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Exiled Wagner Boss Shutters Patriot Media Group – Reports

June 30, 2023



Wagner Group founder Yevgeny Prigozhin. **Vladimir Zhabrikov / URA.RU / TASS**

Wagner mercenary group leader Yevgeny Prigozhin has closed down his St. Petersburg-based media holding, according to multiple media reports published Friday.

The Patriot media group, which Prigozhin founded in 2019, encompasses the Internet Research Agency, widely known as a "troll factory," which conducts online influence operations to advance Russia's business and political interests abroad.

All of the dozens of media outlets under Patriot's umbrella, including RIA FAN, People's News and Economics Today, will be permanently shut down, according to information published by Telegram news channel Mash.

The St. Petersburg-based news outlet Rotonda also reported, citing an anonymous source, that the Patriot media holding has been dissolved.

Prigozhin has not yet confirmed or denied the rumors about the closure of his media group.

Related article: Wagner Leader's Troll Factory Expects Takeover – Reports

The reports come just a day after independent business news website The Bell reported that Prigozhin's media outlets could be sold to the private media holding National Media Group (NMG).

NMG was founded by billionaire banker Yury Kovalchuk, a close ally of President Vladimir Putin, and Putin's alleged mistress Alina Kabayeva is the chair of its board of directors.

Patriot's work has been paralyzed for nearly a week after police raided its St. Petersburg headquarters during Wagner's "march of justice" last weekend, according to The Bell's sources.

Access to all of Prigozhin's news outlets had been blocked by state information watchdog Roskomnadzor earlier Friday. The agency did not state the reason behind its decision.

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