in society and between states, between the rich and the poor. So could it serve as a catalyst for military involvement while perhaps leading to conflict escalation and impairing any controlling mechanisms of the executive power.**
- **The privatized military industry boasts a huge potential for information warfare campaign — and it could be used by state coalitions to solve their transnational problems comprehensively, whether they touch upon issues like migration, demography, or climate change.**
- **What is pivotal for the fate of the privatized military sector will be a vision of the world order as imposed by the U.S. government, or the main client of PMCs.**



Defining private military companies

Private military companies, or PMCs, are independent businesses that trade an array of services pertaining to war and conflict, closely linked to any missions carried out by security forces. Of course, these can mirror tasks of traditional armed forces. “They are business organizations that trade in professional services intricately linked to warfare. They are corporate bodies that specialize in the provision of military skills, including combat operation, strategic planning, intelligence, risk assessment, operational support, training, and technical skills^[1].” They have grown inherently into the security landscape of many countries, whether these be rich or poor.

There is yet a difference between mercenaries, or foreign volunteers, and private military companies. A mercenary, often referred to as a soldier of fortune, is an individual who takes part in military conflict for plausible personal profit, with a binding contract for an employer, and not their homeland. The case of foreign volunteers is somewhat distinct— these are usually guided by ideology, while formally being part of the armed forces (e.g. the XIII Dąbrowski Brigade during the Spanish Civil War). The twentieth century brought a parallel coexistence of both private military companies and war-related services traded in a somewhat traditional way, as was the case of many, just to quote Rafał Gan-Ganowicz, Mike^[2] Hoare, Bob^[3] Denard, or Jan Zumbach. Mercenary activities reached their apex in the 1960s and 1970s while many colonies worldwide were becoming independent of colonizing countries, however, they continue to this day, albeit to a marginal extent^[4]. As for conventional soldiers of fortune, they need to observe a set of strict rules that prevent them from competing with corporate military businesses. Being hired soldiers, they are by no means subject to any corporate structure, with no managerial hierarchy while discipline relies upon the charisma of a leader. As such, mercenaries have no access to any financial markets, which restrains the scope of projects they could possibly engage in. Nor do mercenaries build their status in the privatized military industry — full of intertwined interdependencies — hence it is a challenge to find a soldier of fortune having a professional and loyal attitude and who displays their long-term pursuits.

Private military companies are yet the next stage in the development of military services that burgeons in parallel with an increase in capabilities of contemporary military corporate businesses. Like any other economic bodies, PMCs benefit largely from their legal corporate structure. Private military firms have a clear-cut internal hierarchy, allowing them to go quickly through decision-making processes and implement new regulations quite efficiently. In its business structure, PMCs have the very same bodies as commercial law companies, including the management board or the supervisory board, or shareholders meetings. With these highly proven business methods, PMCs turn into a durable structure capable of surviving in a competitive free-market environment. Another feature that distinguishes private military firms is that they provide services for corporate profit, and not that of individuals. Seemingly a nuance, this yet wholly changes an attitude of the institutional environment toward a company. The mere idea of perks should come in terms of both short and long-term goals, most often described in the form of a corporate strategy, or at least its vision or mission. Any external bodies are legitimate to assess whether to seek cooperation with an individual PMC through an analysis of its stability and long-term pursuits. Business cooperation with external partners develops on the basis of the long-term business tie, and not just a one-off economic event, where a more determined and offensive corporate body takes all the transaction profit. Furthermore, with its status of a commercial law body and other entrepreneurs being keen to join, PMCs grasp an opportunity to team with financial institutions while being able to obtain proceeds from the issue of shares or benefit from trade credits. Also, recruitment possibilities look differently under transparency rules — with greater competition, private military firms can hire better quality employees while expanding their labor pool and welcome more people if needed.

Another peculiarity is that PMCs — while operating worldwide in a somewhat unattainable move for earlier private military firms — must observe any formal regulations pertaining to its registration, accounting, or licensing in a country where they operate businesses. This is what differentiates PMCs from soldiers of fortune, and any other firms formed to produce profits from colonial possessions, just to quote here the East India Company. For trade companies, violence itself was not an exchangeable good, but rather a tool for privileged commercial activity. Mercenaries used to offer nothing but just tactical services yet being unable to handle them worldwide or work for many clients simultaneously.

From <<https://warsawinstitute.org/awakening-private-military-companies/>>

The Wagner Group

February 4, 2023 6:45 PM

The **Wagner Group** ([Russian](#): Грyнна Вaгнepa, *romanized*: *Gruppa Vagnera*), also known as **PMC Wagner**^[a] ([Russian](#): ЧБК «Вaгнep», *romanized*: *ChVK «Vagner»*^[a]; lit. 'Wagner Private Military Company'), is a Russian [paramilitary](#) organization.^[a] It is variously described as a [private military company](#) (PMC), a network of [mercenaries](#), or a *de facto* [private army](#) of Russian President [Vladimir Putin](#).^[a] The group operates [beyond the law](#) in Russia, where private military contractors are officially forbidden.^[a] While the Wagner Group itself is not ideologically driven,^[a] various elements of Wagner have been linked to [neo-Nazis](#) and [far-right extremists](#).^[a]^[a]^[a] The group came to global prominence during the [war in Donbas](#) in Ukraine, where it aided [separatist](#) forces of the self-declared [Donetsk](#) and [Luhansk People's Republics](#) from 2014 to 2015.^[a] Its contractors have reportedly taken part in various conflicts around the world—including the civil wars in [Syria](#), [Libya](#), the [Central African Republic](#) (CAR), and [Mali](#), often fighting on the side of forces aligned with the Russian government.^[a] Wagner operatives have committed [war crimes](#) in areas where they are deployed.^[a]^[a] The accusations include rapes and robberies of civilians,^[a] and torturing accused deserters.^[a]^[a] **Because it operates in support of Russian interests, receives military equipment from the Russian Ministry of Defence (MoD) and uses installations of MoD for training, Wagner Group is frequently considered a de-facto unit of the MoD or Russia's military intelligence agency, the GRU.**^[a] It is widely speculated that the Wagner Group is used by the Russian government to allow for [plausible deniability](#) in certain conflicts, and to obscure from public the number of casualties and financial costs of Russia's foreign interventions.^[a] It has played a significant role in the [2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine](#), where, among other activities, it has been reportedly deployed to assassinate Ukrainian leaders,^[a] and has widely recruited prisoners and convicts for frontline combat.^[a]^[a] In December 2022, Pentagon's John Kirby claimed Wagner group has 50,000 fighters in Ukraine, including 10,000 contractors and 40,000 convicts.^[a] Others put the number of recruited prisoners at more than 20,000,^[a] with the overall number of PMCs present in Ukraine estimated at 20,000.^[a] The group is widely believed to be owned or financed by [Yevgeny Prigozhin](#), a businessman with close links to Putin.^[a] After years of denying links to the Wagner group, Prigozhin admitted in September 2022 that he "founded" the paramilitary group.^[a]^[a]

From <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wagner_Group>

Wagner Group	
Грyнна Вaгнepa	
 <div>Official logo of the Wagner Group^[a]</div>	
Founder	Yevgeny Prigozhin ^[a]
Leaders	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Lt. Col. Dmitry Utkin ("Wagner")^[a]Col. Konstantin Pikalov^[a]</div>
Dates of operation	2014–present ^[a]
Headquarters	Saint Petersburg, Russia
Size	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">50,000+ (December 2022)^[a]8,000 (April 2022)^[a]6,000 (December 2017)^[a]1,000 (March 2016)^[a]250 (2014)^[a]</div>

From <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wagner_Group>

Russia's Wagner Group Doesn't Actually Exist



A Russian armored personnel carrier drives in the street during the delivery of armored vehicles to the Central African Republic army in Bangui, Central African Republic, on Oct. 15, 2020. CAMILLE LAFFONT/AFP/GETTY IMAGES
JULY 6, 2021, 2:03 PM

Over the past seven years, reports have trickled out of war zones and fragile countries around the world about shadowy groups of mercenaries operating under the rubric of the Russian private military contractor Wagner.

