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Jun 26, 2024 · 23 tweets · [P_Kallioniemi/status/1805949964503175605](https://twitter.com/P_Kallioniemi/status/1805949964503175605)

In today's #vatniksoup, I'll discuss the Wagner Group, its founders Yevgeny Prigozhin and Dmitry Utkin, and the mutiny they started on 23 Jun 2023. The event marked the climax of the Wagner Group–Russian MoD conflict, and finally led to the deaths of Prigozhin and Utkin.

1/22



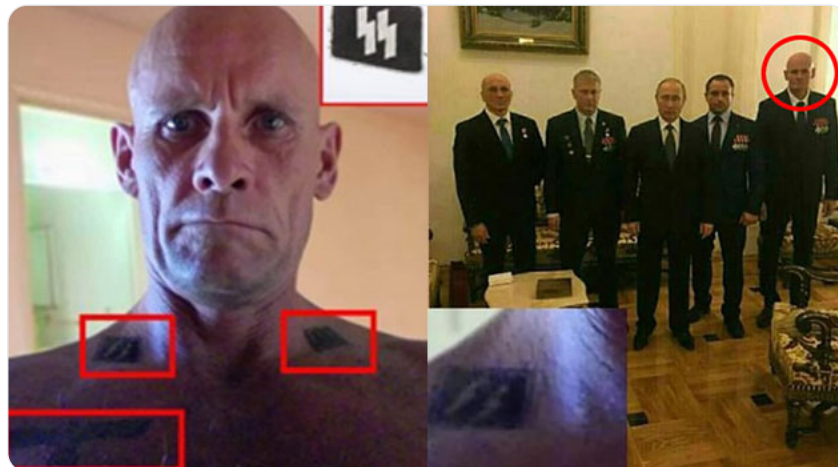
Wagner has been used in many conflicts around the world, but they came to global prominence during the war in Donbas in 2014-2015. Wagnerites helped the Donbas separatists fight against the Ukrainians during the conflict, which helped Putin to “outsource” the insurrection.

2/22



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 had several Nazi symbols tattooed on his body. Neo-Nazi group Rusich has also fought as part of Wagner.

3/22





Dmitry is a 4 time Russian Order of Courage medal winner and has attended Kremlin events

Dmitry "Wagner" Utkin

Callsign "Wagner" and key founder of the "Wagner Group"

Outed as hard-core Nazi by Russian media source Fontanka in 2016 (SEE: <https://fontanka.ru/2016/03/28/171/>)
Fontanka is a trusted media partner in some of Moscow's biggest newsrooms



Wagner was Hitler's favourite musician.

The Wagner Group wears its Nazi insignia in its name.



Even their billboards refer to "orchestra"

"Totenkopf shock troops'. If someone does not like this definition please look at the emblems of 'Wagner'."

said by Igor Girkin ("Strelkov")
Former Defense Minister for "Donetsk Republic"
on his Telegram channel, 22 January, 2023 at 11:45 AM



Стрелков Игорь Иванович
 792,723 subscribers

участках. (На пример - направление на Соледар-Бахмут), где можно вести боевые действия без привлечения других сил, кроме "штурмовиков Мертвой Головы". (если кому-то такое определение не нравится - прошу посмотреть эмблематику "Вагнера").



The Totenkopf (Death's Head) was a symbol used by the criminal 3rd SS Totenkopf division, which had a strong connection to the concentration camps of Nazi Germany.

Dmitry Utkin, the Nazi-tattooed commander who gave Wagner its name

Right-hand man of boss Yevgeny Prigozhin served in Russian military during Chechen wars, led mercenary group's military operations since about 2014

By AFP

26 August 2023, 4:26 am



A portrait of Dmitry Utkin, a shadowy figure who managed Wagner's operations and allegedly served in Russian military intelligence, is seen at the makeshift memorial in Moscow, on August 24, 2023. (Natalia Kolesnikova/AFP)

MOSCOW, Russia — A rare photo of the Wagner group's military commander shows a man with a shaved head, a cold stare and the Nazi SS symbol tattooed on both sides of his neck.

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 (in)famous for hiring prisoners and then sending them to the Ukrainian meat grinders.

Russian mercenaries behind slaughter of 500 in Mali village, UN report finds

Report implicates Wagner group fighters in Moura atrocity, including the torture and rape of civilians

Jason Burke

Sat 20 May 2023 16:19 CEST

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📷 Three Russian mercenaries and a Malian soldier on patrol in northern Mali in January 2022. Photograph: AP

First came a single helicopter, flying low over the marshes around the river outside the village, then the rattle of automatic fire scattered the crowds gathered for the weekly market.

