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# Serbia Asks Russia to End Local Recruitment For War in Ukraine

January 17, 2023



Serbia's President Aleksandar Vucic. **Darko Vojinovic / AP / TASS**

The Serbian government has asked Moscow to end its attempts to recruit Serbs to fight in Ukraine as part of the Wagner mercenary group, Reuters reported on Tuesday.

"Why do you, from Wagner, call anyone from Serbia when you know that it is against our laws?" Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic asked rhetorically during a TV broadcast late on Monday.

Vucic was also critical of Russian websites and social media groups for publishing material in Serbian calling on Serbs to join Wagner, the controversial military group founded by Yevgeny Prigozhin, a close ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

It's illegal under Serbian law for its citizens to fight in conflicts abroad.

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On Tuesday, Russia's RIA Novosti news agency posted a video of two masked men at a weapons training range in the Kremlin-annexed parts of Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia region, identifying them as Serbian volunteers.

Serbian volunteers took part in fighting in eastern Ukraine alongside pro-Russian forces in 2014 and 2015, Reuters reported.

Vucic denied allegations that Wagner had a presence in Serbia.

Serbian Defense Minister Milos Vucevic also warned Serbs against joining Russian forces in the war against Kyiv, adding in an interview with Radio Free Europe that "this will result in legal consequences."

While Belgrade has condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine, it has not joined the European Union in imposing sanctions on Moscow, despite its bid to join the bloc.

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