A [report](#) by a United Nations panel of experts released late last month accused Russian instructors to the Central African Republic armed forces of indiscriminate killings, looting, and enforced disappearances conducted alongside the Central African military. While the report to the U.N. Security Council does not identify those instructors as Wagner affiliates, news reports and the U.N.'s [working group](#) on mercenaries have.

Operatives from the sprawling Wagner network have spanned from [Ukraine](#), where they fought alongside Russian and separatist forces, to [Mozambique](#), where they were hired to fight insurgents. But the group defies the conventional definition of a private military contractor, instead melding mercenary activity and natural resource extraction while advancing the Kremlin's foreign-policy objectives. Nominally private, the group is thought to be closely enmeshed with the Russian security apparatus, although the Russian government has denied the connection. The network's murky nature presents an enormous challenge for victims, governments, and international institutions seeking to hold the group to account for alleged atrocities.

What is the Wagner Group?

The first thing to understand about the Wagner Group is that there **most likely is no Wagner Group**. As far as researchers can tell, there is no single registered business called Wagner. Rather, the name has come to describe a **network of businesses and groups of mercenaries that have been linked by overlaps in ownership and logistics networks**. Entities making up the network have been described in sanctions designations by the U.S. Treasury as being involved in a wide range of activities, including working to suppress pro-democracy protests, spreading disinformation, mining for gold and diamonds, and engaging in paramilitary activity.

The group, such as it is, first appeared in Ukraine in 2014, where it assisted the Russian military in the annexation of Crimea. "Ukraine was basically the beginning, the departure point for the Wagner Group," said Sergey Sukhankin, a senior research fellow with the Jamestown Foundation. Since then, a spiderweb of paramilitaries and businesses has branched out to Syria—where they have fought in support of embattled President Bashar al-Assad while securing a foothold in the country's energy sector—as well as to Libya, Sudan, Madagascar, Mozambique, and the Central African Republic. While Wagner has become a helpful shorthand to describe this opaque and expansive network, experts caution that it may disrupt our ability to think about how they operate.

"It's extremely problematic that we continue to refer to them as the Wagner Group, because it makes them sound like these ghostly operators that cannot be traced, and that's just not the case," said Candace Rondeaux, a senior fellow with the Center on the Future of War, a joint project between Arizona State University and the New America think tank.

"It makes it very difficult for lawmakers and policymakers who want to curtail, contain, deal with, or mitigate the risks. If they can't conceptualize the problem properly then they can't solve the problem properly either," Rondeaux said.

What information we do have about the network has been painstakingly pieced together by investigative journalists, by researchers, in U.N. and government reports, and through corporate documents obtained by the Dossier Center, a London-based investigative outfit funded by the exiled Russian oligarch Mikhail Khodorkovsky.

Russian reporters who have done some of the most detailed reporting on the group do so at great personal risk. In 2018, a team of Russian journalists sent to the Central African Republic to report on Wagner activities in the country were killed in what is thought to have been a **carefully planned** ambush. Reporter [Maxim Borodin](#), who reported on the deaths of Wagner fighters in [Syria in 2018](#), died that same year after falling from the balcony of his apartment. Others have been [threatened and harassed](#).

From <<https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/07/06/what-is-wagner-group-russia-mercenaries-military-contractor/>>

A captured member of the infamous Wagner Group said he is more 'afraid of Putin' than dying in battle, Ukrainian soldier reve als

Rebecca Cohen

Wed, February 1, 2023 at 4:17 p.m. EST-2 min read





Russian President Vladimir Putin (L) looks on Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu (R) during a military parade in Pskov, Russia, on March 1, 2020. Mikhail Svetlov/Getty Images

- A captured Russian soldier said he is more afraid of Vladimir Putin than he is of dying in battle.
- "We're afraid of Putin," a Ukrainian soldier recalled the man saying.
- The Ukrainian soldier said the man joined Russia's Wagner Group to expunge his criminal record.

A captured fighter from Russia's Wagner Group told his Ukrainian captors he is more afraid of Russian President Vladimir Putin than he is of dying on the battlefield, [a Ukrainian soldier revealed to CNN](#).

In an audio recording reviewed by CNN of the Ukrainian soldier questioning the Russian prisoner, Andriy told the man: "Obviously, you know that you will be killed [in battle.] But you're afraid to fight for your freedom in your country."

"Yes, this is true," the Ukrainian soldier named Andriy recalled the man replying. "We're afraid of Putin."

The Wagner fighter was an engineer, CNN reported, citing the audio recording. According to CNN, he had started selling drugs in Russia to make more money on the side, and he joined Wagner in hopes of expunging his criminal record so his daughter, who wants to be a lawyer, would run into fewer roadblocks in her future.

In the recording reviewed by CNN, Andriy asked the man when he realized he was "just meat," to which he replied: "At the first combat mission. They brought us to the frontline on December 28. They sent us forward last night."

Russian President Vladimir Putin is "desperate for a victory of any kind" ahead of the one-year anniversary of his invasion into Ukraine, and he's sending his troops into some of Ukraine's most heavily defended areas to try to get it, a former Australian general [said earlier this month](#).

To achieve this, Russia has been sending prisoners recruited by the Wagner Group and freshly mobilized troops to the front lines to clear the way for its better-trained forces, who step in later, a US official said, [Insider previously reported](#).

Wagner — a private military contractor with close ties to the Kremlin — was designated as a "significant transnational criminal organization" by the US government last week and its global network was [targeted](#) by a slew of sanctions. [The White House said in January](#) that the group had about 10,000 mercenaries and 40,000 former prisoners deployed across Ukraine, where it has joined in Moscow's war efforts.

Earlier this month, [Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Mark Milley estimated](#) that Russia has lost "well over 100,000" troops in almost a full year of battle, including soldiers from its regular military and also Wagner fighters.

From <https://ca.finance.yahoo.com/news/captured-member-infamous-wagner-group-211739672.html>

Dmitry Utkin

February 4, 2023 8:26 PM

Dmitry Valerievich Utkin (**Russian**: Дмитрий Валерьевич Уткин; born 11 June 1970) is a **Russian army officer**. He served as a **special forces officer in the GRU**, where he held a rank of **lieutenant colonel**.^[1] He is alleged to have founded the **Wagner Group**, with his own **call-sign** reportedly being *Wagner*.^{[2][3][4][5][6]} Utkin has received four **Orders of Courage of Russia**.^{[7][8]}

Early life

Utkin was born on 11 June 1970, in the village of **Smolino, Kirovograd**, of the **Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic**.^{[7][8]} He was married to Elena Shcherbinina, but the couple divorced in the early 2000s.^[8]

Political views

Members of Wagner Group reported that Utkin is a **Rodnover**, a believer of Slavic native faith.^[4] Utkin has been alleged by the **Latvia**-based *Meduza* to have sympathies with Nazi Germany, and believed by the British *NationalWorld* to be a **neo-Nazi** because of the images that surfaced in 2021, purportedly showing Utkin with a **Waffen-SS** collar tab and *Reichsadler* tattoos on his neck and chest.^{[10][11][12]}

Utkin hasn't made any public appearances since 2016.^[13]

Military career

Russia and Slavonic Corps

See also: *Slavonic Corps*

Utkin served as the commander of the 700th Separate Special Detachment of the 2nd Separate Special Brigade of the **Main Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation** (GRU), stationed in **Pechory, Pskov Oblast**, until 2013.^{[14][15]} After retiring, he joined the **Slavonic Corps**, fighting on the side of **Syrian President Bashar al-Assad** during the **civil war** in 2013, but returned to **Moscow** in October.^[16]

