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# Bomb Kills 2 CAR Police, 3 Russian Paramilitaries: Govt

By AFP

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EPA **EPA**

A military convoy struck a roadside bomb in the northwest of the conflict-wracked Central African Republic, leaving two policemen and three Russian paramilitaries dead, the government said Sunday.

"Three Russian allies and two Central African police officers were killed," government spokesman Ange Maxime Kazagui told AFP, while UN sources said the attack Thursday also wounded five members of the Central African security forces.

They said the convoy was blown up on the road between Berberati and Bouar, more than 400 kilometers (250 miles) from the capital Bangui.

A Russian helicopter was sent to the scene to recover the victims' bodies and the wounded, the sources said.

Moscow, which wields significant influence in the poor African nation, has since 2018 maintained a large contingent of "instructors" to train the Central African army.

They were joined last December by hundreds more Russian paramilitaries, along with Rwandan troops, who were key in aiding President Faustin Archange Touadera's army to thwart a rebellion.

Bangui referred to the Russian "military" in a bilateral defence accord, before Moscow corrected it by referring to them as "instructors".

Numerous witnesses and NGOs say the instructors are in fact paramilitaries from the Wagner Group, a shadowy private military company that is actively participating in the fight against CAR rebels, alongside Rwandan special forces and UN peacekeepers.

The nation of 4.7 million has been gripped by civil war since a coalition of armed groups overthrew the government in 2013.

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