Mercenaries in Africa

The Wagner group, a Russian paramilitary organisation, has been involved in multiple counter-military operations in Africa. While legally, the group is not a Russia-based private military company, it works closely with the Russian security apparatus

■ Military and political engagement ■ Economic and political

1 **2014, Ukraine:** Lieutenant colonel **Dmitry Utkin** and his mercenary squad take part in the annexation of Crimea. The group is named after Utkin's call sign, **Wagner**

2015: Yevgeny Prigozhin (right) – close ally of President **Vladimir Putin** – becomes Wagner's patron



Jan 2023: Paris agrees to pull its troops out of Burkina Faso following demand from Russian-backed anti-French junta

2 **2015-18, Syria:** Wagner supports Russian military. 100 Wagner members killed in U.S. air strike

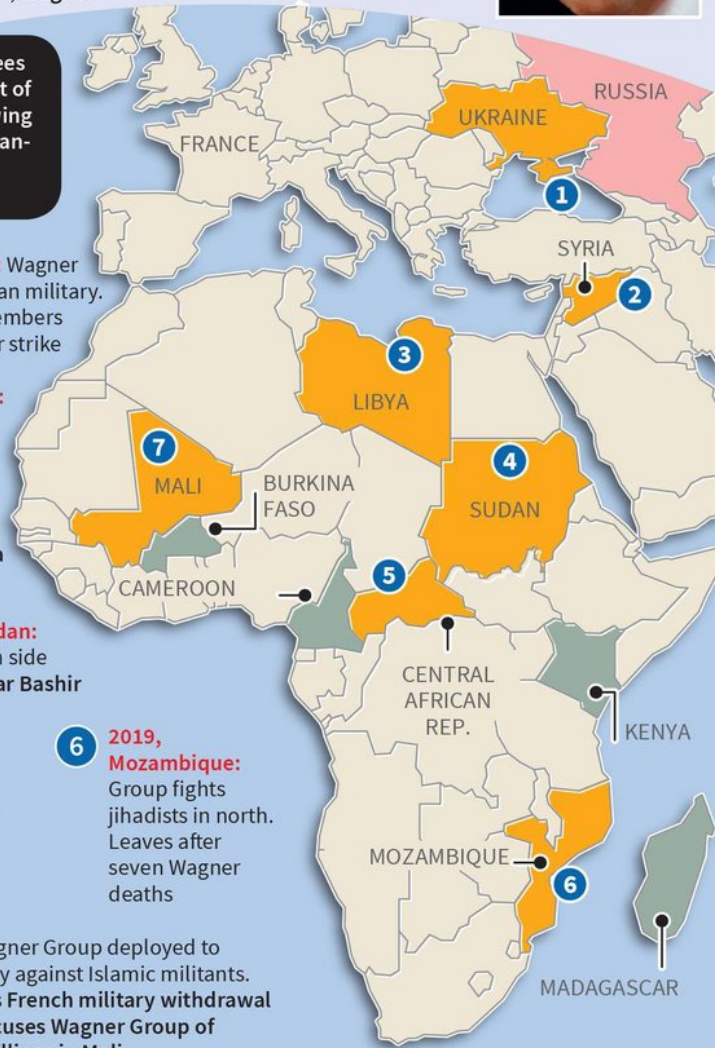
3 **2016-20, Libya:** 1,000 Wagner fighters estimated to have fought alongside General **Khalifa Haftar**

4 **2017-2019, Sudan:** Group fights on side of dictator **Omar Bashir**

5 **2017, CAR:** Wagner involved in training troops and control of diamond mines

6 **2019, Mozambique:** Group fights jihadists in north. Leaves after seven Wagner deaths

7 **2021, Mali:** Wagner Group deployed to provide security against Islamic militants. Move precedes French military withdrawal in 2022. EU accuses Wagner Group of extrajudicial killings in Mali



Putin's Private Army Accused of Committing Their Most Heinous Massacre Yet

'LIKE ANIMALS'

Witnesses are pointing a finger at the Wagner Group over a series of gruesome killings that allegedly involved disemboweling several women.