Wagner Group

Main article: *Wagner Group*

Almost immediately after returning to Russia, Utkin reportedly created his own mercenary group. Utkin, who reportedly has a passion for the history of the **Third Reich**,^[17] had the call-sign *Wagner*, allegedly in honour of **Richard Wagner**.^{[16][18]} Utkin and his "Wagner Group", as well as several veterans of the Slavonic Corps were seen both in **Crimea** in February 2014 and then in **Donbas**, where they fought for the pro-Russian separatists during the **Russo-Ukrainian War**.^[19] *Gazeta.ru* reports that Utkin and his men could have been involved in the killing of several field commanders of the self-proclaimed **Luhansk People's Republic**.^[20] Turkish newspaper **Yeni Safak** reported that Utkin was possibly a figurehead for the company, while the real head of Wagner was someone else.^[21]

Utkin was seen in the **Kremlin** during the celebration of **Fatherland's Heroes Day** on 9 December 2016. He attended the celebration as a laureate of four **Orders of Courage**.^{[22][23]} and was photographed with the **President of Russia**, **Vladimir Putin**.^[24] **Dmitry Peskov**, the Press Secretary for the Russian President, admitted that Utkin was indeed among the invitees, but did not comment on his connection with the mercenaries.^[14]

RBK reported that after completing a training in **Krasnodar Krai**, Utkin and his men returned to **Syria in 2015**.^[25] Soon after the start of the **Russian aerial strikes**, reports emerged on the deaths of Russian mercenaries fighting on the ground. Several images spread in the social media apparently depicting armed Russian men killed during the **Battle of Palmyra** in March 2016.^[19] *Sky News* reported that approximately 500 to 600 people, mostly Wagner mercenaries, were killed in Syria in 2016.^[26]

In June 2017, the United States imposed sanctions against Utkin as the head of Wagner Group.^[22] In November 2017, *RBK* reported the appointment of **Utkin as CEO of Concord Management and Consulting**, the managing company of the restaurant holding owned by **Yevgeny Prigozhin**,^[26] who is believed to be the financier of Wagner Group.^[29] *Bellingcat* contends that this was a different Dmitry Utkin, however.^[30]

On 13 December 2021, the **Council of the European Union** imposed restrictive measures against Utkin and other individuals associated with the Wagner Group. In relation to Utkin, he was accused of being "responsible for serious **human rights** abuses committed by the group, which include **torture** and **extrajudicial, summary** or arbitrary executions and killings."^{[31][32]}

From <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dmitry_Utkin>



Dmitry Utkin	
Native name	Дмитрий Валерьевич Уткин
Birth name	Dmitry Valerievich Utkin
Born	June 11, 1970 (age 52) <div> Smoline, Ukrainian SSR, Soviet Union (now Ukraine)</div>
Allegiance	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none"> Russian Armed Forces (1993–2013) Slavonic Corps (2013) Wagner Group (2014–present)</div>
Service/branch	 GRU (1993–2013)
Rank	 Lieutenant colonel (1993–2013)
Commands held	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2nd Spetsnaz Brigade (1993–2013) 700th Spetsnaz Detachment Wagner Group (2014–present)</div>
Battles/wars	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none"> Syrian civil war Crimean crisis Russo-Ukrainian War</div>
Awards	 Order of Courage (4)

From <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dmitry_Utkin>

February 4, 2023 7:40 PM

Casino, restaurant, and catering career



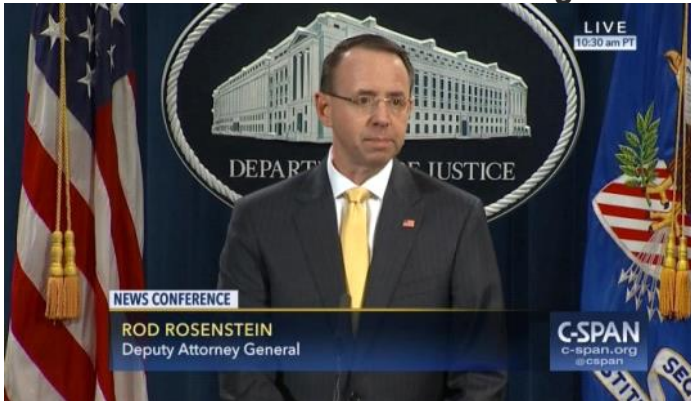
According to [Novaya Gazeta](#) in October 2018, Evgeny Gulyaev is the head of the security service for Prigozhin.^[43] On 11 December 2019, which is "Heroes Day" or "Heroes of the Fatherland Day", Msk LLC (Russian: ООО "Мск") which has the same phone number as Concord Catering, was paid **4.1 million rubles for a Kremlin banquet**.^[44] In 2018, Msk LLC was paid only 2.5 million rubles from the Presidential Administration for the same banquet at the Kremlin.

From <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yevgeny_Prigozhin>

Yevgeny Prigozhin Евгений Пригожин	
	
Prigozhin at Concord Catering in 2010	
Born	1 June 1961 (age 61) Leningrad, Russian SFSR, Soviet Union
Other names	"Putin's chef"
Occupation(s)	Businessman , restaurateur , mercenary
Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wagner Group• Internet Research Agency• Concord Management and Consulting
Criminal charges	1979: theft 1981: robbery, fraud, organizing prostitution LUGENRUE
Criminal penalty	Suspended sentence (1979) 12-year imprisonment (served 1981–1990)
Criminal status	Wanted by the FBI by electoral interference
Spouse	Lyubov Valentinovna Prigozhina
Children	2
Awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hero of the Russian Federation• Hero of the Donetsk People's Republic• Hero of the Luhansk People's Republic

From <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yevgeny_Prigozhin>

The Curious Case of Concord Management and Consulting: The Inception



Deputy Attorney General, Rod Rosenstein, announces indictments against thirteen Russian individuals and three Russian companies, including Concord Management and Consulting LLC.

A difficult question to answer is how far back do you need to go to where the context will be sufficient. In the case of this court case we will start with by briefly looking at the inception of the defendant themselves, then to the appointment of the Special Counsel, the infamous 16 indictments against Russian individuals and companies, and lastly to right where this kicks off.



ALEXEI DRUZHININ/POOL PHOTO VIA AP
Yevgeny Prigozhin(left) and Russian President Vladimir Putin(right).

The story of Concord Management and Consulting begins in chaotic 90s in Russia, where you were either dirt poor or extremely rich. There, a relatively young nobody named Yevgeny Prigozhin who made good money from a **hotdog selling network** set up a company named Concord Management and Consulting LLC. This company quickly began to own other companies and worked on many real-estate projects that were highly controversial. Little by little, the company grew and so did Yevgeny Prigozhin's social capital. Soon they were getting lucrative deals with the Russian government and Prigozhin made many powerful friends, namely Russian President Vladimir Putin. Their success and close relationship with Russian leadership had been well noted. With the United States Treasury Department adding Concord Management and Consulting to the list of companies sanctioned due to Russia's intervention in Ukraine. However, while Prigozhin is still alleged to run the show, it is important to note that in official documentation ownership of the company eventually shifted in 2011 to Prigozhin's mother: Violetta Prigozhin. **With well known Russian mercenary leader, Dimirty Utkin, becoming the CEO in November 14, 2017.**

We now must travel back around the world to understand how this case came to be in the United States. While I will not go into too much detail, as this series has an assumption readers are aware to some extent of the Russia interference in the 2016 elections saga, I will briefly explain this groundwork as to how this specific company became to be indicted. Russia (yes this is a hugely ambiguous term, is the government, individuals? This is however how it was framed and I will use this terminology, as this terminology is a topic for another time) had long been accused of meddling in the elections in order to elect Donald Trump over his opponent Hillary Clinton. The accusations went further to say Donald Trump and his presidential campaign colluded with Russia in order to win. All of this eventually devolved into the Deputy Attorney General, Rod Rosentien, appointing former FBI Head Robert Mueller as Special Counsel to investigate alleged Russian meddling, the issue of Trump Collusion, and Obstruction of Justice. This investigation stayed relatively quiet until February 16, 2018.

