

Prigozhin Claims 'Deception' and 'Threats' from Defense Ministry

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Prigozhin has filmed several diatribes against Russia's Defense Ministry in recent days. **Screen grab / Prigozhin's press center**

Wagner Group leader Yevgeny Prigozhin said Tuesday that he had received a letter from Russia's Defense Ministry threatening to charge his mercenary outfit with treason if they withdrew from Bakhmut, for months the focal point of Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

In a video published on the messaging app Telegram as Russia kicked off Victory Day celebrations, he also claimed that Wagner fighters had yet to receive ammunition promised to them by the Russian military.

"They simply and brazenly deceived us," he said.

Prigozhin last week threatened to pull his mercenaries out of Bakhmut after suffering losses due to ammunition shortages, but on Sunday he said that he had received a "promise" of more ammunition from the Russian army.

Related article: [Wagner Group to Get More Ammo After Bakhmut Pull-Out Threat](#)

Wagner has taken a leading role in the fighting for the eastern Ukrainian city of Bakhmut since the summer of 2022, which has still not been fully seized by Russia despite the loss of thousands of lives on both sides.

In the Tuesday video, Prigozhin also claimed that Russian army units had fled their positions in the war-torn eastern Ukrainian city because of “stupid” and “criminal” orders handed down by senior military commanders.

"Soldiers should not die because of the absolute stupidity of their leadership," he said.

Prigozhin claimed Ukrainian forces were currently “tearing up the flanks” in Bakhmut, while also regrouping in nearby Zaporizhzhia to launch a long-anticipated counter-offensive.

“They are absolutely clear: the counter-offensive will be on the ground, not on television,” Prigozhin warned.

However, Prigozhin said Wagner fighters will not leave Bakhmut for the time being.

“Let’s fight, and then we’ll figure it out,” he said.

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