

Private Military Company in the Russian Manner: the Wagner Group and Business on the Blood in the Central African Republic

Roman ASGAROV¹

Private military companies are gradually becoming indispensable elements of nonlinear and hybrid warfare. A special case in the developing world of PMCs is the Wagner Group. Formed during the war in Ukraine in 2014, the Wagner Group has now become an effective tool to meet the interests of Russian business circles, as well as the geopolitical interests of the country itself. This article examines the activities of the Wagner Group in the Central African Republic, which is a failed state, with an unresolved conflict between religious confessions within the country, whose president does not have complete power over the entire country, and whose natural resources are a source of appetite for France, China and Russia.

Keywords: Private Military Companies, Wagner Group, CAR, Russia, Geopolitics, IHL,

Abbreviations

CAR - Central African Republic

FSB - Federal'naya sluzhba bezopasnosti Rossiyskoy Federatsii (The Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation)

GRU - Glavnoye Razvedyvatel'noye Upravleniye (The Main Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation or the Main Intelligence Directorate)

PMC - Private Military Company

SBU - Sluzhba bezpeky Ukrayiny (The Security Service of Ukraine)

UN(O) - United Nations

¹ romanasgarov@gmail.com

Private Military Company in the Russian Manner: the Wagner Group and Business on the Blood in the Central African Republic

How Did It All Begin?

Whereas in Western countries such structures act as fully established business entities that employ tens of thousands of people and have billions of dollars in turnover, in developing countries they are the main players in the "gray zones," occupying an indirect position between serving the state and acting as illegal armed groups.

At the dawn of private military business in the 1990s, Russia, in contrast to the United States, France and Britain, did not stand out with a particular variety of private military companies, while the existing small structures like PMCs were created only for short-term tasks, and then dissolved.

According to Sergei Sukharin, a researcher of the history and development of private military companies in Russia, the St. Petersburg-based Rubicon security company laid the foundation for the development of private military services in Russia. Although such formations were originally created to participate in solving narrow geopolitical issues, they were later demanded by Russian business structures, such as Transneft and Gazprom. The State Duma and the Federation

Council of the Russian Federation approved the use of private security companies in the interests of business. From 1997 to 2013 such companies as RSB-Group, MAR, Antiterror, Moran Security Group, E.N.O.T. Corp., Tigr Top-Rent Security, and Slavonic Corps Limited were created.²

But NATO operations in the former Yugoslavia (1999), the American invasion of Iraq (2003), the color revolutions in Georgia (2003) and Ukraine (2004) have forced

The Afghan campaign and the Chechen wars have left an indelible sad mark in the public consciousness of ordinary Russians. These events can also be attributed to the factors that caused the need to resort to the services of PMCs.

Russian military and political experts to look differently at the changing reality. In fact, these events became the heralds of new, more effective and reliable ways to ensure victory over the enemy and superiority in military and geopolitical

ULUSAM

terms, which would later be called "hybrid wars", the main feature of which is the simultaneous application of "traditional war, small war and cyber war" methods. Hybrid wars, as a rule, are also accompanied by a strong psychological attack on citizens through social media.³ Private military companies have also been among the promoters of hybrid wars. The role of private military companies in overthrowing regimes unwanted by the West and Western corporations was particularly evident during

² Sergey Sukhankin, "Continuing War by Other Means": The Case of Wagner, Russia's Premier Private Military Company in the Middle East," in Russia in the Middle East, ed. Theodore Karasik and Stephen Blank (Washington: The Jamestown Foundation, 2018), 296-297.

³ RIA NOVOSTI, "SMI: rossiyskiye voyennyye eksperty khotyat sozdat' kontseptsiyu "myagkoy sily," <https://ria.ru/20160301/1382237782.html> (accessed on 25 August 2021)

ANALYSIS

the toppling of Gaddafi and the Iraq campaign.⁴

At the same time, armed conflicts erupted on the perimeter of Russia's own borders - conflicts in South Ossetia and Abkhazia; Transnistria; Tajikistan; the war in Chechnya and the Balkans⁵ - giving rise to war-hardened militants who were interested in "realizing their potential". In addition, the criminalized nature of Russian society led to the hiring of private contractors to serve the interests of oligarchs and the creation of the first private national military companies. These factors served as a kind of foundation for the formation of the necessary human capital for future full-fledged private military companies.

The next step towards the improvement of Russian PMCs was the war in eastern Ukraine and the Syrian campaign, where PMCs and similar associations have become almost the main "defenders" and "promoters" of Russian interests.

The Appearance of the Wagner Group on Stage.

After the end of the second Chechen campaign some of the soldiers, who had experienced all the hardships of war, were "left behind. The difficult socio-economic situation further exacerbated the situation. And then,

⁴ Komleva Natal'ya Aleksandrovna, "Preemptivnaya voyna kak tekhnologiya resurnogo peredela mira," *Prostranstvo i Vremya* 2(8)/2012, p. 30. <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/preemptivnaya-voyna-kak-tehnologiya-resurnogo-peredela-mira> (accessed on 25 August 2021)

⁵ Sergey Sukharin, "Rossiyskiye chastnyye voyennyye kompanii v subsakharskoy Afrike: rol', preimushchestva

Issue 37 (September 2021)

following the principle of demand generates supply, the discussions about the establishment of the first PMCs were initiated. The first such structure was the "Slavyanskiy Corpus". Due to the lack of legal regulations governing the activities of such structures in the Russian Federation, and because such activities are equated with mercenary activities in accordance with Article 359 of the Criminal Code, it was registered in Hong Kong under the name of "Slavonic Corps Limited". As the first task of the PMC was to protect the oil fields in Syria, where there has been civil war for two years. The total strength of the unit assigned to this assignment was just under 300 men. However, the PMC did not cope with the task. On October 17, 2013, the corps members came under a massive attack by ISIS fighters in the Syrian province of Homs, and, not having received proper reinforcements, were forced to retreat towards the airfield, from where they were evacuated to Russia. The reason for this failure was due to ill-conceived logistics and outright negligence on the part of the command. Upon arrival to Russia, members of the corps were arrested by Alfa, a special unit of the Federal Security Service. The staff of the PMC was found guilty, and some employees received criminal sentences of two to three years.⁶

Among them was one of the platoon commanders, former GRU special forces

i ogranicheniya," *Russie.Nei.Vision 120, Notes de L'Ifri*, september, 2020, p. 12.

⁶ Nikolay Larin, "Biznes na krovi. Chto izvestno o rossiyskikh chastnykh voyennykh kompaniyakh," *Forbes*, August 2, 2018, <https://www.forbes.ru/biznes/365421-biznes-na-krovi-cto-izvestno-o-rossiyskikh-chastnyh-voennyh-kompaniyah> (accessed on 25 August 2021)

Private Military Company in the Russian Manner: the Wagner Group and Business on the Blood in the Central African Republic

officer Dmitry Utkin. In the GRU he was the commander of the 700th separate unit of the 2nd Separate Special Forces Brigade. He began his career in the PMC after retiring from his former position in special forces. In 2014 he took part on the side of the rebels in eastern Ukraine (Donetsk), where his team - at the time still unnamed PMC - was able to show their best side, especially since they were involved in one of the most serious operations - Debaltsevo cauldron (Debal'tsevskyy kotel), where according to various estimates from 5000 to 8000 Ukrainian soldiers were killed. According to the SBU of Ukraine, the destruction of the military transport IL-76 and the storming of Donetsk airport are also included in the list of "merits" of the Wagner PMC.⁷ There was also a perception that the PMC was involved in the killing of more vivid and charismatic rebel leaders in eastern Ukraine, who acted independently and thus incurred the wrath of Moscow.