On February 16, 2018, Deputy Attorney General, and the DOJ official overseeing the Special Counsel's investigation announced **16 indictments** against thirteen Russian individuals and three Russian companies. This indictment (can be fully read in the hyperlink in the previous sentence) outlined a deep and complex operation in which Russian's used social media memes and helped organize rallies for Trump and against his then political rival: Hillary Clinton. A part of the indictment rarely mentioned was that after the election of Donald Trump, as per the indictment, this operation supposedly helped set up anti-Trump rallies. **This indictment stated that these individuals worked for the three companies: Internet Research Agency - a troll farm which created the memes and organized rallies and as well as Concord Management and Consulting and Concord Catering(subsidiary of Concord Management and Consulting) who supposedly bankrolled and helped direct and plan the operation.** The indictment although long, rarely outlined specific crimes that Concord Committed and lumped it in the first felony count which was Conspiracy to Defraud the United States (Concord was not charged with wire, bank fraud, or identity theft as was the Internet Research Agency). Some skeptics came out saying parts of this indictment were rather far-fetched such as when the indictment mentioned that somehow these companies "arranged for a real U.S. person to stand in front of the White House in the District of Columbia under false pretenses to hold a sign that read 'Happy 55th Birthday Dear Boss.' Defendants and their co-conspirators informed the real U.S. person that the sign 7 Case 1:18-cr-00032-DLF Document 1 Filed 02/16/18 Page 8 of 37 was for someone who 'is a leader here and our boss . . . our funder.' PRIGOZHIN's Russian passport identifies his date of birth as June 1, 1961." While some skeptics existed this was however met with extreme fanfare in the media. With some calling it a dark day for Trump and a huge victory for the Special Counsel's investigation and America as a whole. This, however was largely for show. The Special Counsel was well aware that no individual would head over from Russia to be a rested and tried. The United States

and Russia have no extradition treaty and given the political climate these people would never go to the United States. It seems that the Special Counsel scored a huge win- however there was a big flaw in their methodology- corporations are legal persons and cannot be arrested.

On April 11 2018- Concord Management and Consulting retained the legal services of Reed Smith's Eric Dubelier and Katherine Seikaly and the case commenced.

From <<https://medium.com/@DanielTch/the-curious-case-of-concord-management-and-consulting-the-inception-67c6f4def8d9>>

Serb Unit

February 4, 2023 9:00 PM

Serb unit

Wagner is believed to have a [Serb](#) unit, which was, until at least April 2016, under the command of Davor Savičić, a [Bosnian Serb](#) who was a member of the [Serb Volunteer Guard](#) (also known as *Arkan's Tigers*) during the [Bosnian War](#) and the [Special Operations Unit](#) (JSO) during the [Kosovo War](#). His call sign in Bosnia was "Elvis". Savičić was reportedly only three days in the Luhansk region when a [BTR](#) armored personnel carrier fired at his checkpoint, leaving him [shell-shocked](#). After this, he left to be treated. He was also reported to have been involved in [the first offensive to capture Palmyra](#) from the [Islamic State](#) (ISIL) in early 2016. One member of the Serbian unit was killed in Syria in June 2017, while the SBU issued arrest warrants in December 2017, for six Serbian PMCs that belonged to Wagner and fought in Ukraine, including Savičić. In early February 2018, the SBU reported that one Serb member of Wagner, who was a veteran of the conflict in Syria, had been killed while fighting in eastern Ukraine. In January 2023, Serbian president [Aleksandar Vučić](#) criticised Wagner for recruiting Serbian nationals and called on Russia to put an end to the practice, noting that it is illegal under Serbian law for Serbian citizens to take part in foreign armed conflicts.

From <https://www.detailedpedia.com/wiki-Wagner_Group>

Neo-Nazi Russian Attack Unit Hints It's Going

Back Into Ukraine Undercover
BE AFRAID
EXCLUSIVE



Instagram

One of the most notorious battalions of the secretive and deadly Wagner Group appeared to suggest it was prepping to return to Ukraine, raising the prospect of a Russian assault.

[Candace Rondeaux](#)
[Jonathan Deer](#)
[Ben Dalton](#)

Updated Jan. 26, 2022 10:30AM ET / Published Jan. 26, 2022 5:06AM ET



ne of the most feared and radical [Russian paramilitary](#)

[groups](#) may have slipped up on social media and revealed its plans to return undercover to Ukraine, where it was accused of committing war crimes during a previous incursion.

[Task Force Rusich](#), a Russian mercenary unit which glories in its neo-Nazi reputation, became known for its brutality when it was first deployed to the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine during peak fighting between Russian separatist forces and the Ukrainian military in the summer of 2014.

Now it seems Rusich has set its sights on the strategically important north-eastern Ukrainian city of Kharkiv. That could mean the [Wagner Group](#)—which counts Rusich among its network of off-the-books fighting cadres posted all over the world—will be well-positioned for the opening salvo in what some fear may be the prelude to an all-out war between Russia and Ukraine.

The Pentagon says it has intel suggesting Russia plans to position a group of covert operatives inside Ukraine to conduct false-flag operations as a pretext

Rusich unit

Main article: [Rusich Group](#)

DSHRG Rusich	
ДШРГ Русич	
Patch	
Leaders	Alexey Milchakov Yan Petrovsky
Dates of operation	2014–present
Country	
Ideology	Russian nationalism Russian irredentism
Battles and wars	Russo-Ukrainian War Syrian civil war Second Libyan Civil War

The Wagner Group includes a contingent known as Rusich, or Task Force Rusich, referred to as a "sabotage and assault reconnaissance group", which has been fighting as part of the [Russian separatist forces in eastern Ukraine](#). Rusich are described as a [far-right](#) extremist or [neo-Nazi](#) unit, and their logo features a [Slavic swastika](#). The group was founded by [Alexey Milchakov](#) and Yan Petrovsky in the summer of 2014, after graduating from a paramilitary training program run by the Russian Imperial Legion, the fighting arm of the [Russian Imperial Movement](#). As of 2017, the Ukrainian Prosecutor General and the [International Criminal Court](#) (ICC) were investigating fighters of this unit for alleged war crimes committed in Ukraine.

From https://www.detailedpedia.com/wiki/Wagner_Group

Band of brutal neo-nazi mercenaries whose leader cuts ears off enemies heading to Ukraine

A BRUTAL band of neo-nazi mercenaries have reportedly crossed the border and is heading to fight in Vladimir Putin's war against innocent civilians in Ukraine.

By [YASSIA BARBA](#)

22:59, Thu, Apr 7, 2022 | UPDATED: 22:59, Thu, Apr 7, 2022

[8](#)



The Rusich unit is understood to be part of the Wagner Group (Image: diyaruna.com/Wikipedia)

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The Rusich group is a far-right Russian paramilitary unit, part of the Wagner group which came to global prominence during the war in Donbas in Ukraine in 2014. The members of the network are known for enacting hardcore atrocities including tortures, mutilations and brutal killings of innocent civilians. It is understood that the network is supported by the Kremlin in its horrible acts.

From <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/1592997/Ukraine-news-band-neo-nazi-mercenaries-rusich-wagner-russia-update>

for invasion. These public claims have rightly set Washington, Kyiv, and the rest of the world on edge with tensions mounting over the 100,000-plus Russian [troops now massing](#) near Ukraine's borders with Russia and [Belarus](#).