Philip Obaji Jr. | Updated Sep. 03, 2022 3:13AM EDT / Published Sep. 02, 2022 11:33PM EDT

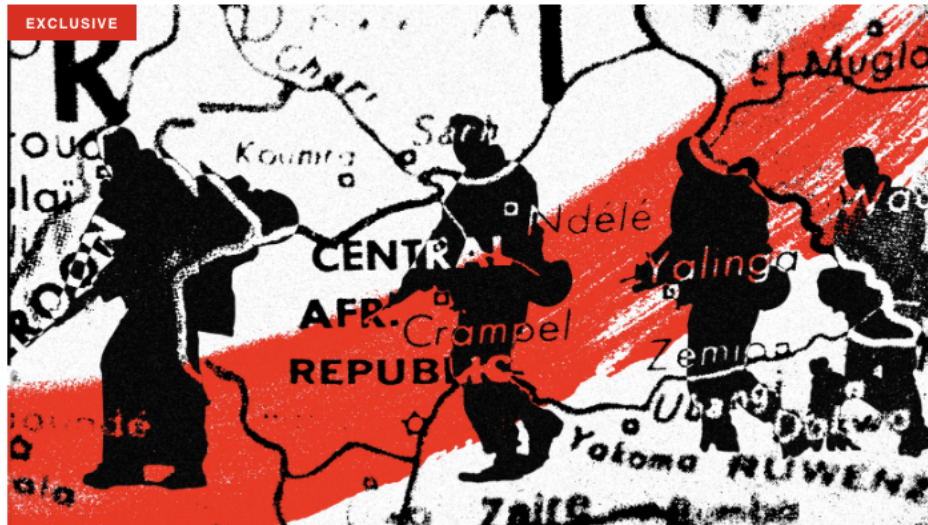


Photo Illustration by Luis G. Rendon/The Daily Beast/Getty

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EBAM, Cameroon—It was the “most barbaric” act of violence Nas Ali said he has witnessed since the [Central African Republic \(CAR\)](#) welcomed Russian mercenaries from the [infamous Wagner Group](#), which some have called [Vladimir Putin's “private army.”](#) about four years ago.

Like most refugees, Alabdullah has a traumatic story to tell. Only his is not his own but that of his much younger cousin, Muhammad Taha Ismail Alabdullah, more commonly known as Hamadi Bouta.

In 2017, Bouta, a Syrian army deserter, was kidnapped and tortured on camera by a handful of mercenaries affiliated with the Wagner Group, a notorious paramilitary organization financed by the Western-sanctioned Russian oligarch and catering magnate Yevgeny Prigozhin. The U.S. has labeled Wagner a "proxy force" of the Russian Ministry of Defense, and its ties to the GRU, Russia's military intelligence service, are well established.

The murder movie shot by Wagner is stomach-turning. A carousel of four Russian-speaking men took turns beating Bouta with a sledgehammer. Then they cut off his hands and head with a shovel before stringing up his corpse by the feet and setting it alight. "Of course I couldn't finish the video," Alabdullah says, adding that there's a longer version of it his relatives have seen. "They told me about the rest: that his head was cut off and they played soccer with it, kicking it at the wall with their feet."

The group has their own brutal rules, and the hierarchy is based on Russia's prison system (Prigozhin himself spent 10 years in prison). Sexual violence is very common, and Wagner is known for their brutal sledgehammer murders.

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ARGUMENT

Russia's Convict-Soldiers Have Their Own Brutal Rules

The recruitment of prisoners via the Wagner Group has boosted manpower but cost morale.

MAY 16, 2023, 4:14 PM

By [Kristaps Andrievs](#), a journalist in Latvia and the creator of The Eastern Border podcast.



Family 'horrified' by video of sledgehammer killing of Wagner Group defector

Kremlin-linked private military group posted video on Telegram of apparent execution in Russia of Yevgeny Nuzhin

[Russia-Ukraine war: latest updates](#)

Pjotr Sauer

Mon 14 Nov 2022 20:08 CET

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Visitors wearing military camouflage at the Wagner Centre office building in St Petersburg. Photograph: Olga Maltseva/AFP/Getty Images

Russia's Wagner Group Says Sending Blood-Stained Sledgehammer to EU Parliament

Updated: Nov. 24, 2022



Yevgeny Prigozhin

Mikhail Metzel / TASS

The Kremlin-linked leader of the notorious Wagner mercenary group [said](#) Wednesday that he sent a sledgehammer to be delivered to the European Parliament in a dark reminder of one fighter's gruesome killing.