Subsequently, this PMC will be named after Utkin's call sign "Wagner". It was Utkin who managed to prove himself as a loyal ward and to gain support in high circles of power, which allowed him to deploy a new venture since the second half of 2015 in Syria, where his group was sent to support the regime of Bashar al-Assad. Given the Russian reality, where no government agency would allow a purely commercial PMC to act for their own reasons, it is not difficult to guess that Utkin

initially acted under the cover of the authorities, in this case, presumably the Ministry of Defense.⁸

What Is the Russian Model?

Russia is not yet a signatory to the Montreux Document, nor is it a member of the International Code of Conduct of the Association of Private Security Service Providers.

It is important to note that in the Russian reality PMCs are perceived primarily as structures:

1. functioning in the interests of the state, but without direct involvement of the state itself and its official armed forces;
2. Involved in operations outside of the origin country borders;
3. Called to become part of the mechanism for implementing foreign policy in cases where the intervention of the regular army is fraught with the violation of international norms and the resulting sanctions. Being the Prime Minister of Russia, Vladimir Putin in 2012, answering the questions of MPs, directly stated that PMCs "are an instrument of implementation of national interests without direct involvement of the state."⁹

ULUSAM

⁷ Mikhail Bushuyev, Marina Baranovskaya, "CHVK Vagnera: vse, chto o ney izvestno," Deutsche Welle, July 29, 2020, <https://p.dw.com/p/2sjMA> (accessed on 25 August 2021)

⁸ Larin, "Biznes na krovi."

⁹ RIA NOVOSTI, "Putin podderzhal ideyu sozdaniya v Rossii chastnykh voyennykh kompaniy," <https://ria.ru/20120411/623227984.html> (accessed on 26 August 2021)

ANALYSIS

Based on the above, we can say that in Russia, PMCs are not so much private business structures, but one of the tools of foreign policy of the state.

According to Sukharin, Russia is unable to apply the Western model of PMCs because of the following reasons:

1. National security. Being legalized, the Russian PMCs fall under direct dependence on the World Trade Organization, which will apply to them its rules and regulations, which for Moscow means loss of freedom space.

2. Competitiveness. The market of private military services has long been conquered by the U.S. and British companies, providing high quality services. Russian PMCs can outpace them only in that they are willing to work for low wages and do not require comfortable conditions of operation.

3. Publicity. Since the Russian PMCs are not perceived as fully-fledged independent business entities, each of their "mistakes" will be perceived as a mistake by the Russian authorities themselves and will cause public criticism. Therefore, the semi-legal status of PMCs, which for this reason have no ties with the state, is quite conducive to the protection of the image of the state.

Issue 37 (September 2021)

4. Homeland Security. The process of legalization of PMCs may cause an increase in the number of professional contractors. However, if suddenly these contractors are unemployed, then this situation directly affects the security of the state itself.¹⁰

However, in Russia there are still private companies of a pro-Western persuasion, such as "RSB Group" and "Moran Security", which, although they have connections with the state, are still focused on the commercial component.

Russia can also rely on paramilitary nationalist youth associations, a prime example of which is the "E.N.O.T. Corp." that emerged during the war in eastern Ukraine.¹¹

However, the above-mentioned structures and associations are much inferior to the Wagner PMC in the volume of tasks performed, the number of personnel and variety of arsenal. They are not entrusted with the tasks of such a high geopolitical level. Moreover, they are not as popular in the information field as Wagner's group and do not create as much information noise as the latter.

Who Cares About the Legal Issue?

At the moment the Wagner PMC appears to us as an unofficial organization, which is not part of the regular armed forces of

¹⁰ Sergey Sukhankin, "War, Business and Ideology: How Russian Private Military Contractors Pursue Moscow's Interests," the Jamestown Foundation, March 20, 2019.

¹¹ Nathaniel Reynolds, "Putin's Not-So-Secret Mercenaries: Patronage, Geopolitics, and the Wagner Group," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2019, 3.

Private Military Company in the Russian Manner: the Wagner Group and Business on the Blood in the Central African Republic

Russia and has no legal status on its territory, and therefore has no legal guarantees for its employees, but in the semi-criminal realities of Russia, few people care. Existence of PMCs is denied by officials.

It should be noted that the Russian reality is characterized by fierce competition between various government agencies. This circumstance affects the problem of legalization of private military companies and further regulation of their activities. In particular, there is a rivalry between the Federal Security Service (FSB) and the Ministry of Defense for control over such structures. One of the projects envisaged that the function of licensing and control of PMCs will be transferred to the FSB, which will subsequently exercise oversight over their activities. However, such a situation was not only contrary to the interests of the Defense Ministry, but also the administration of the President and the government, because it would lead to strengthening the position of the already all-powerful FSB.¹²

However, the most popular reason for the lack of legal status of PMCs in Russia is explained by a trick called "plausible deniability",¹³ which has become traditional for the Russian political circles. Such denial of involvement in PMCs and distancing themselves from such structures, explaining it by the fact that the Russian legislation contains no provisions on PMCs, and

establishment, financing, as well as participation in such structures is a criminal offense, helps to avoid criticism and maintain a positive image of the country.

As we see, the lack of legal mechanisms to regulate the activities of PMCs and the presence of their illegal status is consistent with the interests of the Russian political elite.

Sources of financing for the Wagner Group

The results of journalistic investigations indicate that there are two sources of funding: the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation and businessman Yevgeny Prigozhin, one of Vladimir Putin's close associates.

ULUSAM

Evgeny Prigozhin's connection with the Wagner PMC was established on the basis of circumstantial evidence. Since the winter of 2016-2017, the development of oil and gas fields in Syria began to be interested in the Russian firm "Euro-Police". According to Fontanka, this firm is affiliated with Prigozhin. On the basis of an agreement signed with the Syrian state concern, the firm will receive a quarter of the extracted energy resources. Under this agreement, the security functions were assigned to the Wagner PMC.

¹² Irek Murtazin, "CHVK v Rossii — kak seks v SSSR," Novaya Gazeta, August 7, 2020, <https://novayagazeta.ru/articles/2020/08/06/86552->

[chvk-v-rossii-kak-seks-v-sssr](https://fontanka.ru/2020/08/06/86552-) (accessed on 26 August 2021)

¹³ Sergey Sukharin, "Rossiyskiye kompanii v Afrike," 14.



Yevgeniy Prigozhin

Photo 1: Mikhail Mettsel' / TASS

In the [past](#), Evgeny Prigozhin was sentenced to 12 years in prison for "theft, fraud, involving minors in criminal activity, and robbery." After being released from prison in the 1990s, Prigozhin became a successful entrepreneur - the owner of a restaurant business in St. Petersburg. After [Putin visited](#) his restaurant in the mid-2000s, a new chapter in his career in pro-government circles began. He began to be called "Putin's friend" and "Putin's cook". In the 2010s Prigozhin's name began to appear in cases related to the troll factory. In february 2018, the "Internet Research Agency", which is also considered to be close to Prigozhin, was accused of [interfering in the 2016 U.S. election](#).