The Wagner Group—which the U.S. believes is run by one of President Vladimir Putin's closest oligarch friends, Yevgeny Prigozhin—is not officially acknowledged as part of the Russian military apparatus, and the Kremlin says it doesn't know anything about its operations around the world. In many cases, the quasi-private military units are sent to conflict zones where Putin wants to maintain plausible deniability.

- [Russian Militia Tortured, Beheaded Man: Landmark Court Docs](#)
[IN THE DOCK](#)

[Candace Rondeaux](#)



Rusich left Ukraine in the summer of 2015 a few months after the [U.K.](#), [Canada](#), and the [European Union](#) sanctioned one of the group's commanders, [Alexey Milchakov](#), after reports of his unit's involvement in alleged war crimes in Donbas.

Milchakov and Rusich's lead military trainer, [Yan Petrovsky](#), have since been spotted in [Syria](#), according to multiple reports about their recent exploits—which allegedly include the [grizzly torture and dismemberment of a Syrian prisoner](#).

Rumblings about Rusich's possible return to the front lines first surfaced on the contingent's Instagram account late last year. On Sept. 27, the group indicated that they were training for military exercises in a post depicting a stylized photo of its members on a Russian armored vehicle.

From <https://www.thedailybeast.com/wagners-rusich-neo-nazi-attack-unit-hints-its-going-back-into-ukraine-undercover>

Plausible Deniability

February 5, 2023 7:34 AM

PLAUSIBLE DENIABILITY

January 24, 2019 by: [Content Team](#)

The term "plausible deniability" refers to the ability of an individual to deny knowing about something nefarious because there is no proof to the contrary. For example, plausible deniability can protect people who were either personally involved or willfully disregarded something illegal or unethical if there is no [evidence](#) showing they knew about it.

High-ranking individuals may claim plausible deniability because they know those who are subservient to them will not challenge their claims. To explore this concept, consider the following plausible deniability definition.

Definition of Plausible Deniability

Noun

1. The ability to deny knowing about something illegal or unethical because there is no evidence to the contrary.

Origin

Early 1960s

Plausible Deniability and the CIA

Plausible deniability is a concept that pops up at various points throughout history. However, it was the CIA who named the concept as we know it today. The CIA used the term to describe the act of withholding information about illegal or immoral activity from senior officials so as to protect them in case that information becomes public. Otherwise, people expect those in executive positions to take [responsibility](#) for the actions of their subordinates. In fact, in Japan, executives have gone as far as committing suicide when a subordinate dishonored their company.

Hughes-Ryan Act (1974)

In December of 1974, the government passed the Hughes-Ryan Act, which was an [amendment](#) to the [Foreign Assistance Act](#) of 1969. The Hughes-Ryan Act prohibits the CIA from using funds for covert, or secret, actions unless the President certifies the operation as essential to the nation's security. The Act also dictates that the CIA provides Congress with a timely explanation of the operation they are trying to run.

The government passed the Hughes-Ryan Act in response to disgust shown by both Congress and the public in the way the CIA handled the Vietnam War. The government also hoped that, by passing the Act, the U.S. could avoid entangling itself in another war by mistake as the result of bungled covert operations.

However, in the decades that followed, the Act ultimately proved to be a failure. The CIA learned how to get around the Act by failing to provide Congress with the full picture about the covert actions they planned. As a result, members of the intelligence committee became hesitant to ask for further information from the CIA, since they knew they weren't going to get the full story anyway.

Intelligence Oversight Act (1980)

The [Intelligence Oversight Act of 1980](#) is an amendment to the Hughes-Ryan Act of 1974. The Intelligence Oversight Act is a federal law that requires governmental agencies within the U.S. to report their covert activities to only two of the original eight committees mentioned in the Hughes-Ryan Act.

The Intelligence Oversight Act worked to remove the other six formerly required agencies entirely. The Act also set detailed ground rules for governmental agencies like the CIA fully informing those required agencies of their activities, including any activities they anticipated in the near or distant future.

Overconfidence and Plausible Deniability

Confidence is a good skill to have, especially if an individual is a leader. However, it can also be a person's downfall if he's not careful. Interestingly, when it comes to confidence, people prefer it be a quiet personality trait, rather than someone strutting about, puffing out his chest, and telling you how confident he is.

In fact, in a study conducted by the University of Notre Dame, the researchers found that their subjects could not [trust](#) people who overly expressed their confidence. What the findings of this study illustrated was that people like politicians and business executives are more successful at conveying plausible deniability because their confidence is quiet, and quiet confidence is more trustworthy than peacocking.

A good example of plausible deniability and overconfidence lies in the way President Donald Trump has often used plausible deniability to his advantage. He regularly made overconfident claims about the future, such as being able to single-handedly bring coal jobs back to the forefront in the U.S. Yet, when experts debunked these claims, he simply undermined them as "fake news," thereby bolstering his plausible deniability.

Plausible Deniability Example Involving a Discrimination Case

An example of plausible deniability that reached the U.S. Supreme Court occurred in the matter [Ashcroft v. Iqbal](#), which the Court heard in 2009. In this case, police arrested Javid Iqbal, a Pakistani-American from Hicksville, New York, in November of 2001 on charges of [conspiracy](#) to defraud the U.S. and [identity theft](#).

Lawsuit

Following his arrest and subsequent release, Iqbal filed a lawsuit against, among others, former Attorney General John Ashcroft and former FBI Director Robert Mueller. In the lawsuit, Iqbal alleged that, like hundreds of Arab Muslim men recently before him, the FBI only arrested him for discriminatory reasons in the wake of the attacks on September 11, 2001.

He also made claims of torture and abuse while imprisoned at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn, New York. This included accusations that the officers dragged him across the floor, punched him in the stomach, and subjected him to air conditioning in his cell during the winter.

All told, Iqbal alleged that the FBI, the Department of Justice, and the Bureau of Prisons, violated 21 of his statutory and [constitutional rights](#). The defendants argued that they should enjoy qualified [immunity](#) by way of their roles as governmental officials. They asked the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York to dismiss the case. The Court denied the defendants' request for [dismissal](#) and rejected their immunity defense outright.

Appeal

The defendants appealed their case to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. The Court affirmed the lower court's ruling with one exception: the right to [due process](#).

The Court noted that because the government's actions occurred during the aftermath of September 11th, this case was unique and required a special review. However, the Court believed that, despite the unique situation presented here, the immunity defense only protected the government insofar as the due process claim was concerned. Iqbal's "serious allegations" of the mistreatment he had suffered were enough for the Court to uphold the lower court on the remainder of the counts.

U.S. Supreme Court

The case then made its way all the way up to the U.S. Supreme Court, who then had two questions to [answer](#):

1. Are governmental officials protected by immunity by default, even in the face of allegations of "gross mistreatment" and repeated violations of a prisoner's constitutional rights?
2. Is an allegation that a high-ranking government official knew of or permitted his subordinates to commit these alleged violations enough to fulfill a claim of unlawful discrimination?

Ultimately, the Court did not answer the first question, and issued a solid "no" on the second. The Court held that Iqbal had failed to provide enough factual evidence for his claim of unlawful discrimination. This made his [complaint](#) procedurally deficient, and so the Court remanded the case to the district court for the potential amending of Iqbal's complaint.

However, the [dissenting opinion](#), authored by Justices David H. Souter, John Paul Stevens, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and Stephen G. Breyer, disagreed. The Justices believed that, since the defendants admitted they would be liable for their actions if they were aware of their subordinates acting in such a way as to be deliberately discriminatory, they relied on plausible deniability. As such, the dissenting Justices believed that Iqbal did, in fact, provide enough facts to back up his claim of unlawful discrimination.