Yevgeny Prigozhin's threatening gesture came as the EU Parliament prepared to condemn Wagner in a non-binding resolution after branding Russia a "[state sponsor of terrorism](#)."

Prigozhin's Concord firm [said](#) he had discussed the anticipated EU Parliament vote with Wagner commanders and decided to respond with what he described as a "case of information."

Video [emerged](#) later Wednesday showing a Prigozhin associate brandishing a violin case containing a sledgehammer with the inscription "PMC Wagner" on its head and artificial blood stains on its handle.

Some have suggested that Wagner members should be divided into two categories—the "cannon fodder", including prison recruits that are used as baits and to deplete Ukraine of resources like artillery shells, and the professional soldiers who focus on more specialized missions.

6/22

BLOG POST

Cannon Fodder for “Putin’s Chef”

By Olga Podoplelova on January 9, 2023

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NOVOSIBIRSK, RUSSIA—29 August 2011. Prisoners stand in the prison dining room listening to an Orthodox priest.

IMAGE CREDIT



US officials have suggested that Prigozhin had longstanding disputes with the the Russian Ministry of Defence (MoD) for years before the full—scale invasion. At the same time, he presented himself as a populist figure confronting the “corrupt military establishment”.

7/22

It remains unclear if he can return to Russia, but he has capitalized on his feud with the generals to fashion himself as a populist political figure, fighting for humble servicemen and others suffering at the hands of “unqualified scoundrels and intriguants.”

He has contrasted that with what he sees as the decadence of Russian elites and the injustice in society.

“The children of the elite smear themselves with creams, showing it on the internet; ordinary people’s children come in zinc, torn to pieces,” he said, referring to the coffins of dead soldiers, and adding that those killed in action had “tens of thousands” of relatives.

“Society always demands justice,” he said, “and if there is no justice, then revolutionary sentiments arise.”

In May 2023, Prigozhin even warned that Russia could face a revolution similar to the 1917 one, warning the Kremlin of potential uprisings by “soldiers & their loved ones”.According to ISW, this increased his influence within the ultranationalist Russian milblogger community.

8/22

Europe

Mercenary Prigozhin warns Russia could face revolution unless elite gets serious about war

By Guy Faulconbridge

May 24, 2023 12:25 PM GMT+3 · Updated a year ago



Founder of Wagner private mercenary group Yevgeny Prigozhin leaves a cemetery before the funeral of Russian military blogger Maxim Fomin widely known by the name of Vladlen Tatarsky, killed in a bomb attack in a St Petersburg cafe, in Moscow, Russia, April 8, 2023. REUTERS/Yulia Morozova [Purchase Licensing Rights](#)

Prigozhin has also waged a relentless defamation campaign against the Russian MoD and the military command since May 2022 – first covertly via Wagner-affiliated ultranationalist social media platforms. Wagner-affiliated milbloggers began to boast about Wagner’s successes in assault operations and even spread the idea that Prigozhin could replace Shoigu as defense minister in September 2022. [14] These milbloggers capitalized on the increasing criticism among the Russian ultranationalist communities aimed at the Russian conventional military command that failed to maintain the initiative following the exhausting capture of Lysychansk and Severodonetsk. Wagner was able to exploit the greater ultranationalist community because the ultranationalists shared the objective of improving the war effort and saw a common enemy in the Russian MoD and its bureaucracy. The ultranationalist community had also been extremely interconnected over the years prior to the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine and drew on the same recruitment pools.

The tensions between Prigozhin and MoD reached a critical juncture during the battle of Bakhmut. Prigozhin was publicly voicing his dissatisfaction over ammunition supply, while threatening to withdraw his troops unless his demands were met.

Wagner chief says his forces are dying as Russia's military leaders 'sit like fat cats'

By Brad Lendon, Josh Pennington and Uliana Pavlova, CNN
4 minute read · Updated 6:39 PM EDT, Fri May 5, 2023



After Wagner troops withdrew from Bakhmut, Prigozhin claimed that the military attempted to assault them, and the group even captured a Russian commander who, while intoxicated, allegedly ordered the attack against Prigozhin's troops.