It is also alleged that since mid-2017, the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation has drastically reduced spending on the needs of PMCs, instead offering them to take advantage of financial opportunities in Syria itself, which involves the capture or retaking of oil fields from ISIS militants with further provision of their protection.¹⁴

In one such adventure, on february 7, 2018, the Wagner PMC, together with syrian pro-government tribal formations, attempting to occupy the area of the former *Al-Isba oil refinery in Deir Ez-Zor* province, which was under the control of the US-backed syrian democratic forces, was subjected to a massive air attack in response. According to the "Kommersant" newspaper, the reason for the incident was "an attempt by local big businessmen, currently supporting Bashar Al-Assad, to seize oil and gas fields controlled by Kurds, allies of the US." As a result, according to different sources, several to 100 people were killed.

This change in attitude in the Defense Ministry can be explained by the successful operations conducted by the Wagner Group in the liberation of Palmyra in 2016 and 2017.¹⁵

Tying the Wagner Group to Yevgeny Prigozhin's business empire allows the Kremlin to:

¹⁴ Fontanka, "Nemnogo biznesa v siriyskoy voyne," June 26, 2017 <https://www.fontanka.ru/2017/06/26/084/> (accessed on 27 August 2021)

¹⁵ Meduza, "Rebyata, vy prednaznacheny dlya voyny," December 1, 2020

<https://meduza.io/feature/2020/12/01/rebyata-vy-prednaznacheny-dlya-voyny> (accessed on 27 August 2021)

Private Military Company in the Russian Manner: the Wagner Group and Business on the Blood in the Central African Republic

- avoid additional spending on weapons and personnel;

- distancing itself from the Wagnerians, making Prigozhin "the main culprit for all sins. Putin, referring to this issue, stated ambiguously that the authorities are not responsible for Prigozhin's actions, since he is not an official.

Recruitment, Participation and Remuneration

According to various sources, the number of Wagner's group ranges from 1,350 to 2,000 people. The German newspaper Bild cites a figure of 2,500 people.¹⁶ The UN report states that, in addition to Russian citizens, citizens of Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and Serbia are also fighting in the ranks of the Wagner group.¹⁷

According to investigative journalism, the process of joining the PMCs takes three days. On the first day the physical preparedness is tested, on the second day a medical analysis is carried out, and on the third day the recruits fill out forms, which, among other things, include the data of their relatives, so that in the event of death of a soldier the private military company could pay them

compensation, as well as record the passwords to all their social networking accounts. The next stage is communication with a security specialist. An integral part of the recruitment procedure is a polygraph test. After receiving a personal badge with a number, the contract with the recruit is considered to be concluded and his/her salary is accrued.¹⁸

The place of training and preparation for the Wagner Group recruits is the Molkino

military base, located in the Krasnodar region, in the immediate vicinity of the 10th Independent Brigade of Special Forces of the Russian Defense Ministry's GRU. Fontanka, citing participants in the events in Syria in 2016 and 2017, notes that before being sent to the theater of military operations in Syria, PMC personnel underwent two months of comprehensive training in Molkino.¹⁹

Unlike other Russian PMCs, the Wagner Group has in addition to reconnaissance and assault brigade and artillery battalion, a tank company, reconnaissance and sabotage company,

If on the one hand there is a disposal of the most passionate part of Russian society, on the other hand, the Wagner PMC and other similar structures allow to isolate the most socially dangerous elements from society.

ULUSAM

¹⁶ Mikhail Bushuyev, Marina Baranovskaya, "CHVK Vagnera."

¹⁷ BBC News, "Wagner, shadowy Russian military group, 'fighting in Libya,'" May 7, 2020 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-52571777> (accessed on 27 August 2021)

¹⁸ Il'ya Barabanov, Andrey Soshnikov, Anastasiya Napalkova, Pavel Aksenov, "Siriya, Afrika, Ukraina.

Kuda i kak "CHVK Vagnera" verbuyet lyudey i gde ikh pominayet," BBC News, November 23, 2018,

<https://www.bbc.com/russian/features-46291929> (accessed on 27 August 2021)

¹⁹ Denis Korotkov, "Spisok Vagnera," Fontanka, August 21, 2017 <https://www.fontanka.ru/2017/08/18/075/> (accessed on 27 August 2021)

ANALYSIS

engineering reconnaissance company and a communications company.²⁰ Such diversity in the Wagnerian arsenal is largely due to the direct support and tutelage of the Defense Ministry and their close ties with the GRU. For example, during Syrian operations the Wagners were provided with weapons that were produced exclusively for the GRU.²¹ We should not forget the fact that Dmitry Utkin himself is a former GRU officer. There is also information that a number of operations of the Wagner group in Syria were led by members of the FSB and GRU.

However, the Wagner PMC has a number of distinctive features, which are not usually characteristic of private contractors. The fact is that the Wagnerians have a very high percentage of losses in manpower. According to estimates of direct participants in the events, the average level of combat losses reaches 30-35%.²² In addition, they go into battle as the first column and are involved in operations, which, as a rule, take place in the hottest spots: they are used as a strike force in destroying enemy's firing points, in recapturing territories and in capturing settlements.

The increasing number of inexperienced and untrained recruits, the provision of low-quality and outdated military equipment, the intentional use of the group as

Issue 37 (September 2021)

cannon fodder with their constant redeployment to the front line cause great dissatisfaction among the group members. However, despite this, the number of those wishing to join the ranks of the Wagner is growing steadily (even the popular phrase "There is a queue at Molkino")²³ and the main reason for this is the difficult socio-economic situation caused by unemployment and the high wages of contract soldiers, which are several times higher than the average wage in Russia. The imposition of sanctions against Russia in 2014, which had a negative impact on the already difficult economic situation of ordinary Russians, can also be added to the list of reasons for the "forced" interest in serving in private military companies. It is the race for material gain that makes young and inexperienced soldiers neglect the full range of those dangerous "super-tasks" they are ordered to perform. Sometimes, participation in private military companies is directly perceived by them as a patriotic duty to their country. Among the fighters of the Wagner PMCs there are many former prisoners.²⁴

There are a number of factors that complicate the calculation of the number of dead fighters or employees of PMCs:

- The illegal status of PMCs and their fighters;

²⁰ Irek Murtazin, "Ikh prosto net. Rassledovaniye," Novaya Gazeta October 9, 2017

<https://novayagazeta.ru/articles/2017/10/09/74125-ih-prosto-net> (accessed on 27 August 2021)

²¹ Gostev, A., and R. Coalson. 2016. "Russia's Paramilitary Mercenaries Emerge from the Shadows." RFE/RL.org, <https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-paramilitary-mercenaries-emerge-from-the-shadows-syria-ukraine/28180321.html> (accessed on 27 August 2021)

²² Larin, "Biznes na krovi."