In Their Own Words

As part of the Decision issued by the Court, the dissenting Justices wrote:

"I do not understand the majority to disagree with this understanding of "plausibility" under Twombly. Rather, the majority discards the allegations discussed above with regard to Ashcroft and Mueller as conclusory, and is left considering only two statements in the complaint: that "[the FBI], under the direction of [Defendant](#) MUELLER, arrested and detained thousands of Arab Muslim men ... as part of its investigation of the events of September 11," and that "[t]he policy of holding post-September-11th detainees in highly restrictive conditions of confinement until they were 'cleared' by the FBI was approved by Defendants ASHCROFT and MUELLER in discussions in the weeks after September 11, 2001".

I think the majority is right in saying that these allegations suggest only that Ashcroft and Mueller 'sought to keep suspected terrorists in the most secure conditions available until the suspects could be cleared of terrorist activity,' and that this produced 'a disparate, incidental impact on Arab Muslims.' And I agree that the two allegations selected by the majority, standing alone, do not state a plausible entitlement to relief for unconstitutional discrimination." [Citations omitted]

Related Legal Terms and Issues

- **Appellate Court** – A court having [jurisdiction](#) to review decisions of a [trial](#)-level or other lower court.
- **Defendant** – A party against whom someone has filed a lawsuit in civil court, or has charged with a crime or offense.
- **Due Process** – The fundamental, constitutional right to fair legal proceedings in which all parties receive notice of the proceedings, and have an opportunity to defend themselves.

From <<https://legaldictionary.net/plausible-deniability/>>

plausible deniability

Plausible deniability is the ability to deny any involvement in illegal or unethical activities, because there is no clear evidence to prove involvement.

The lack of evidence makes the denial credible, or plausible.

The use of the tactic implies forethought, such as intentionally setting up the conditions to plausibly avoid responsibility for one's future actions.

The term is used both in law and in politics. In politics, plausible deniability usually applies to the practice of keeping the leadership of a large organization uninformed about illicit actions that the organization is carrying out.

The leaders then have "plausible deniability" if they are ever questioned about those illicit actions. In other words, they truly don't know about any illegal actions, and so they are automatically clear of blame.

The term [was first coined](#) when the [Church Committee](#), a committee of the US Senate, was investigating US intelligence agencies during the 1970s.

The committee found that the CIA had carried out a plot to try and assassinate Cuban leader Fidel Castro; the Church Committee believed that the president was supportive of the action. However, the president was able to plausibly deny any knowledge of the plot against Castro, since he truly had no knowledge of the specifics of the plan.

From <<https://politicaldictionary.com/words/plausible-deniability/>>

Warzones

February 4, 2023 8:36 PM



Evidence Mounts of Wagner Group Atrocities in the CAR

TOP STORIES

By ADF On May 17, 2022



Russian mercenaries have been in the Central African Republic since 2017. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

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Russian Wagner Group mercenaries have been abusing and killing civilians in the Central African Republic (CAR) since 2019, according to a recent report from Human Rights Watch (HRW).

The United Nations and several governments say that the Wagner Group, a Russian private military company with close ties to the Kremlin, committed war crimes and crimes against humanity.

"There is compelling evidence that Russian-identified forces supporting the Central African Republic's government have committed grave abuses against civilians with complete impunity," HRW Crisis and Conflict Director Ida Sawyer said in a statement. "The failure of the Central African Republic government and its partners to forcefully denounce these abuses, and to identify and prosecute those responsible, will most likely only fuel further crimes in Africa and beyond."

In compiling its report, which was published on May 3, HRW conducted 40 interviews between February 2019 and November 2021.

Russia and the CAR have denied repeatedly that the Wagner Group is in the country.

In HRW's report, witnesses described a roadblock by Russian men north of the town of Bossangoa in the early morning on July 21, 2021, in which 13 unarmed men on motorcycles were stopped, beaten and shot dead. At least eight bodies were dumped in a shallow hole by the road.

The U.N. Working Group on the Use of Mercenaries wrote to CAR President Faustin-Archange Touadéra on September 28, 2021, saying "military personnel and Russian security" were responsible for the attack. The U.N. Working Group also said witnesses to the executions had been "threatened by Russian personnel."

The CAR government on August 2, 2021, said it would set up a special commission of inquiry to establish responsibility and take appropriate measures. The commission has not published any findings.

More recently, the U.N. investigated a massacre in northeastern CAR on April 11-12, 2022. First reports placed Russian mercenaries at the scene.

"Between 10 and 15 civilians were killed," the U.N. said in a statement on April 15. "An investigation has been opened by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic."

HRW is demanding further official investigations.

"National judicial authorities, the country's Special Criminal Court — a hybrid war crimes court based in Bangui — and the ICC [International Criminal Court] all have jurisdiction over serious crimes committed in the country," HRW's report recommended. "Credible allegations of abuse, including potential war crimes, by Russia-linked forces or private security personnel in the country should be investigated and prosecuted."

Sawyer said the CAR must take action to protect its citizens.

"The Central African government has every right to request international security assistance, but it can't allow foreign forces to kill and otherwise abuse civilians with impunity," she said. "To demonstrate its respect for the rule of law, and to put an end to these abuses, the government should immediately investigate and prosecute all forces, including Russia-linked forces, responsible for murder, unlawful detention, and torture."

From <<https://adf-magazine.com/2022/05/evidence-mounts-of-wagner-group-atrocities-in-the-car/>>

“Black Russians” as cannon fodder. The Wagner Group is recruiting prisoners from the Central African Republic

[Home](#) » [World](#) » “Black Russians” as cannon fodder. The Wagner Group is recruiting prisoners from the Central African Republic

- by archwordys
- December 15, 2022
- No Comments



The Russian mercenary group Wagner Group recruits convicted rapists in the Central African Republic and then sends them to fight in Ukraine. It not only gets manpower but also money from Africa. Their entire presence also has political goals – to deepen the influence of the Kremlin in the region and to undermine the image of Europe.

Mohammed hails from the Central African Republic (CAR), but is now believed to be fighting in Ukraine. He was behind bars in his home country for raping and killing civilians. The infamous Russian mercenary group Wagner Group got him out of prison along with his four cronies. She recruits Mohammed-like individuals in Africa and sends them to fight in Europe.

[The Russian Wagner Group is exploiting African resources to finance wars, says U.S.](#)

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The Wagners release convicts from less guarded cells in the SAR and thus replenish their numbers. Many of the new contractors are from the Union for Peace (UPC) rebel group. They are often behind bars for the most serious crimes against innocent people. “No one can stop the Wagner Group men because the government has given them power and they do as they want,” an officer from the military headquarters in Bangui, the SAR capital, told The Daily Beast.

Some of the freed African prisoners complained that Russian soldiers dropped them off in a town in Ukraine and left them to fight there alone.

Another of the rebels who joined the Russians is a man nicknamed Little Bouba. He was arrested in June for aiding and abetting attacks on government forces. “They accused him of massacring the soldiers,” explained ex-rebel Hassan, who recently left the Wagners. “Now he’s fighting in Ukraine.”

Former UPC members who accepted the offer from the Russians came to be called “Black Russians” in their native country. According to Hassan, by mid-March, all of his former brothers in arms were in eastern Ukraine, fighting for Russia. “When we talked on the phone, they said that their commanders had abandoned them and nobody cared about what they were doing,” he noted.

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“Some of our people called us and complained that the Russian soldiers who took them to eastern Ukraine dropped them off in some town and left them to fight alone,” revealed Ali, a friend of Hassan’s who also left the Wagner Group.

Read also: *Russian mercenaries in Mali, or the extended arm of the Kremlin without golden eagles on its sleeve*

At least 200 Central Africans – originally from the UPC – already traveled to Moscow a year ago for training, which, according to the original agreement, was supposed to last for weeks at the Wagner base in Africa. Subsequently, they were transported to Donbas, where they joined the fighting.

