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Gaddafi's Son Wanted Over Russian Mercenary War Crimes in Libya – BBC

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Saif al-Islam Gaddafi is reportedly wanted in connection to war crimes committed during strongman Khalifa Haftar's offensive against Tripoli. **AP / TASS**

Libya's UN-backed government has issued an arrest warrant for toppled dictator Muammar Gaddafi's son on charges of war crimes allegedly committed by shadowy Russian mercenaries, the BBC reported Friday.

The order for Saif al-Islam Gaddafi's arrest was made public after the British broadcaster published an investigation into possible war crimes committed by the Russian private military contractor known as Wagner.

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Citing a tablet allegedly left behind by a Wagner fighter near Tripoli and interviews with two former fighters, BBC said the group was involved in extrajudicial killings of prisoners and the mining and booby-trapping of civilian areas.

According to the BBC, Gaddafi is wanted in connection to war crimes committed during strongman Khalifa Haftar's offensive against Tripoli. Deputy public prosecutor Mohamed Gharouda reportedly circulated the arrest warrant internally to security bodies on Aug. 5 and then made it public following the investigation's release.

Yevgeny Prigozhin, a catering magnate with close ties to President Vladimir Putin and who is linked to Wagner, called the report on human rights violations by Russians in Libya "an absolute lie." A spokesperson for Prigozhin denied his links to Wagner.

A U.S.- and EU-sanctioned company owned by Prigozhin paid two Russian operatives $500,000 late last year after their release from 18 months of captivity on vote-meddling charges.

Russia's Foreign Ministry rejected the details about Wagner in Libya as based on "rigged data" aimed at "discrediting Russia's policy" in the oil-rich North African country.

Moscow has backed Haftar in his fight to seize power from Libya's Government of National Accord.

Gaddafi, the son of Libya's longtime dictator who was toppled in 2011, was sentenced to death in absentia over the killings of protesters and is wanted by the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity.

Russia denies having any links between Wagner and the state.

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