²³ Denis Korotkov, "Oni srazhalis' za Pal'miru," Fontanka, March 29, 2016

<https://www.fontanka.ru/2016/03/28/171/> (accessed on 27 August, 2021)

²⁴ Konstantin Eggert, "Kommentariy: CHVK Vagnera v Livii - na sluzhbe interesov Kremlya," Deutsche Welle, May 8, 2020 <https://p.dw.com/p/3bwN2> (accessed on 27 August, 2020)

Private Military Company in the Russian Manner: the Wagner Group and Business on the Blood in the Central African Republic

- Formal lack of accountability of such structures to state authorities;
- Availability of non-disclosure agreement, which applies to the entire staff of PMCs;
- Refusal of the Defense Ministry to register any losses among the mercenaries;
- Refusal of the group members to talk to the press, because of the illegality of such activities there is a fear of getting arrested²⁵ or causing a media resonance. Former members of such groups, who were nevertheless able to be interviewed, sometimes did not know "not only each other's surnames, but also each other's names."²⁶

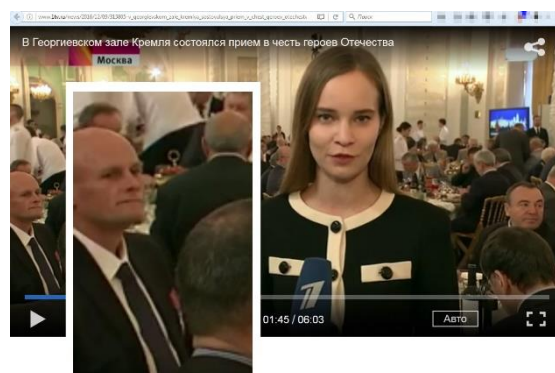
There is an opinion that "the salary depends on skills, goals, and place of operations." While undergoing training in Russia, team members can expect a salary of 50 to 80 thousand rubles. Participation in operations abroad leads to a doubling of this amount - 100-120 thousand, and in the case of military operations the salary reaches 150-200 thousand. "Special campaigns or major battles promises a sum of up to 300 thousand."²⁷ Compensation for death to the family varied from 2,000,000 to 3,000,000 rubles (\$32,000-\$48,000).²⁸

²⁵ Mikhail Bushuyev, Marina Baranovskaya, "CHVK Vagnera."

²⁶ Denis Korotkov, "Oni srazhalis' za Pal'miru."

²⁷ Mikhail Bushuyev, Marina Baranovskaya, "CHVK Vagnera."

It is also known that Wagner employees have been awarded orders and medals of combat (often posthumously), up to the highest badge of honor, the Hero of Russia. Stars of Heroes of Russia were spotted on the lapels of the jackets of Dmitry Utkin (Photo 2) and his deputy Andrei Troshev, who took part in a ceremony celebrating Heroes of Russia in the St. George's Hall of the Kremlin on December 9, 2016.²⁹



Сегодня в России отмечают День героев Отечества. Праздник сравнительно молод, но имеет глубокие

Photo 2: Dmitriy Utkin (Wagner) in the Kremlin // Footage of the First Channel (Russian) video frame

Thus, it can be summed up that the Wagner Group is not so much a private military company of the Western type, but a government-controlled group of illegally operating (although, given Russian realities, few care) individuals of different ages and with varying levels of military experience and qualifications, who are willing to take any adventures for the sake of money, including illegal ones, and as this implies, disregards the norms of international law. Let us recall once

²⁸ Sergey Sukhankin, "Continuing War by Other Means," 303.

²⁹ Denis Korotkov, "Vagner v Kremle," Fontanka, December 12, 2016 <https://www.fontanka.ru/2016/12/12/064/> (accessed on 27 August 2021)

ANALYSIS

again that Russia has not yet signed the Montreux Document and has not joined the International Code of Conduct of the Association of Private Security Service Providers. The example of the CAR clearly demonstrates such "extraordinary" activities of PMCs.

All of this, of course, negatively affects Russia's own image. Prigozhin himself, as already noted, is on the U.S. sanctions list, and one of the two accusations against him is directly related to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, where his group played a significant role.

CAR (Background)

in March 2003, the head of the general staff of the armed forces of the CAR, François Bozizé, ousted President François Patassé from power. However, Bozizé's new power was not recognized by the so-called Union of Democratic Forces for Unity, which is a branch of the Islamist armed group Seleka, led by Michel Djotodia. Thus began a series of protracted confrontations within the country, which took on a religious character that could be called a full-blown civil war.

Note that half of the CAR population is Christian, 15 percent are Muslim, and the remaining 35 percent adhere to traditional beliefs.

Issue 37 (September 2021)

Although the parties were able to reach a peace agreement in 2007 through the efforts of France, at the end of 2012 the confrontation broke out with renewed vigor. The Northerners (Jotodia formations) accused the government in Bangui of violating the terms of the 2007 peace agreements. The Christian population of the country was brutally massacred by the Islamists, which forced them to turn their faces to the French embassy.

Bozizé, also hoping for U.S. and French help, was unable to get the expected response from the Elysée Palace. Although Bozizé's candidacy was supported by France up to a point, Bozizé himself committed the so-called "exploiter diversifique" when he refused to allow the French corporation Areva to develop uranium mines and, based on a November 2011 agreement, allowed Chinese companies to participate in the exploration and development of uranium reserves in the country.

On March 23, the Islamists succeeded in bringing the capital Bangui under their control, and Bozizé fled to the Congo and then to Cameroon. Soon the national transitional council declared Djotodia president of the country.

In an effort to earn the support of the Elysée Palace, Djotodia announced that he was ready to terminate the agreement with the Chinese for the joint development of uranium mines.³⁰

³⁰ V.R. Filippov, "Tsentral'noafrikanskaya Respublika: protivostoyaniye Kremlya i Yeliseyskogo dvortsa,"

Private Military Company in the Russian Manner: the Wagner Group and Business on the Blood in the Central African Republic

However, the situation in the country remained tense. The response of the Christian population to the brutality, looting and atrocities by the Islamists was to unite in self-defense groups called "Anti-Balaka. They "followed on the footsteps" of their opponents, carrying out the same massacres against the Muslim population.³¹

All this further exacerbated the situation, which eventually required the intervention of France, which, at the instigation of UNO, launched an operation called "Sangaris" on December 5, 2013. But the Tuareg separatist uprising in Mali and Niger and the following need to reallocate military forces and funds, the financial cost (500 million euros), as well as the damage to the reputation of the French military caused by accusations of sexual abuse of African children forced France to interrupt the operation, which ultimately brought the Elysee Palace neither political nor military-strategic dividends.³²

Under pressure from the Economic Community of Central African States, the National Transitional Council of the CAR removed Djotodia from power. With the help of France, Catherine Samba-Panza was elected as "interim president" of the CAR. However, the new president had a legitimacy problem, since despite French military aid and

international peacekeeping troops, she did not control most of the country.³³

On February 20, 2016, Fostin-Archange Touadera won the presidential election with 63% of the vote.³⁴ A professor of mathematics and rector of Bangui University, educated in European universities, he demonstrated equidistance from both Muslim and Christian politico-military groups, declared his interest in attracting foreign investment, and his intention to defeat corruption.³⁵

It is not difficult to guess that the holding of regular elections in the CAR was a French project. These elections were aimed at ending the operation Sangaris, which was extremely disadvantageous for France.³⁶ In November 2016, France also pledged to invest 2 billion euros in the country.

ULUSAM

The first years of Tuader's presidency were marked by a decline in GDP, diamond mines were still in the hands of gangs, corruption still flourished in the country, the peacekeeping contingent was unable to provide stability, pogroms between Muslims and Christians continued, refugees remained in camps, and much of the country was still controlled by armed groups.