However, the Wagnerites do not always succeed in freeing possible future comrades-in-arms. In June, Egyptian soldiers from the MINUSCA mission prevented Russian mercenaries from releasing five prisoners from the Roux military prison in the Central African capital.

According to Ali and Hassan, these “black Russians” have not yet received any money from the Wagners or the SAR for a year of mercenary work. At the same time, the Central African government allegedly promised them monthly “scholarships” – probably reminiscent of a study stay in a foreign country. However, with Russia’s growing problems in the war, there is not even enough basic equipment for African comrades. “They told me they didn’t even have bullets,” Hassan added.

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Most of the Africans hired by the Wagners only want to get to Europe through a contract. But this strongly contradicts the Russian practice of using mercenaries.

In the Central African Republic itself, African mercenaries working for the Wagner Group began to disappear. That is, those who were supposed to stay in this country. “Over the past two months, up to 50 of our colleagues have mysteriously disappeared like this,” Ali confided. “No one knows where they are, and the Russians are not answering to us.” According to some, they may have been sent to fight in Ukraine or perform other, unspecified tasks. “The Russians do everything in secret,” Ali elaborated.

At the same time, the Central African Republic is not the only place from where the Wagner Group sends its residents to fight in Europe. In several African countries, the Wagnerites have their own people, through whom they manage to influence local politics. Profits from the extraction of mineral resources can also be used to finance units fighting in Ukraine.

European war weakens numbers elsewhere

In March, the Wagner Group withdrew about 1,300 of its contractors from Libya and sent them to Ukraine. In the North African country, the Wagners supported the leader of the Libyan National Army, Khalifa Haftar. A little further away – in the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa – several hundred men gathered in front of the Russian embassy in April, hoping to be sent to Ukraine for money.

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Read also: *Burkina Faso: Another military coup, this time with Russian flags and congratulations from the Wagnerites*

Many potential fighters were found by the Wagner Group in Eritrea, Congo and Cameroon. But most of them don’t want to fight, they just want to get to Europe through a contract. But this strongly contradicts the Russian practice of using such mercenaries.

Contractors from Africa are clearly cheaper for the Wagner Group than, for example, Russians. According to the research organization RLI, they are offered about \$300 a month, while Russians rent \$1,000. They are then sent to the most dangerous places. Specifically, to locations where the Wagnerian commanders want to provoke the Ukrainians to open fire in order to reveal their positions. Such mercenary units are subsequently decimated, and therefore no additional payments are required.

Money not only for wood

However, the Russians are not only coming to Africa to recruit fighters. As an extended arm of the Kremlin, the Wagner Group also fulfills a much more fundamental role there, as Voxpot has already written about several times. Of course, such strategic goals are better achieved in a friendly atmosphere.

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For example, the film *Turista*, shown in many African cinemas, has contributed to this. It is mainly aimed at SAR. Its protagonist, Grisha Dmitriev, arrives in SAR with a group of military instructors tasked with training the local army in the basics of combat. In the end, however, he prevents a group of rebels from staging a coup d’état.

The film, which was watched by a stadium full of people in Bangui, is of course inspired by real events. Even in reality, the government army, with the help of the Wagnerites, managed to stop the rebels last January and prevent them from taking over the government of the country. They tried to seize power after the Constitutional Court rejected the presidential candidacy of former head of state François Bozizé.

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This is also why, after several previous “tourists”, Russians are the only ones welcome. Before them, the country was visited by colonizers from France, soldiers from Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Ugandan rebel group God’s Resistance Army and American special forces.

Wherever there are mines and miners, there are also gunmen linked to the Wagner Group. When a gold digger stumbles upon something valuable, they go after it.

“A number of local citizens consider the presence of the Wagner Group a good thing,” noted journalist Fiacre Salabe from the SAR capital. It even led to the current Central African president, Faustin-Archange Touadéra, declaring Russian as an additional official language, along with French and Sangeese.

Of course, all of this helps in mercenary work, which also includes procuring finances. For example, the Wagner Group established a front company in SAR to ensure the sale of diamonds. The latest report from experts dealing with the group states that the Wagners are forcing impoverished miners to hand over, or at best, sell their ready-made gems to Diamville. According to the report, it violates the rules of the Kimberley Process, which prevents “blood diamonds” from reaching the international market.

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“Wherever there are mines and miners, there are also gunmen linked to the Wagner Group. When a gold digger stumbles upon something valuable, they go after it. ... Because of the expensive goods, there have even been murders,” reveal the conclusions of the mentioned investigation, referring to an insider in the SAR.

The authors of the report also asked for a statement from Russian oligarch Yevgeny Prigozhin, who is considered the highest-ranking person in this mercenary company. “Diamville is owned by Emmanuel Macron through an intermediary. The aforementioned blackmail is carried out by NATO special forces called the SDFA,” he conspired. According to him, the abbreviation SDFA stands for “steal diamonds from Africa”.

Read also: *France and the Czechia are withdrawing from Mali. They leave behind burning portraits of Macron and Russian mercenaries*

Last February, the Bois Rouge company obtained a permit from the SAR to cut down trees in the Congo basin. It was granted access to more than 186 thousand hectares of forest for 30 years. But this company is more Russian than African. Thanks to the satellite images, it is clearly visible that many white people work in the forest, mainly using Russian technology.

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Putin is trying to take advantage of growing rifts between some African governments and their traditional European allies.

At the same time as the mining permit was obtained, several military operations of the Central African government army started in the area together with the Wagners. They probably had the task of clearing the forests of armed groups that would make work in the forest more difficult.

According to the All Eyes on Wagner project, forestry concessions will bring significant profits to the company. "If they mine 30% of the area, it can potentially earn them about \$890 million in the international market. Exporting wood could be a profitable business for Prigozhin and at the same time a way to bring money to sanctioned Russia," write the investigators of this international interdisciplinary group of volunteers.

"Special Military Operation" only causes problems

The activities of the Wagnerites in the Central African Republic are part of a much broader effort by the Kremlin. It is meant to unofficially promote Russia's geopolitical goals in Africa and at the same time secure lucrative contracts. Putin is trying to use growing rifts between some African governments and their traditional European allies to strengthen Russian influence on the continent.

Over the years, the Wagners have acquired facilities in 18 African countries. In many places, the group was paid to fight Islamist insurgents or to guard important sites such as mines. However, its main motivation was often to profit from the natural wealth there, despite the agreements on the basis of which this mercenary formation came to Africa.

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In Mali, for example, the Wagnerians' invitation was retaliated by the locals. They arrived there after the 2020 coup and are linked to several massacres of civilians and other atrocities. Also in this country, there is now an effort to turn public opinion in favor of Russia and to discredit France, which has traditionally had a powerful influence here.

Anyway, according to Alex Vines of the Chatham House think tank, the SAR should have been part of a corridor of influence across this part of the continent – from Sudan to Congo. But the war in Ukraine put an end to that. "We're going back to the drawing board when it comes to building influence in this area," he added.

Now Russia, including its Wagner Group, has deep pockets, and is trying to get as much as possible out of Africa. Not only is he involved in cutting down trees, which the mercenaries use to buy bullets, but the Kremlin also recruits convicted rapists into its paramilitary units. In many cases, they are meant to serve only as fodder for Ukrainian cannons.

From <<https://www.archyworldys.com/black-russians-as-cannon-fodder-the-wagner-group-is-recruiting-prisoners-from-the-central-african-republic/>>

What is Russia's Wagner Group of mercenaries in Ukraine?

Published
23 January

Share



IMAGE SOURCE: REUTERS

Tens of thousands of mercenaries are believed to be fighting for Russia in Ukraine.