Wagner captures Russian commander as Prigozhin feud with army escalates

Lt Col Roman Venevitsin seen telling interrogator he ordered troops to shoot at convoy of mercenaries

Russia-Ukraine war - latest news updates

Pjotr Sauer

Mon 5 Jun 2023 12:16 CEST

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An aerial view of destruction in Bakhmut, most of which was captured by the Wagner group last month. Photograph: Ukrainian Armed Forces/Reuters

Yevgeny Prigozhin's Wagner group of mercenaries has captured a Russian commander, as the notorious leader further escalates his feud with the regular army.

According to US intelligence agencies, Wagner and Prigozhin had started planning the rebellion weeks before its execution, and allegedly Prigozhin made the decision after Russian MoD decided to integrate Wagner into the Russian military.

11/22

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US gathered detailed intelligence on Wagner chief's rebellion plans but kept it secret from most allies

By [Natasha Bertrand](#), [Alex Marquardt](#), [Kylie Atwood](#) and [Kevin Liptak](#), CNN
 5 minute read · Updated 3:07 AM EDT, Tue June 27, 2023

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On 23 Jun 2023, Yevgeny published a video in which he finally told the truth:that the Kremlin's justification for invading Ukraine was based on falsehoods & that the real reason was to serve the interests of the Russian elites.He also said that Ukraine wasn't the aggressor.

12/22

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Wagner mercenary chief calls for armed rebellion against Russian military leadership

The FSB called on Wagner fighters not to follow Prigozhin's orders.

By [Patrick Reevell](#)
June 24, 2023, 2:20 AM

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The Wagner Group is a private military organization run by Yevgeny Prigozhin, a longtime ally of Russian leader Vladimir Putin.

0:03 / 1:14

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HYBRID WAR

Victims of "Donbas genocide" were paid actors, Prigozhin's fired trolls reveal

 BY IRYNA VOICHUK · 14/07/2023 · 5 MINUTE READ

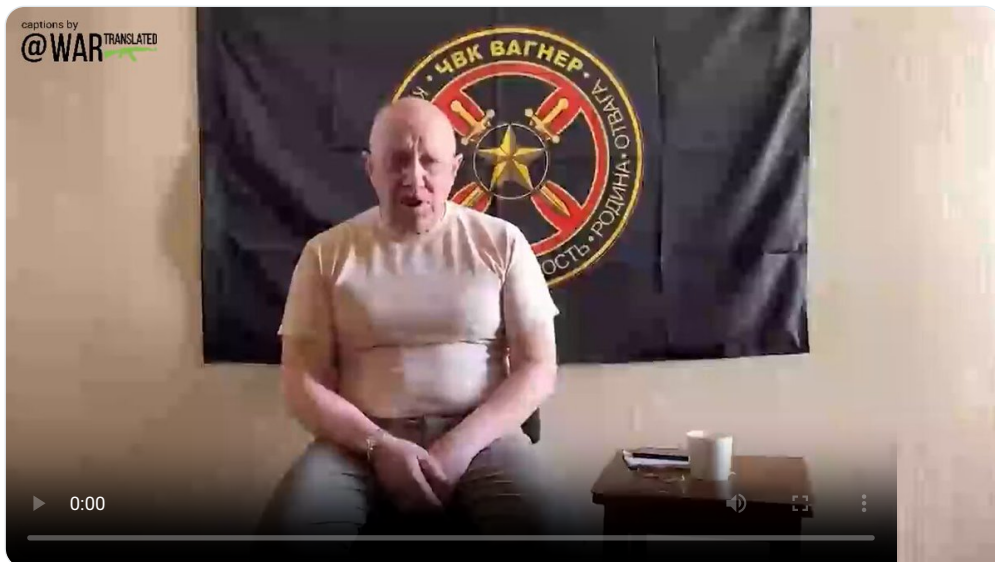


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Europe

Wagner mercenary chief says Russia's war in Ukraine based on lies

By Andrew Osborn
June 23, 2023 4:04 PM UTC · Updated ago



Prigozhin then declared the start of an armed conflict against the MoD on his press service's Telegram channel, calling upon people interested in joining the conflict against the MoD and its leadership, especially Shoigu and Gerasimov.

NEWS > DEFENSE

Putin in crisis: Wagner chief Prigozhin declares war on Russian military leadership

Russia's FSB security service opens criminal case against mercenary boss, as he vows to steamroll over anyone who gets in his way.

