

Alleged Mastermind of Kremlin Troll Factory Denies Involvement in U.S. Elections

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Dmitry Prigozhin (Mikhail Metzler / TASS)

Russian businessman Dmitry Prigozhin has [denied](#) ties to the infamous Kremlin troll factory suspected of being behind Russian meddling in U.S. presidential elections last year.

A St. Petersburg native, Prigozhin's ties to the Kremlin go back to hosting dinner receptions for President Vladimir Putin in the early 2000s. He is [reportedly](#) an investor in the private military contractor Wagner and the alleged owner of the St. Petersburg-based Internet Research Agency, also known as the "Kremlin's troll factory."

The U.S. Treasury added Concord Management and Consulting and Concord Catering to its list of sanctioned companies in June after identifying Prigozhin as the "owner or controller" of both entities.

U.S. authorities suspect the business of being behind hundreds of fake Facebook and Twitter accounts that reached tens of millions of Americans during the 2016 election campaign that saw Donald Trump win the White House.

Related article: [Russia's Infamous 'Troll Factory' Is Now Posing as a Media Empire](#)

Wagner has reportedly taken part in combat operations in eastern Ukraine and Syria.

In his first public statement since the news broke, Prigozhin refuted a connection to the troll factory and expressed bewilderment at the prospect of further punitive actions by the U.S. government.

"Neither the company Concord nor other structures owned by the businessman are in any way connected to activity designed to interfere with the American elections," Prigozhin's spokesperson told the RBC business outlet.

"We do not know the reasons for the possible introduction of new sanctions on the part of the U.S. (government)."

The U.S. placed Prigozhin on its sanctions list in 2016 and added Concord Management and Consulting, as well as and Concord Catering, to its list of prohibited companies in June 2017.

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