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Wagner Allowed to Keep African Businesses After Mutiny – Bloomberg

July 11, 2023



PMC Wagner mercenaries. **Erik Romanenko / TASS**

The Kremlin will allow Russia's Wagner mercenary outfit to keep its Central African Republic (CAR) businesses after mounting a failed mutiny at home, Bloomberg reported Monday, citing two anonymous sources with knowledge of the discussions.

Wagner-linked companies have been widely reported to run gold, timber and beer brewing operations in CAR for helping the former French colony fight off a rebel insurgency in recent years. Wagner fighters were at the same time accused of torturing and executing civilians in the CAR.

The deal allowing Wagner to hold onto its CAR foothold "has the support" of President Vladimir Putin, Bloomberg cited one of its sources as saying.

Putin will likely leave Wagner in charge of operations in other African countries that "pay for themselves" while seizing those that directly depend on Moscow as he assesses options, said another source.

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Sudan, a critical logistical corridor connecting Wagner's operations from Syria to Libya and further into Africa, is "the next big question" on Putin's agenda, according to Bloomberg. The Kremlin officially supports Sudan's military leadership while Wagner has been assisting rebels, according to the news agency.

Outsourcing military and commercial activities to Wagner has allowed Russia to extend its influence in resource-rich Africa while maintaining deniability.

Russia's Defense Ministry is not currently in a position to take over Wagner's operations in Africa amid its entanglement in Ukraine, Bloomberg notes.

Its report follows the Kremlin's disclosure that Putin had talks with Wagner founder Yevgeny Prigozhin and 34 other senior Wagner commanders on June 29, five days after their short-lived revolt.

Prigozhin's post-mutiny role in Africa has not been outlined in the report.

"Wagner will stay in Africa, that's for sure. But whom it will report to, Prigozhin or another oligarch, has yet to be decided," said the Kremlin-connected political consultant Sergei Markov.

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