³¹ Council on Foreign Relations, "Violence in the Central African Republic" <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/violence-central-african-republic> (accessed on 27 August 2021)

³² Filippov, "Tsentral'noafrikanskaya Respublika," 127-128.

³³ Ibid., 129-130.

³⁴ Aljazeera, "Central African Republic: Touadera wins election," February 21, 2016

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/2/21/central-african-republic-touadera-wins-election> (accessed on 3 September 2021)

³⁵ Filippov, "Tsentral'noafrikanskaya Respublika," 130.

³⁶ V.G. Kusov, "Fostin-Arkanzh Tuadera // Praviteli Afriki: KHKHI vek,"

https://africanrulers.ru/main/biographies/centralafrica_to_uadera/ (accessed on 3 September 2021)

But the biggest setback was the inability to attract foreign investment, and France's investment promises remained unfulfilled. Moreover, the French were no longer particularly concerned with establishing law and order in the country.³⁷ All this pile of failures and threats, as well as the disappointment in assistance from France, eventually forced Touadera to change the vector of its foreign policy and look for other patrons.

Protector Changing Policy

In June 2017, Putin and Touadera met during an economic summit in St. Petersburg, where the parties discussed strengthening bilateral relations.³⁸ In October 2017, an agreement on joint development of natural resources was signed in Sochi,³⁹ after which "Lobaye Invest" (a subsidiary of Prigozhin's "M Invest") began mining gold and diamonds in the CAR.⁴⁰ Moreover, in December 2017, at Russia's request, the UN lifted the arms embargo and the embargo on sending military trainers to the CAR, which freed up Russia's hands to strengthen its military presence. As a

result, five military and 170 Russian civilian instructors arrived in the CAR to help improve the level of military training of the CAR troops.⁴¹ According to the French newspaper *Le Monde*, five servicemen are officers of the GRU intelligence, while 170 civilians are members of the Wagner PMC, posing as members of the fictitious private military company Sewa Security Services.⁴²

On May 23, during the next St. Petersburg economic summit, Touadera expressed hopes for the consolidation of economic and humanitarian ties, and thanked Putin for his assistance in the process of consolidation and peace in the CAR.⁴³ August 2018 was notable for the fact that Minister of National Defense and Army Reconstruction of CAR Sari Noel Kouyara and Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu signed bilateral agreements. Kouyara also did not rule out the possibility of placing a Russian military base on the territory of the CAR.⁴⁴ Valery Zakharov, an adviser to the CAR president, was charged with managing the purchase of armaments, as

³⁷ Filippov, "Tsentral'noafrikanskaya Respublika," 130-131.

³⁸ Meeting with President of the Central African Republic Faustin Arrange Touadera <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/57534> (accessed on 5 September 2021)

³⁹ Yevgeniy Krutikov, "Rossiyskiy desant vysadilsya v tsentre Afriki," *Vzglyad*, April 27, 2017, <https://vz.ru/world/2018/4/27/920216.html> (accessed on 5 September 2021)

⁴⁰ Anton Bayev, Mikhail Maglov, "Kontrakt ot prezidenta: chto poluchila v TSAR kompaniya, kotoruyu svyazyvayut s Prigozhinym," *The Bell*, August 31, 2018 <https://thebell.io/kontrakt-ot-prezidenta-chto-poluchila-v-tsar-kompaniya-kotoruyu-svyazyvayut-s-prigozhinym> (accessed on 5 September 2021)

⁴¹ Rémy Ourdan, "Soldats, mercenaires et conseillers russes se multiplient dans la capitale centrafricaine," *Le Monde*, April 23, 2018,

https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2018/04/23/la-russie-installe-peu-a-peu-sa-presence-dans-la-capitale-centrafricaine_5289462_3212.html (accessed on 5 September 2021)

⁴² Remy Ourdan, "V stolitse Tsentral'noafrikanskoy respubliki rastet chislo rossiyskikh soldat, nayemnikov i sovetnikov," *Le Monde*, April 24, 2018

<https://www.inopressa.ru/pwa/article/24Apr2018/lemond/afrique.html> (accessed on 5 September 2021)

⁴³ Filippov, "Tsentral'noafrikanskaya Respublika," 132.

⁴⁴ RIA Novosti, "V TSAR ne iskluchili razmeshcheniya rossiyskoy bazy," *yanvar'* 10, 2019, <https://ria.ru/20190110/1549168209.html> (accessed on 5 September 2021)

Private Military Company in the Russian Manner: the Wagner Group and Business on the Blood in the Central African Republic

well as with providing appropriate assistance.⁴⁵

Valery Zakharov, a former military intelligence officer, is known for working for Prigozhin for a certain period of time. In the CAR, he became the de facto manager of Russian military instructors. Zakharov attempted to negotiate with leaders of rebel groups (both meetings were held in Khartoum in July and August 2018), where the main topics discussed were disarmament and the distribution of profits from mining. However, this initiative of the Russian protégé was not successful and the fragile alliance soon broke up.⁴⁶

Arguments in Favor of the Presence of Russian Contractors

The trigger for the spread of rumors about the presence of Russian PMCs in the CAR was the establishment of a mining company called "Lobaye Invest" by Russian businessman Evgeny Khodotov, part of the "M-Invest Group", which in turn has been in close contact with Prigozhin's company "Euro-Polis" on 25 October 2017. The fact that this company was closely related to Prigozhin's business empire only supported the argument

that, in fact, not official military instructors but private contractors were operating there, especially since this firm, in return for providing security services to the CAR government, was given a concession to mine gold in the area of Ndassima, which was controlled by the Islamist group Seleka. Yevgeny Prigozhin himself denies having any businesses of his own in the CAR.⁴⁷

Another argument in favor of the claim that Russia engaged a private military company in the CAR was the sighting by journalists in May 2018 of several Ural-375 armored trucks entering the CAR from Sudan, presumably carrying members of the Wagner group.⁴⁸

In March 2018, during Tuadera's celebration of the second anniversary of his presidency, Russian PMC employees showed up at the celebration ceremony.⁴⁹

On July 30, 2018, three Russian journalists - Orkhan Dzhemal, Alexander Rastorguev and Kirill Radchenko (Photo 3) - were murdered in the CAR.⁵⁰ They had gone to the CAR to check the veracity of the ever-growing rumors about the Wagner group, and to study in detail the nature of its activities in that country.

⁴⁵ Sergey Sukharin, "Rossiyskiye voyennyye kompanii v Afrike," 17.

⁴⁶ Filippov, "Tsentral'noafrikanskaya Respublika," 135.

⁴⁷ Anton Bayev, Mikhail Maglov, "Kontrakt ot prezidenta."

⁴⁸ Kubat Kasymbekov, "NV: Sledy kyrgyzstantsa sredi rossiyskikh nayemnikov v Afrike," Radio Azatlyk, fevral 27, 2019, https://rus.azattyk.org/a/kyrgyzstan_rossiya_vagner_v_afrike/29793461.html (accessed on 6 September 2021)

⁴⁹ Andrey Kamakin, "Safari dlya Vagnera," Novaya Gazeta, iyun' 13, 2018, <https://novayagazeta.ru/articles/2018/06/13/76787-safari-dlya-vagnera> (accessed on 6 September 2021)

⁵⁰ Ivan Martynenko, "Tsentr "Dos'ye": k ubiystvu zhurnalistov v TSAR prichastna CHVK "povara Putina," Radio Svoboda, yanvar' 10, 2019, <https://www.svoboda.org/a/29701584.html> (accessed on 6 September 2021)

ANALYSIS

Although the perpetrators of the murders have not yet been definitively identified, Wagner's group is listed as a prime suspect.



