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Video Glorifying Russian Mercenaries in Syria Trends on YouTube

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Screenshot Youtube / Russkoe Nebo

A rap glorifying a notorious mercenary group linked to Russia's conflicts in Ukraine and Syria is trending on Russian YouTube this week.

Although mercenaries are banned under Russian law, the Wagner private contractor — named after the nom de guerre of its founder Dmitry Utkin — is believed to have played central roles in conflicts in Ukraine and Syria.

Embed:

Utkin is reported to have been on the guest list of a Kremlin banquet last year and was spotted receiving a medal at a state ceremony in December.

By Wednesday morning, the video had amassed more than 450,000 views.

Titled "To Our Heroes: PMC Wagner - Who Defend the World From Terrorists in Syria" the

song copies a well-known refrain from the legendary rock singer Viktor Tsoi's 1980s song "Kukushka."

The video shows numerous desert scenes with demolished buildings and soldiers firing on targets and references the capture of the Syrian city of Palmyra and killing jihadists.

According to an Oct. 16 report by the independent investigators at the Conflict Intelligence Team, at least seven Wagner contractors have died fighting in Syria. The Russian Defense Ministry does not acknowledge their presence in the war or their deaths.

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