

# Russian Officer Accuses Wagner of Torture, Disinformation

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Russian Lieutenant Colonel Roman Vinivitin. **Video grab**

A Russian officer has [accused](#) the Wagner mercenary group of conducting a “cynical” campaign to discredit the conventional Russian army during efforts to capture eastern Ukraine’s Bakhmut.

Lieutenant Colonel Roman Vinivitin first appeared in a Wagner video this week confessing to firing at a Wagner vehicle on orders to disarm its rapid response unit. Wagner leader Yevgeny Prigozhin, who has publicly feuded with the Russian military, also published a document describing a firefight with Vinivitin’s unit and accusing it of mining Wagner’s rear positions near Bakhmut in mid-May.

In a video published on social media Thursday, Vinivitin denounced Prigozhin’s sabotage accusations as “a product of the Wagner PR service’s delusional mind” and said his confession was filmed under duress.

“Yevgeny Viktorovich [Prigozhin], you are openly discrediting the Russian Armed Forces,”

Vinivitin said in the video first shared by the Ostorozhno, Novosti news channel on Telegram.

“Discrediting” the Russian military is a crime under laws passed shortly after the invasion of Ukraine.

### **Embed:**

Russian colonel Vinivitin who has been taken prisoner by Wagner PMC, has shared details about the conflict of soldiers from his brigade with Wagner mercenaries.

"Wagners kidnapped my fighters, staff military. They used them as slaves. One of them, after being beaten up and... [pic.twitter.com/bz6BSLbbuD](https://pic.twitter.com/bz6BSLbbuD)

— Anton Gerashchenko (@Gerashchenko\_en) [June 8, 2023](#)

“The Russian Armed Forces did not mine the [private military company’s] rear,” he added. “The mercenaries have no rear lines, my now-former brigade has them.”

In an account challenging Prigozhin’s version of the story, Vinivitin said his troops had disarmed Wagner fighters that had blocked him as he toured his units.

“[Wagner] subsequently captured me, kept me in a basement and abused me,” Vinivitin said, describing being deprived of sleep and threatened with being shot.

### **Related article:** [Wagner Captures Russian Soldier Accused of Firing on Its Positions](#)

The officer noted that “tensions” between his unit and Wagner emerged “from the first days of our deployment” and spilled out into the periodic torture of his soldiers.

Wagner had “provoked our soldiers into conflicts, threatened murder, forced them to sign contracts with the company and stole military equipment as trophies,” Vinivitin said.

Neither Vinivitin nor Prigozhin’s claims could be independently verified.

Ostorozhno, Novosti, which was founded by media personality Ksenia Sobchak, said it received Vinivitin’s 11-minute video from an anonymous email address.

Toward the video’s end, Vinivitin accused Wagner of “spreading anarchism on the frontlines,” which he said was the result of “a game of the political elite.”

“Instead of propping up our president, [the elite] is trying to weaken him and I’m confident that it’s a temporary phenomenon.”

“As the state becomes stronger,” Vinivitin said, “extravagant field commanders [like Prigozhin] fade into existence.”

“Russia will win in this war against Ukraine and NATO. There’s no other way, but not thanks to a single private, magical, fashionable military company, but thanks to unity around the Russian president, the Armed Forces and all of society.”

Prigozhin’s press service has not yet responded to Vinivitin’s accusations as of Thursday afternoon.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/06/08/russian-officer-accuses-wagner-of-torture-disinformation-a81444>