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Russian National Guard Eyes Tanks After Wagner Mutiny

By AFP

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Russian National Guard employees. **Sophia Sandurskaya / Moskva News Agency**

Russia's National Guard may be equipped with tanks and armored vehicles, it said Tuesday, after the army announced it was receiving military hardware from Wagner mercenaries following their failed uprising.

"We have no tanks or long-range heavy weapons. We will supply our forces with those depending on funding," guard head Viktor Zolotov was cited as saying by the Interfax news agency.

Formed in 2016 to bolster police in maintaining public order, and answerable to the Kremlin, the "Rosgvardiya" has since taken on a broader role, including by joining the offensive on Ukraine launched last February.

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His comments came hours after the Russian Defense Ministry announced it was preparing to receive seized military hardware from the Wagner group after their aborted march on Moscow.

The mercenary outfit captured military installations in the southern city of Rostov-on-Don before moving northwards to near the capital last weekend.

"We concentrated... all our forces on the outskirts of Moscow. Because if our forces had been scattered (Wagner) would have passed like a knife through butter," Zolotov said.

Zolotov, a former bodyguard of Russian President Vladimir Putin, also said he believes the mutiny was orchestrated from abroad.

"Everything was inspired by the West. Everything was organized there. I don't rule out the possibility that agents of the Western intelligence services were involved," Zolotov said, without providing evidence.

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