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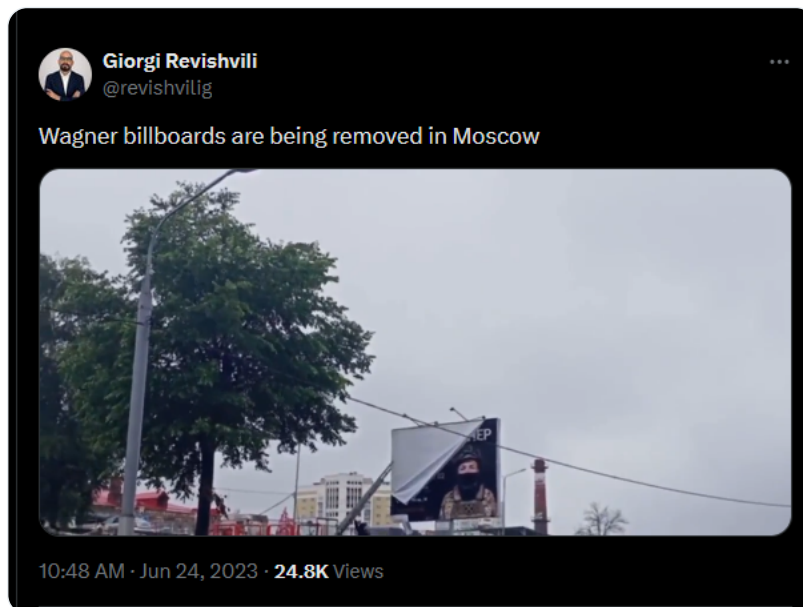


Wagner troops quickly captured Rostov—on—Don, with the majority of the local population being supportive of the mutiny. Prigozhin set up his headquarters in the city, and quickly sent two convoys of Wagner forces towards Moscow. The second convoy was led by Dmitry Utkin.



Moscow immediately panicked, taking down Wagner billboards, allegedly moved Putin from Moscow to St. Petersburg, and even called Kazakhstan for military assistance in case Russian military failed to put down the rebellion. Interestingly, Kazakhstan refused the request.

15/22



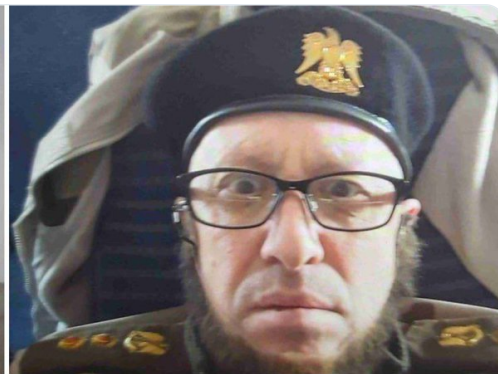
Patrushev organized Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko's role in negotiating a deal with Prigozhin to stand down. He had also requested military aid from Kazakhstan if the Russian army could not put down the rebellion, but President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev refused, The Wall Street Journal reported.



FSB raided Wagner headquarters, where they allegedly found cash, gold bars, handguns and lavish Wagner memorabilia like sledgehammers. Leaked photos of Prigozhin wearing

various funny looking disguises were also published by various media.

