

U.S. Deems Russia's Wagner Group 'Transnational Criminal Organization'

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Wagner's St. Petersburg offices **AP**

The U.S. Treasury Department declared Russia's shadowy Wagner Group a “transnational criminal organization” and imposed fresh sanctions on several other Russian political and business figures, according to a [statement](#) released on Thursday.

“Today’s expanded sanctions on Wagner, as well as new sanctions on their associates and other companies enabling the Russian military complex, will further impede Putin’s ability to arm and equip his war machine,” Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said.

Wagner, a controversial mercenary organization founded by business magnate Yevgeny Prigozhin, has for years supplied fighters to multiple conflicts in Africa and the Middle East. The group has come to particular prominence in the past year due to its growing role in supplying forces to fight alongside the Russian military in Ukraine, including arranging commuted sentences for prisoners who agree to be deployed to the frontlines.

Six individuals and 12 companies considered by Washington to be associated with Wagner and

Prigozhin, who is a close associate of Russian President Vladimir Putin, have also been sanctioned according to the press release.

Other sanctioned companies include the Almaz-Antey Corporation, a state-owned developer and manufacturer of air defense systems, and Sewa Security Services, which reportedly represents the interests of the Wagner Group in Central Africa.

The U.S. first imposed sanctions on Wagner back in 2017 but tightened them further in December due to its involvement in combat operations in Ukraine.

Also included on the list were several prominent Russian politicians and businesspeople with no known links to Wagner, including Russia's Deputy Prime Minister and Trade and Industry Minister Denis Manturov, the head of the Russian republic of Tatarstan Rustam Minnikhanov, and telecommunications billionaire Sergei Adoniev.

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