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In today's [#vatnik](#) soup I'll introduce Yevgeny Prigozhin's Wagner Group. I have written about the topic before, but now that it's been designated as a Transnational Criminal Organization by the US, we should reiterate some key points and update the latest news about them.

1/16



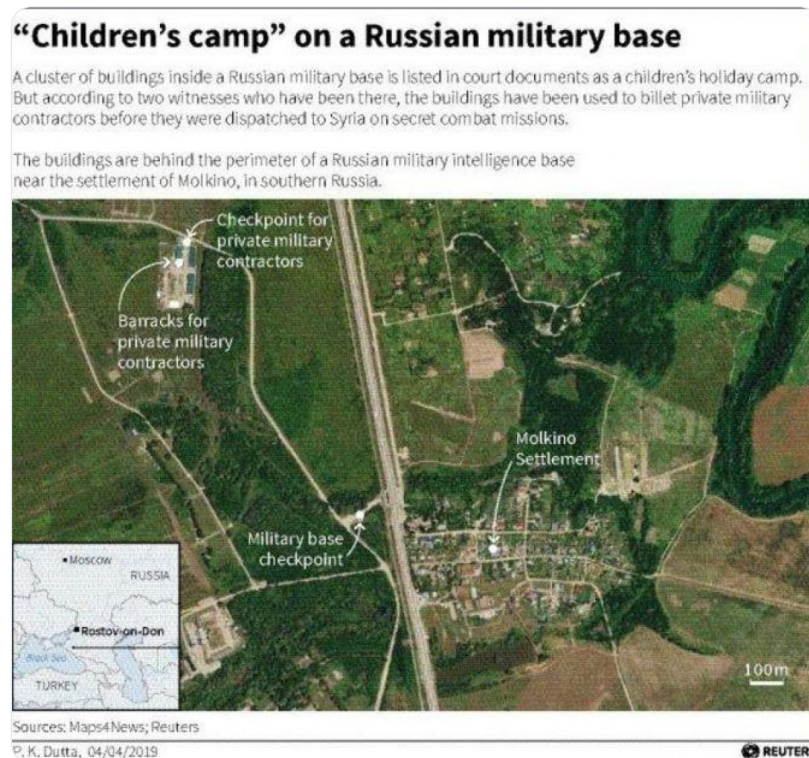
Wagner is a Russian paramilitary organization that consists of network of mercenaries, and many consider it to be the private army of Putin. Private military companies are actually illegal in Russia, so basically the group operates beyond the law.

2/16



Despite of its illegality, Wagner trains its personnel in a Russian MoD facility, Molkino. This camp is masked as a "children's vacation camp". New Lines magazine concluded that Wagner members come from fifteen different countries, but most of them are Russian.

3/16



The group doesn't have any central ideology, but many of its members and leaders have ties to various neo-nazi movements in Russia. For example, Wagner leader Dmitry Utkin has several Nazi symbols tattooed on his body. Neo-nazi group Rusich also fights as part of Wagner.

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Wagner has been utilized in many conflicts around the world, but they came to global prominence during the war in Donbas in 2014-2015. Wagnerites helped the Donbas separatists fight against the Ukrainians during the conflict, which helped Putin to "outsource" the insurrection.5/16




Wherever Wagner goes, war crimes follows: Prigozhin's troops have raped women in Mali, killed and tortured civilians in Ukraine and tortured soldiers in Syria. In Russia, they are famous for hiring prisoners and then send them to the Ukrainian meat grinders like Bakhmut.

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'Land covered in corpses' as Russia claims first big Ukraine gains in months

EURACTIV.com with Reuters Jan 11, 2023



Ukrainian servicemen on patrol in Bakhmut, eastern Ukraine. 09 January 2023. Russian commanders have made the capture of Soledar a key objective in a campaign to take the nearby strategic city of Bakhmut and Ukraine's larger eastern Donbas region. [EPA-EFE/MYKOLA TYMCHENKO]

Print

Britain said on Tuesday (10 January) Russia had probably captured a mining town in eastern Ukraine where Kyiv accused Moscow of sacrificing wave upon wave of mercenaries and soldiers in a horrific and senseless battle over wasteland.