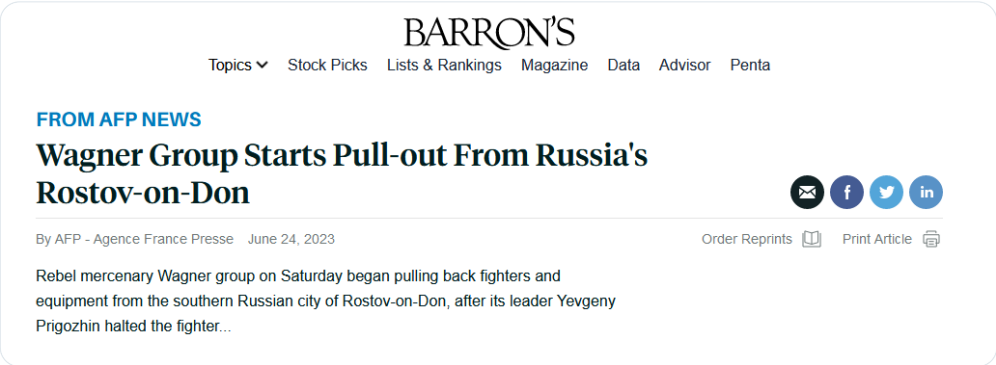
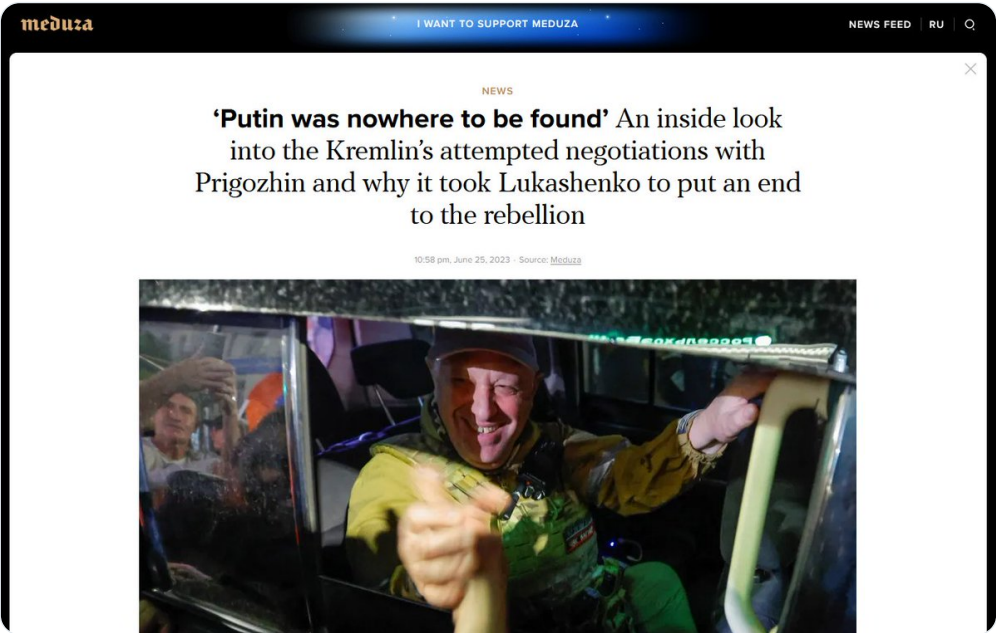
16/22



But the rebellion died as quickly as it was born. Prigozhin quickly realized that he didn't get the support he was looking for, & the gang started negotiating, with Belarussian dictator

Lukashenko working as the mediator. Then, on 24 Jun, Wagner withdrew from Rostov—On—Dov.

17/22



Soon after, Russian authorities said they had dropped all charges against Prigozhin and others involved in the rebellion, and the construction of Wagner camps in Belarus had begun. Prigozhin also relocated there, and finally Russian MoD took over his group.

18/22



But Prigozhin's betrayal was not forgotten. On 23 Aug 2023, Prigozhin, Utkin and eight other Wagner figures were killed in a plane crash. Allegedly, the assassination was called by Putin's old friend and former intelligence officer Nikolai Patrushev.

Wagner chief Yevgeny Prigozhin presumed dead after Russia plane crash

24 August 2023
By Frank Gardner, security correspondent, & Robert Greenall & Jaroslav Lukiv.
BBC News

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Prigozhin Killing Ordered by Putin's Security Council Chief – WSJ

Dec. 22, 2023



Anonymous US intelligences sources have claimed that Army General Sergey Surovikin had prior knowledge about the rebellion. Also, WSJ claimed that FSB knew about the rebellion

two days before it was scheduled to happen, and this discovery led to its premature start.

20/22

The New York Times

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Russian General Knew About Mercenary Chief's Rebellion Plans, U.S. Officials Say

Yevgeny Prigozhin, the head of Wagner, may have believed he had support in Russia's military.

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MILITARY & DEFENSE

Prigozhin rushed his Wagner mutiny because he knew Putin was on to him, report says

Sophia Ankel Jun 28, 2023, 4:56 PM GMT+3

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Founder of Wagner private mercenary group Yevgeny Prigozhin. Press service of "Concord"/Handout via REUTERS

Wagner was eventually integrated into the Russian MoD, its brutal African operations were rebranded as "The African Corps of the Russian Defense Ministry" & the whole incident of a competing warlord trying to take over the kleptocratic Russian state was quickly forgotten.



Wagner Group is now Africa Corps. What this means for Russia's operations on the continent

Published: February 14, 2024 3:26pm CET

A makeshift memorial for the head of the Wagner Group, Yevgeny Prigozhin, who died in August 2023. Natalia Kolesnikova/AFP via Getty Images

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In August 2023, Wagner Group leader Yevgeny Prigozhin died after [his private jet crashed](#) about an hour after taking off in Moscow. He had been Russia's pointman in Africa since the Wagner Group [began operating on the continent in 2017](#).