Orkhan Dzhemal, Alexander Rastorguev and Kirill Radchenko

Photo 3: TACC, "Ъ", Facebook

This example clearly demonstrates the determination of the Russian elites to put an extremely harsh end to any attempts to leak information about the Wagnerites and to prevent the emergence of a fuss about this topic. The very nature of the close relationship between the two governments is also aimed at creating an effect of extreme secrecy and informational opacity (for example, we can only guess at the content of the military agreements between the countries).

The secret nature of the Wagner Group's activities can also be explained by the fact that it is directly supervised by the GRU and the FSB.

Core Activities of Russian Contractors in CAR

⁵¹ Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory, Russian Private Military Companies, UNCLASSIFIED, April, 2020, 81.
15

Issue 37 (September 2021)

Unlike Ukraine and Syria, in the CAR, PMC employees do not participate in military operations. The main mission of Russian private military structures is to protect the country's officials. The main threat to the central government today is posed by religiously motivated militias - the Muslim Seleka and Christian Antibalaka - which control most of the country, while government forces retain the capital and the areas adjacent to it. Although the guards for Touadera were originally organized from the Rwandans of the UN peacekeeping contingent, the rapprochement with Russia contributed to the displacement of the Rwandans and the complete transition of security functions to the Russians, who now have unlimited access to the working schedule of the president and his entourage.

Close cooperation between Russian private contractors and CAR government forces includes "joint patrolling, jointly equipping checkpoints, transporting construction materials from Sudan into CAR territory, escorting convoys inside CAR, providing security to hospitals and hospital staff..."⁵¹

In addition, the Russian contract employees, as one would have guessed, provide security in those areas where Russian mining firms are involved. It is also known that PMCs often enter into negotiations with representatives of armed groups to ensure the security of Russian companies.⁵² Another

⁵² Yuriy Safronov, "Chto delayut v TSAR rossiyskiye «instruktory»," Novaya Gazeta, dekabr' 24, 2020
<https://novayagazeta.ru/articles/2020/12/24/88515-cto->

Private Military Company in the Russian Manner: the Wagner Group and Business on the Blood in the Central African Republic

important task of the Russian PMCs is to improve the skills of the governmental armed forces.

A number of French publications noted that the Russians have chosen as their base an estate of the former leader of the country

Bocassa, which is located 60 kilometers from the capital Bangui.⁵³

Russia's activities in the so-called "failed-states" can be regarded as a "state building" policy, which is carried out by providing security for the political elite of these countries, establishing military-technical cooperation and expanding mutually beneficial economic ties. Such cooperation between Russia and "failed states," including the CAR, can be characterized as security in exchange for gold.

Regarding the size of the contingent, although it was officially announced that there were 5 military and 170 Russian civilian instructors, the information space is dominated by figures from 800 to 2,000 people who are involved in operations

of high strategic importance.⁵⁴ Yevgeny Shabaev, head of the branch of the paramilitary Cossack organization, said that the number of private contractors in the CAR could be 1,000, and for all of Africa, including Sudan, South Sudan and Libya, from 5,000 to 10,000.⁵⁵

However, the activities of Russian private military companies are also not devoid of "violations" of international humanitarian principles. On March 31, 2021, a group of UN experts expressed concern about the increasing number of contractors, whose services are used by the CAR government. Their communiqué mentions three Russian private companies: Sewa Security Services, Lobaye Invest SARLU and Wagner Group. Of greatest concern to the group of experts was a series of violent attacks by Russian PMCs after the presidential elections of December 27, 2020. According to the expert communiqué, the Russians, together with the Central African Armed Forces (FACA), and sometimes with the participation of UN peacekeeping forces, are guilty of initiating:

- Mass executions without due process of law; ULUSAM
- Arbitrary detentions, torture during interrogations;
- Enforced disappearances;
- Forcible displacement of civilians;
- Indiscriminate attacks on civilian objects;

[delayut-v-tsar-rossiyskie-naemniki](#) (accessed on 6 September 2021)

⁵³ Par Rémy Ourdan, "Soldats, mercenaires et conseillers russes se multiplient dans la capitale centrafricaine."

⁵⁴ Novaya Gazeta, "Kazni, iznasilovaniya, grabezhi," May 4, 2021

<https://novayagazeta.ru/articles/2021/05/04/kazni->

[iznasilovaniia-grabezhi](#) (accessed on 6 September 2021)

⁵⁵ Aaron Ross, "How Russia Moved Into Sub-Saharan Africa," The Moscow Times, October 17, 2018 <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2018/10/17/how-russia-moved-into-sub-saharan-africa-a63213> (accessed on 6 September 2021)

ANALYSIS

- Violations of the right to health and increased attacks on humanitarian organizations.

The communiqué also reports that there are no investigations into the aforementioned cases and regrets the lack of "determination to identify those responsible for these abuses."⁵⁶

It is important to note that the government is pro-Russian propaganda and is trying in every way to present Russian PMCs as champions of peace in the country. Sometimes, such propaganda turns into a diktat, when any attempt to oppose the abuses of the Russians can be regarded as opposition to the government or as pandering to anti-government armed groups.⁵⁷

Issue 37 (September 2021)

The Wagner Group is engaged in regions where, for the most part, the rule of law is violated, democratic institutions are obsolete, people's rights are violated, and governments are corrupted. This situation suggests that in addition to all kinds of violations of international humanitarian law, the Wagner Group contributes to strengthening the position of authoritarian regimes loyal to Moscow.⁵⁸

Russia Ranks Cooperation in Africa

Documents leaked in December 2018 detailed levels of cooperation between Russia and governments in Africa.



What's the Benefit for Russia?

At this point, we can clearly trace the process of the gradual displacement of France from the CAR, on the one hand, and the increasing competition between Russia and China, on the other. Russia, gradually displacing the old metropolises, resorts to a policy of "security exports" in unstable African countries engaged in civil war, and uses private military companies as the main tools of this policy. This is especially relevant for those unstable countries that face the threat of terrorism and extremism.

We can also assume that Russian mining companies will not wait for the Touadera regime to establish its authority over the entire territory of the country so that they can carry out their work in peace. On the contrary, Russian companies benefit from maintaining the situation of instability in the

⁵⁶ United Nations Human Rights, "RCA : Les experts s'alarment de l'utilisation par le gouvernement de " formateurs russes " et des contacts étroits avec les soldats de la paix de l'ONU" <https://www.ohchr.org/FR/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=26961&LangID=F> (accessed on 6 September 2021)

⁵⁷ Novaya Gazeta, "Kazni, iznasilovaniya, grabezhi."

⁵⁸ Nathaniel Reynolds, "Putin's Not-So-Secret Mercenaries: Patronage, Geopolitics, and the Wagner Group," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2019, 12.

Private Military Company in the Russian Manner: the Wagner Group and Business on the Blood in the Central African Republic

CAR, on the basis of which they could argue for their presence and enrichment at the expense of the country's resources in exchange for the security protection.