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The total number of prisoners hired by Wagner from the Russia's prison system is around 38 000. At the beginning of Jan, 2023, almost 30 000 of them were either killed, wounded, missing or taken as a prisoner. A whopping 106 people, or 0,28%, have been amnestied.

7/16

Recently an official Russian TV channel showed an interview of Mikhail Popok, a Russian serial killer, rapist and a necrophile who wants to join the Russian war effort in Ukraine. He said that he'd probably do it "during the Spring" since it's much warmer then.

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In Jan, 2023, Wagner organized a "hero's funeral" for a man who beat his mother to death in a drunken frenzy. They also put up a plaque for Denis Kovyrtzin, a convicted murderer, in a grade school in Saratov.

9/16



But Russia is not the only where they do the recruiting - two senior military officers from the Central African Republic reported that Wagner is hiring criminals in Africa and sending them overseas to fight.

10/16



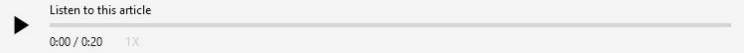
These criminals, many of them held in custody for hard crimes such as rape and murder, are called "Black Russians" and now fight in the front lines in East of Ukraine. Some of them complained about the lack of payments after a few months of fighting.

11/16

Media: Russia's Wagner Group recruits prisoners in Africa to fight against Ukraine.

by The Kyiv Independent news desk · November 29, 2022 11:45 pm

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Wagner Group, a Kremlin-controlled paramilitary organization, is releasing rebels from jails in the Central African Republic and sending them overseas, including to Ukraine's Donbas, the Daily Beast [reported](#) on Nov. 29, citing two senior military officers in the African country.

Dozens of men held in custody by the country's army and police for crimes such as rape and murder have been recruited by Wagner's local wing of militants, commonly known as "Black Russians," according to the sources.

"They (Wagner) said they needed urgent manpower in Mali and Ukraine," an officer of the Central African Republic's military told the Daily Beast. "I think more than 20 people we've been holding (for very serious crimes) have been released."

According to another officer in the republic, "nobody can stop them (Wagner Group) because the government has given them so much power to act the way they want."

The group has also been recruiting Russian inmates since August to fight against Ukraine.

Wagner Group has been operating in the Central African Republic for years.

In 2018 Russian journalists Orkhan Dzhemal, Alexander Rastorguev, and Kirill Radchenko were killed in the Central African Republic after investigating Wagner Group's activities in the country.

Before Ukraine, Wagner mostly consisted of experienced ex-military people, but after Russia's failed mobilization and dramatic losses on the battlefield, they started hiring anyone willing to hold a rifle (or just run and die) for money.

12/16

They've allegedly employed cannibals and serial killers, many of them carrying infectious diseases including hepatitis and HIV. These cannon fodder are marked with appropriate bracelets.

13/16



Even though almost 80% of the Wagner's finest die in the meat grinder, hiring murderers and rapists to fight in Ukraine increases the prevalence of war crimes in Ukraine drastically. The group's monthly salary is estimated to be something between 700 and 2100 USD.

14/16

But for the convicts there is another prize: survive in the meat grinder for 6 months, and you can go free: In Jan, 2023, Prigozhin released a tiny batch of convicts, telling them to "don't rape women" while in Russia. This release was probably done for PR purposes.

15/16



Wagner has promoted the group by producing three movies: Tourist (2021), Hotsunlight (2021) and Luchshiye v adu (2022). I watched the first two so you don't have to: they're both shit.

16/16



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In today's #vatnik soup I'll be introducing a man behind both 🇷🇺's private war organization and its disinformation and propaganda machine: an oligarch and a businessman Yevgeni Prigozhin. This thread will be divided into 2 (or 3) parts since his "achievements" are plentiful. 1/10



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Fringe pro- bloggers such as the [@TheGrayzoneNews](#) like to keep the  narrative of Ukrainian neo-nazis and the need for "denazification" inside Ukraine. Today I'll be introducing a real Russian [#vatnik](#), co-leader of the Rusich group and a neo-nazi called Aleksei Milchakov. 1/8



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