Deutsches Afrikakorps / DAK



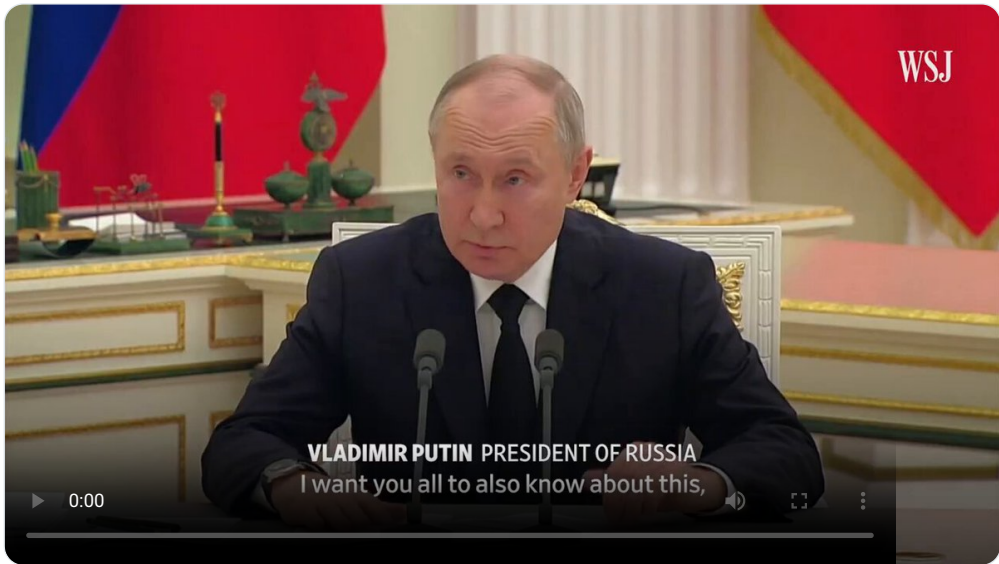
Seal of the Afrika Korps

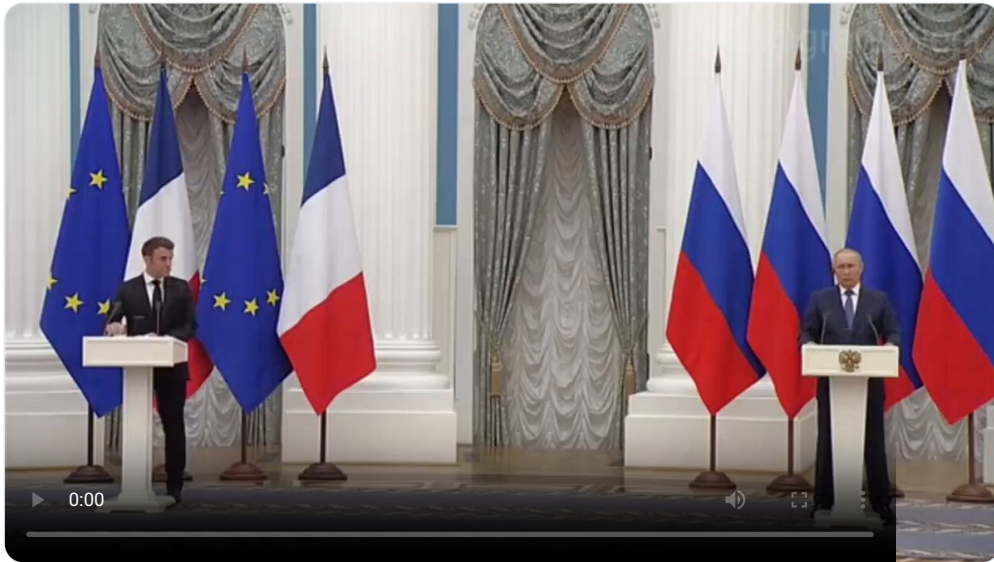
Active	21 February 1941 – 13 May 1943
Country	Nazi Germany
Branch	Army
Type	Expeditionary forces
Role	Desert warfare Expeditionary warfare
Size	Corps June 1941: 33,500 men in total ^[1]





To conclude, Prigozhin was a powerful warlord & Putin ally, who decided to attempt a power grab after his adversaries started making moves against him by taking away his lucrative businesses. Surprisingly, the incident had very little effect on the Kremlin's power structure.





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