They belong to an organisation called the Wagner Group, which has been used in Russian military operations in many countries.

Who are the Wagner Group's mercenaries?

"Wagner almost certainly now commands 50,000 fighters in Ukraine and has become a key component of the Ukraine campaign," [according to the UK Ministry of Defence](#).

It says the organisation started recruiting in large numbers last year because Russia had trouble finding people for the regular army.

About 80% of its troops in Ukraine have been drawn from prisons, according to the US National Security Council.

Before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, it is thought the Wagner Group had only about 5,000 fighters.

They were mostly experienced former soldiers - many of them from Russia's elite regiments and special forces.

Although mercenary forces are illegal in Russia, the Wagner Group registered as a company in 2022 and opened a new headquarters in St Petersburg.

"It is openly recruiting in Russian cities, on billboards, and is being named in Russian media as a patriotic organisation," says Dr Samuel Ramani, of the Royal United Services Institute think tank.

- [US to designate Russia's Wagner as a criminal group](#)
- [Uproar in Serbia over Wagner recruiting for Russia](#)

What is the Wagner Group doing in Ukraine?

The Wagner Group has been heavily involved in Russian efforts to capture the city of Bakhmut, in eastern Ukraine.

Ukrainian troops say [Wagner fighters have been sent into attacks in large numbers over open ground](#), with many killed as a result.

After Russia [claimed to have captured the town of Soledar](#), near Bakhmut, a row broke out between its defence ministry and the Wagner Group over who should get the credit.

At first, the defence ministry [did not mention that the Wagner Group was involved in the fighting](#). However, it then conceded that its mercenaries had played [a "courageous and selfless" role](#).

From <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-60947877>

What to know about the Wagner group, a 'brutal' Russian military group fighting in Ukraine

The U.S. has labeled them a "criminal organization."

By [Nathan Luna](#) and [Leah Vredenburg](#)

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Ukraine's frontline towns: An inside look

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Nearly one year [after Russia's invasion of Ukraine](#), the U.S. is increasingly focused on denouncing what it calls a "brutal" paramilitary group aiding Russian forces there.

The Wagner group is a private military organization run by an ally of Russian leader Vladimir Putin with tens of thousands of fighters, according to U.S. officials, and it has also operated in Syria and in various African countries.

Last week, the U.S. labeled the group a "significant transnational criminal organization" and levied new sanctions, while human rights observers this week said they suspected Wagner fighters were linked to the mass killing of people in Mali last year.

Government reports, statements from U.S. officials and insights from experts, as well as other sources, shed light on the Wagner group's history and goals, its alleged wrongdoings and its importance to Russia -- in Ukraine and elsewhere in the world.

How is the Wagner group involved in Russia's invasion of Ukraine?

According to Catrina Doxsee, an expert on the Wagner group from the nonprofit Center for Strategic and International Studies, Wagner was first involved in the Ukrainian-Russian conflict in 2014, when Russia illegally annexed the Crimean Peninsula.

Today, there are an estimated 50,000 fighters from the Wagner group in Ukraine, White House spokesman John Kirby said last month.

Around 40,000 of the fighters are believed to be convicts, according to Doxsee, which could lead to more allegations of human rights abuses. A video circulating online appears to show the group's leader, businessman Yevgeny Prigozhin, asking prisoners to join the Wagner group.

"You have individuals coming in who are less experienced, less trained and who are kept in line in a much less efficient way by their commanders," Doxsee said.



In this Oct. 13, 2022, file photo, service members of Russian private military company Wagner Group bring combat groups to their positions, as Russia's military operation in Ukraine continues, in Luhansk. Viktor Antonyuk/Sputnik via AP, FILE

In September, a senior U.S. defense official downplayed the success of Wagner recruiting prisoners, with some felons declining to join given Ukraine's success in its counteroffensive.

Other Wagner fighters have [reportedly been drawn](#) in for financial reasons.

Recent satellite images show a growing Wagner burial site, illustrating the grim chances for convicted fighters on the front lines. Another recent video from Russian media outlet RIA Novosti showed Prigozhin -- who previously claimed he had no role with the group, a position he has since reversed -- visiting the cemetery.

Kirby told reporters in December that Wagner has received weapons it purchased from North Korea to be used in Ukraine.

Despite what the U.S. says is the Wagner group's significant presence in Ukraine, such mercenaries are technically illegal under Russian law and the Kremlin has long avoided discussing the use of contracted fighters.

Doxsee said Russia's purported ban on private military companies (PMC) like the Wagner group allows the government a necessary distance from its operations.

"They are technically all operating in violation of Russian law by means of even participating in PMC activities, and ultimately in the mind of the Russian government they are more expendable," Doxsee said.

She said the Kremlin is likely able to leverage the group's illegal status: If Wagner turns, the government has the full ability to punish them.

Other countries, including the U.S., heavily rely on contractors for some military duties, from logistics to training.

From <https://abcnews.go.com/International/International/wagner-group-brutal-russian-military-group-fighting-ukraine/story?id=96665326>

JUSTICE POLICY



Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights - By Adrian Gryciuk

The case against Russia's Wagner Group and what it means for Syria

Human rights groups have filed a [case](#) at the European Court for Human Rights (ECtHR) against the Russian Wagner Group for violations in Syria. But Russia has already expressed its intent to withdraw from the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR) and thus the ECtHR's jurisdiction. This raises the question of whether the Court will even have an opportunity to rule on the case and what Russia's withdrawal will mean for broader efforts of accountability against the Russian Wagner Group.

Last year, SJAC [assessed](#) Syrian pathways to justice at the ECtHR against Russia. SJAC then found that despite new cases raising hopes of holding Russia legally accountable for its military involvement in Syria and violations of the ECHR, Russia's reluctance to implement any policy or legal changes, or payments to victims, in response to ECtHR rulings, make proceedings before the Court merely symbolic. We now examine the prospects of the Wagner case before the ECtHR in light of Russia's expulsion from the Council of Europe (CoE) and the practical implications for other Syria-related cases against Russia at the Court.

Wagner's Role in Syria

'[Plausible deniability](#)' is probably the most frequently used term to describe the relationship between the Russian government and the Private Military Company (PMC) Wagner Group. Wagner is not officially registered in Russia or elsewhere in the world, and since mercenarism is criminalized under Russian law, the Russian government repeatedly denies any ties to the PMC. The company was founded shortly before the Russian annexation of Crimea and has been involved in Russian military operations in the country ever since. According to Ukrainian intelligence information, Wagner is directly connected to the Russian military. The Wagner Group is also involved in the Syrian conflict. Among others, its members participated in a [firefight with U.S. troops in Deir ez-Zor](#) in 2018 and, according to [SJAC's own research](#) with Syrians for Truth and Justice, the Wagner Group has been involved in recruiting and exploiting Syrians as mercenaries to fight abroad.

Video footage from June 2017, circulated on social media in 2019 and analyzed by an independent Russian media agency, shows members of Wagner beating, beheading, and burning the body of a Syrian national. This material is at the core of a [criminal complaint against the Wagner Group](#) filed by several human rights organizations supporting the brother of the victim shown in the videos. The NGOs decided to first file the complaint with relevant Russian courts. However, they were not expecting that the Russian judiciary would pursue an investigation. The NGOs decided to go through the Russian judiciary first, in order to [exhaust local remedies](#), a key admissibility criterion for cases to be filed at the ECtHR. Indeed, the [Russian judiciary rejected the case](#), arguing that the evidence, namely the video footage, was not authentic. This holding would likely be rejected by the ECtHR since open-source digital evidence has been admitted in numerous cases arising from the Syrian conflict. However, the question remains if the ECtHR will accept to hear the case at all.

From <<https://syriaaccountability.org/the-case-against-russias-wagner-group-and-what-it-means-for-syria/>>