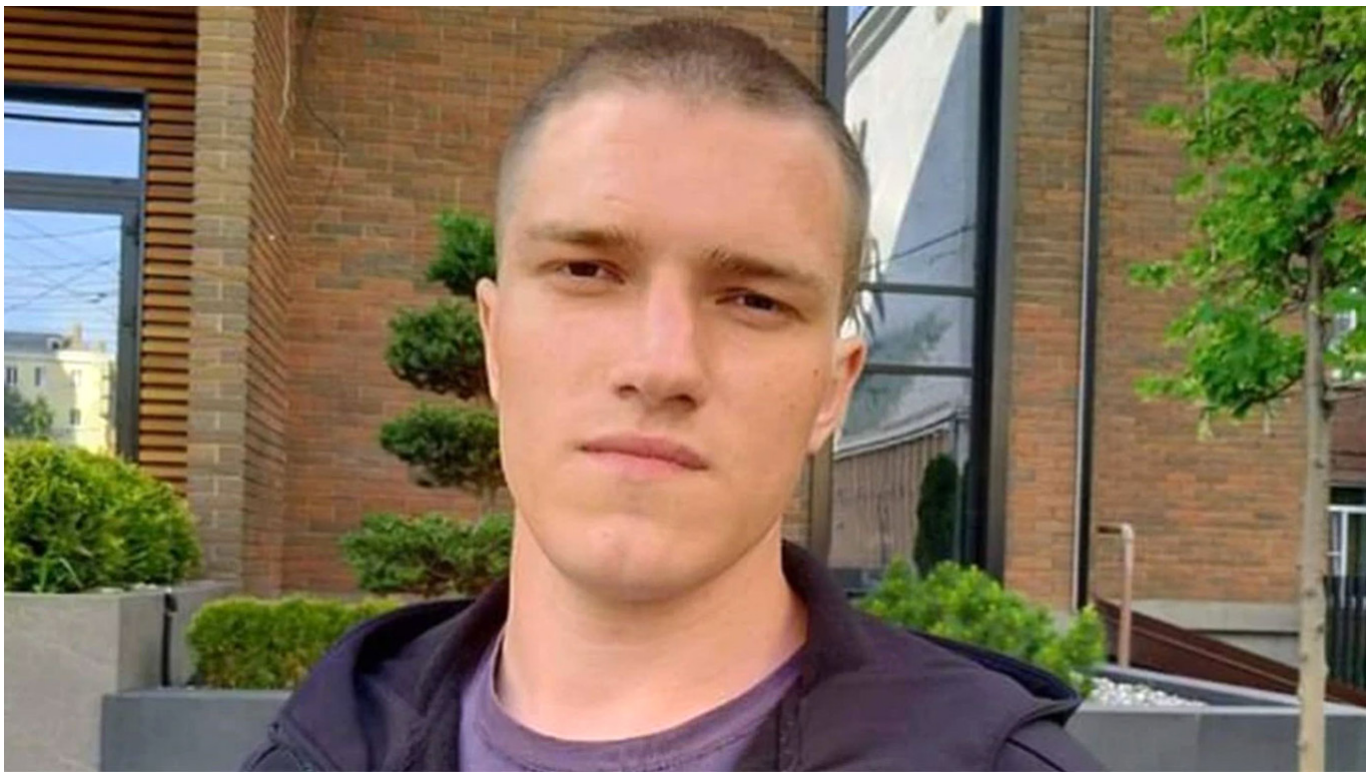
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Russian Ex-Wagner Commander Flees to Norway, Seeks Asylum – Reports

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Andrey Medvedev. **Andrey Medvedev / VK**

A former commander for Russia's Wagner private military group who claims to have witnessed several extrajudicial killings has fled to Norway and requested asylum, Russian activists and Norwegian media reported.

"I heard dogs barking [and] two bullets flying near me," the man identified as Andrei Medvedev said of his dramatic journey across the Russian-Norwegian border late last week to the human rights NGO Gulagu.net.

Norwegian media said Medvedev, whose identity was not known at the time, was detained after illegally crossing the Russia-Norway border last Friday.

Lawyer Jens Bernhard Herstad confirmed to Norway's Verdens Gang daily Sunday that the man who crossed the border was Medvedev.

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Gulagu.net claimed that Medvedev led the unit of Yevgeny Nuzhin, a convicted murderer recruited by Wagner who was recaptured by the group after he surrendered to Ukrainian forces. Gruesome video footage published in November showed Nuzhin being bludgeoned to death with a sledgehammer by a Wagner fighter.

Gulagu.net claimed that Medvedev, who hails from the Siberian region of Tomsk, had left Wagner upon the expiration of a four-month contract he had signed in early July 2022.

Medvedev previously appeared on camera in mid-December claiming to have witnessed Wagner soldiers carrying out several extrajudicial killings against comrades who refused to go into battle in Ukraine.

Medvedev is already testifying against Wagner founder Yevgeny Prigozhin and about the alleged extrajudicial killings, according to Gulagu.net.

He is the first Wagner unit commander to have fled to Europe and expressed readiness to provide testimony on its alleged crimes, Gulagu.net founder Vladimir Osechkin said.

Wagner, which operated in the shadows for years before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, has seen its public profile grow for its role in supplementing the undersupplied and ill-equipped Russian army in Ukraine.

Prigozhin, a St. Petersburg business magnate often referred to as "Putin's chef" for his longtime role supplying catering to the Kremlin, confirmed that he founded Wagner in September.

The United States has issued a federal arrest warrant for Prigozhin on charges of alleged interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. Prigozhin last fall admitted to interfering in the U.S. elections after years of denials and defamation lawsuits against journalists.

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