Russia's military and economic presence in the CAR can also be viewed through the prism of geoeconomics, since the geographical location of the CAR makes it a bridge that opens the way to more economically attractive regions of Africa, and thus "creating an axis of influence from Sudan in the North to Angola in the South."⁵⁹

Conclusion

When one considers that future conflicts, thanks to technological advances, will be short, precise and intense because of the large number of participants, among whom there will undoubtedly be countries as well as other actors, such as business structures, this state of affairs will require a high degree of mobility from the participants. Resourcefulness and out-of-the-box thinking on the battlefield will remain the main precursors of success in future conflicts.

It is private military companies today best meet these requirements, and of course, private military companies will be at the forefront of future conflicts. Using the services of PMCs is much more profitable than

deploying regular troops on a particular territory, which is fraught with complicated logistics. Private military companies have a high level of professionalism, high efficiency, flexible management and lack of bureaucracy. And one of the biggest advantages of PMCs over regular troops is the freedom to choose the means and methods of achieving the goals. Moreover, the private military companies can be made responsible for all the "dirty work", which is inherent in any war. PMC also allows the country to operate simultaneously in several theaters of military operations, as well as to participate in the provision of consulting and training services for the armed forces of allied countries.

As for the Wagner Group, due to the lack of practice of free activity as a full-fledged private military company, there is no need to classify it as a Western-type PMC. Today, the Wagner Group is a symbiosis of a private military company and an armed formation, supervised by the intelligence services, designed to protect the economic and geopolitical interests of the country. Access to equipment, military technology and resources of Russia's elite special units, in particular the GRU, increases the Wagner Group's advantage over the rest of Russia's private military establishments.

However, despite having all sorts of brigades and access to the latest weapons,

ULUSAM

⁵⁹ Jack Losh, Owen Mathews, "Battle for Africa': Russia Pushes Into 'Free Country for the Taking' In Attempt to Rival the West," Newsweek, September 8, 2018 <https://www.newsweek.com/2018/08/17/russia-putin->

[africa-kremlin-central-republic-devastated-power-dynamic-1061066.html](https://www.newsweek.com/2018/08/17/russia-putin-africa-kremlin-central-republic-devastated-power-dynamic-1061066.html) (accessed on 6 September 2021)

ANALYSIS

the Wagner Group still lags behind its advanced Western rivals. The Wagner Group can enter active operations and destroy relatively weak opponents, such as various kinds of terrorist groups, while against well-equipped armies, as was the case during the clash with American units in the Syrian province of Deir ez-Zor, the Wagner Group "fails".

As has already been noted, private military companies sometimes incur heavy losses in the most complex operations. In particular, the Wagner group has a much higher figure than is customary in the world practice. Moreover, losses among the PMCs are not included in the official lists of losses and are concealed from the public in every way. But the fact of absence of losses among the armed forces of the Russian federal forces is actively propagandized by the official channels, whose main objective is to create an image of "invincible Russian army" in the public mind.

So, the use of the Wagner PMC allows the Russian Federation to:

- ❖ expand its (geo)political influence abroad;
- ❖ protect the economic interests of the state, individuals and business structures; (We can say that the economic interests of those who have close ties with the Russian political establishment, directly affect the foreign economy of the country. Also we see that today Russian PMCs have become

Issue 37 (September 2021)

the promoters of geopolitical and economic interests at the same time).

- ❖ create conflicts on a local scale and control them;
- ❖ under the pretext of providing military and technical assistance, strengthen and support partner countries and regimes loyal to Moscow;
- ❖ by supporting anti-government forces against the pro-Western government, to destabilize the situation in those neighboring countries where the political vector is being transformed not in favor of Moscow (Ukraine).

As for African countries, in particular the CAR, the problems in such failed countries are not solved by private military companies, but by a deeper transformation in the socio-economic, cultural sphere and by conducting a national policy that meets the interests of all parties. As it has already been noted, the protector countries, such as Russia, are not at all interested in ending the bloody clashes on religious grounds between Muslims and Christians in the country or in establishing the full authority of President Touadera over the entire territory of the country. Russia cannot and does not want to offer an effective model of development to African countries, except for military cooperation. On the contrary, Russia is interested in preserving instability, which will allow it, referring to "ensuring security," to strengthen its military presence, maintain the current regime, and in return gain access to natural resources, which primarily

Private Military Company in the Russian Manner: the Wagner Group and Business on the Blood in the Central African Republic

corresponds to the appetite of Russian business structures and influential oligarchs close to power. Such economic cooperation benefits only Russian business and does not bode well for the people of the CAR. Most likely, in economic terms, African countries can expect more from China than from Russia.

Thus, private military companies act as "protectors of the process of plundering" the natural resources of the CAR. Figuratively speaking, African countries now act as an arena for Chinese money and Russian muscle.

Bibliography

Aljazeera, "Central African Republic: Touadera wins election," February 21, 2016 <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/2/21/central-african-republic-touadera-wins-election> (accessed on 3 September 2021).

Barabanov Il'ya, Soshnikov Andrey, Napalkova Anastasiya, Aksenov Pavel, "Siriya, Afrika, Ukraina. Kuda i kak "CHVK Vagnera" verbuyet lyudey i gde ikh pominayet," BBC News, November 23, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/russian/features-46291929> (accessed on 27 August 2021).

Bayev, Anton and Mikhail Maglov. "Kontrakt ot prezidenta: chto poluchila v TSAR kompaniya, kotoruyu svyazyvayut s Prigozhinym," The Bell, August 31, 2018 <https://thebell.io/kontrakt-ot-prezidenta-chto-poluchila-v-tsar-kompaniya-kotoruyu->

svyazyvayut-s-prigozhinym(accessed on 5 September 2021).

BBC News. "Wagner, shadowy Russian military group, 'fighting in Libya,'" May 7, 2020 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-52571777> (accessed on 27 August 2021).

Bushuyev, Mikhail and Baranovskaya Marina. "CHVK Vagnera: vse, chto o ney izvestno," Deutsche Welle, July 29, 2020 <https://p.dw.com/p/2sjMA> (accessed on 25 August 2021).

Council on Foreign Relations, "Violence in the Central African Republic". <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/violence-central-african-republic> (accessed on 27 August 2021)

Eggert, Konstantin. "Kommentariy: CHVK Vagnera v Livii - na sluzhbe interesov Kremlya," Deutsche Welle, May 8, 2020 <https://p.dw.com/p/3bwN2> (accessed on 27 August, 2020).

Filippov, V.R. "Tsentral'noafrikanskaya Respublika: protivostoyaniye Kremlya i Yeliseyskogo dvortsa," LOKUS: lyudi, obshchestvo, kul'tury, smysly № 1, 2019.

Fontanka. "Nemnogo biznesa v siriyskoy voyne," June 26, 2017 <https://www.fontanka.ru/2017/06/26/084/> (accessed on 27 August 2021).

Gostev, A., and R. Coalson. 2016. "Russia's Paramilitary Mercenaries Emerge from the Shadows." RFE/RL

ANALYSIS

<https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-paramilitary-mercenaries-emerge-from-the-shadows-syria-ukraine/28180321.html> (accessed on 27 August 2021).

Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory. Russian Private Military Companies, UNCLASSIFIED, April, 2020.

