The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

# How Are Officials, Pro-War Bloggers Reacting to Prigozhin's Threat Against Russian Defense Ministry?

June 24, 2023



**t.me/Prigozhin_hat**

Russia's FSB security service on Friday charged the Wagner mercenary group's leader Yevgeny Prigozhin with calls to stage "an armed mutiny" after he pledged to resist Moscow's military leadership.

Prigozhin earlier accused Russia of killing a "huge number" of Wagner's forces in strikes and vowed to retaliate, bringing tensions between Moscow's conventional military and the private military company to their highest point yet.

The Moscow Times has collected the key reactions to the incident as of late Friday:

**President Vladimir Putin**

The Kremlin said that Putin was aware of Wagner's claims that Russian forces attacked a base belonging to the private fighting outfit, adding that "necessary measures" were being taken.

"President Putin has been made aware of all the events surrounding Prigozhin. All necessary measures are being taken," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said in comments carried by Russian news agencies.

**Related article**: Prigozhin Charged With 'Inciting Armed Revolt' After Vowing to Stop 'Evil' Military Leadership

Peskov later said that Putin was being "constantly" informed on the measures taken in response to the "attempted armed rebellion."

"The Defense Ministry, the FSB, the Interior Ministry and the National Guard are reporting to the president constantly, around the clock," Peskov said in comments carried by state news agencies.

**Russia's Defense Ministry**

The Defense Ministry said that Prigozhin's statements "do not correspond to reality," calling them a "provocation."

"The Russian Armed Forces continue to carry out combat missions" in Ukraine, the ministry said in a Telegram post.

It later claimed that Ukrainian forces, "taking advantage of Prigozhin's provocation," had launched offensive operations near the eastern city of Bakhmut.

**The FSB**

The FSB called on Wagner fighters "not to carry out the criminal and treacherous orders of Prigozhin" and to take steps to detain him themselves.

"Prigozhin's statements and actions are in fact calls for the start of an armed civil conflict on the territory of Russia and are a 'stab in the back' to Russian servicemen," the FSB said in a statement published by the state-run RIA Novosti news agency.

**Russian General Sergei Surovikin, former commander of Russia's forces in Ukraine**

"It is necessary to lay down arms and return to the places of deployment and to solve all problems peacefully under the leadership of the Supreme Commander," Surovikin said in a video statement circulated on social media.

"The enemy is just waiting for the political situation in our country to deteriorate. It's wrong to play into the enemy's hands during these difficult times," he said.

"We are of the same blood. We are warriors. I urge you to stop."

**Russian pro-war bloggers**

"The country is on the verge of an attempted military coup. It's not yet clear who initiated it. It is possible that both warring factions of the 'party of power' are striving for it, with the neutrality of the third (the FSB and the Security Council)," said Igor Girkin, a Russian army

veteran and ex-FSB officer and the former defense minister of the self-proclaimed Donetsk people's republic in eastern Ukraine.

**Ukraine's military intelligence directorate chief**

"Prigozhin threatens to 'go on a march' to Moscow. [Defense Minister Sergei] Shoigu, according to him, fled from Rostov in order to not become a victim in the massacre," the chief of Ukraine's military intelligence directorate, Kyrylo Budanov, said in a Telegram post, adding that "Putin's fragile dictatorship has fallen."

*AFP contributed reporting.*

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/06/24/how-are-officials-pro-war-bloggers-reacting-to-prigozhins-threat-against-russian-defense-ministry-a81616