Kamakin, Andrey. "Safari dlya Vagnera," Novaya Gazeta, iyun' 13, 2018, <https://novayagazeta.ru/articles/2018/06/13/76787-safari-dlya-vagnera> (accessed on 6 September 2021).

Kasymbekov, Kubat. "NV: Sledy kyrgyzstantsa sredi rossiyskikh nayemnikov v Afrike," Radio Azattyk, fevral 27, 2019, https://rus.azattyk.org/a/kyrgyzstan_rossiya_vagner_v_afrike/29793461.html (accessed on 6 September 2021).

Komleva Natal'ya Aleksandrovna, "Preemptivnaya voyna kak tekhnologiya resursnogo peredela mira," Prostranstvo i Vremya 2(8)/2012 <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/preemptivnaya-voyna-kak-tehnologiya-resursnogo-peredela-mira> (accessed on 25 August 2021).

Korotkov Denis. "Spisok Vagnera," Fontanka, August 21, 2017 <https://www.fontanka.ru/2017/08/18/075/> (accessed on 27 August 2021).

Korotkov, Denis. "Oni srazhalis' za Pal'miru," Fontanka, March 29, 2016 <https://www.fontanka.ru/2016/03/28/171/> (accessed on 27 August, 2021).

Issue 37 (September 2021)

Korotkov, Denis. "Vagner v Kremle," Fontanka, December 12, 2016 <https://www.fontanka.ru/2016/12/12/064/> (accessed on 27 August 2021).

Krutikov, Yevgeniy. "Rossiyskiy desant vysadilsya v tsentre Afriki," Vzglyad, April 27, 2017, <https://vz.ru/world/2018/4/27/920216.html> (accessed on 5 September 2021).

Kusov, V.G. "Fosten-Arkanzh Tuadera // Praviteli Afriki: KHKHI vek," https://africanrulers.ru/main/biographies/centralafrica_touadera/ (accessed on 3 September 2021).

Larin, Nikolay. "Biznes na krovi. Chto izvestno o rossiyskikh chastnykh voyennykh kompaniyakh," Forbes, August 2, 2018. <https://www.forbes.ru/biznes/365421-biznes-na-krovi-chto-izvestno-o-rossiyskih-chastnyh-voennyh-kompaniyah> (accessed on 25 August 2021).

Losh, Jack and Owen Mathews. "Battle for Africa': Russia Pushes Into 'Free Country for the Taking' In Attempt to Rival the West," Newsweek, September 8, 2018 <https://www.newsweek.com/2018/08/17/russia-a-putin-africa-kremlin-central-republic-devastated-power-dynamic-1061066.html> (accessed on 6 September 2021).

Martynenko, Ivan. "Tsentri "Dos'ye": k ubiystvu zhurnalistov v TSAR prichastna CHVK "povara Putina," Radio Svoboda, yanvar' 10, 2019, <https://www.svoboda.org/a/29701584.html> (accessed on 6 September 2021).

Private Military Company in the Russian Manner: the Wagner Group and Business on the Blood in the Central African Republic

Meduza. "Rebyata, vy prednaznacheny dlya voyny," December 1, 2020
<https://meduza.io/feature/2020/12/01/rebyata-vy-prednaznacheny-dlya-voyny> (accessed on 27 August 2021).

Meeting with President of the Central African Republic Faustin Arrange Touadera
<http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/57534> (accessed on 5 September 2021).

Murtazin, Irek. "CHVK v Rossii — kak seks v SSSR," Novaya Gazeta, August 7, 2020
<https://novayagazeta.ru/articles/2020/08/06/86552-chvk-v-rossii-kak-seks-v-sssr> (accessed on 26 August 2021).

Murtazin, Irek. "Ikh prosto net. Rassledovaniye," Novaya Gazeta October 9, 2017
<https://novayagazeta.ru/articles/2017/10/09/74125-ih-prosto-net> (accessed on 27 August 2021).

Novaya Gazeta. "Kazni, iznasilovaniya, grabezhi," May 4, 2021
<https://novayagazeta.ru/articles/2021/05/04/kazni-iznasilovaniia-grabezhi> (accessed on 6 September 2021).

Ourdan, Rémy. "Soldats, mercenaires et conseillers russes se multiplient dans la capitale centrafricaine," Le Monde, April 23, 2018
<https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2018/04/23/la-russie-installe-peu-a-peu-sa-presence-dans-la-capitale->

[centrafricaine_5289462_3212.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2018/04/23/la-russie-installe-peu-a-peu-sa-presence-dans-la-capitale-centrafricaine_5289462_3212.html) (accessed on 5 September 2021).

Ourdan, Remy. "V stolitse Tsentral'noafrikanskoj respubliki rastet chislo rossiyskikh soldat, nayemnikov i sovetnikov," Le Monde, April 24, 2018
<https://www.inopressa.ru/pwa/article/24Apr2018/lemonde/afrique.html> (accessed on 5 September 2021).

Reynolds, Nathaniel. "Putin's Not-So-Secret Mercenaries: Patronage, Geopolitics, and the Wagner Group," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2019.

Reynolds, Nathaniel. "Putin's Not-So-Secret Mercenaries: Patronage, Geopolitics, and the Wagner Group," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2019.

RIA Novosti, "V TSAR ne isklyuchili razmeshcheniya rossiyskoj bazy," yanvar' 10, 2019
<https://ria.ru/20190110/1549168209.html> (accessed on 5 September 2021).

RIA Novosti. "Putin podderzhal ideyu sozdaniya v Rossii chastnykh voyennykh kompaniy"
<https://ria.ru/20120411/623227984.html> (accessed on 26 August 2021).

RIA Novosti. "SMI: rossiyskiye voyennyje eksperty khotyat sozdat' kontseptsiyu "myagkoy sily,"
<https://ria.ru/20160301/1382237782.html> (accessed on 25 August 2021).

ANALYSIS

Ross, Aaron. "How Russia Moved Into Sub-Saharan Africa," The Moscow Times, October 17, 2018
<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2018/10/17/how-russia-moved-into-sub-saharan-africa-a63213> (accessed on 6 September 2021).

Safronov, Yuriy. "Chto delayut v TSAR rossiyskiye «instruktory," Novaya Gazeta, dekabr' 24, 2020
<https://novayagazeta.ru/articles/2020/12/24/88515-chto-delayut-v-tsar-rossiyskie-naemniki> (accessed on 6 September 2021).

Sukhankin, Sergey. "Continuing War by Other Means': The Case of Wagner, Russia's Premier Private Military Company in the Middle East," in *Russia in the Middle East*, ed. Theodore Karasik and Stephen Blank (Washington: The Jamestown Foundation, 2018).

Sukhankin, Sergey. "War, Business and Ideology: How Russian Private Military Contractors Pursue Moscow's Interests," the Jamestown Foundation, March 20, 2019.

Sukharin, Sergey. "Rossiyskiye chastnyye voyennyye kompanii v subsakharskoy Afrike: rol', preimushchestva i ogranicheniya," *Russie.Nei.Vision 120*, Notes de L'Ifri, september, 2020.

United Nations Human Rights. "RCA : Les experts s'alarment de l'utilisation par le gouvernement de " formateurs russes " et des contacts étroits avec les soldats de la paix de l'ONU"
<https://www.ohchr.org/FR/NewsEvents/Pages>

Issue 37 (September 2021)

[/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=26961&LangID=F](#) (accessed on 6 September 2021).