

Apparent Wagner Chief Comments Defend Niger Coup

By [AFP](#)

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Rebels attack the headquarters of the Party of Democracy and Socialism of Niger of ousted President Mohamed Bazoum, in Niamey. [AFP](#)

A Russian organization affiliated with the Wagner mercenary group shared a message apparently from its boss Yevgeny Prigozhin, who said the events in Niger were part of the nation's fight against "colonizers."

The Officers' Union for International Security (OUIS), considered by Washington to be a front company for Wagner in the Central African Republic, on Thursday evening [shared](#) a message attributed to Prigozhin.

While the voice in the audio message resembles that of Prigozhin, AFP was unable to confirm its authenticity.

Prigozhin has been out of the public eye since the mercenary group's short-lived rebellion

against Russia's top military brass last month.

"What happened in Niger is nothing more than the struggle of the people of Niger against colonizers, who tried to impose their own rules of life," the message said.

The message noted "former colonizers are trying to keep the people of African countries in check" and "fill these countries with terrorists and various gangs, creating a colossal security crisis."

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"In order to maintain their actual slave system in the territories of these states, they deploy various foreign missions, which number tens of thousands of soldiers," the statement attributed to Prigozhin said.

It added that "these tens of thousands of soldiers are not capable of protecting the population of sovereign states. The population is suffering."

Wagner has for years been a major player in the security sphere in Africa but its overseas operations have been called into question by its leader's failed revolt.

Prigozhin hailed the "effectiveness" of the Wagner force saying a thousand of its fighters "are able to restore order and destroy terrorists, preventing them from harming the civilian population."

Niger's President Mohamed Bazoum has been confined to his residence since Wednesday by coup plotters in the west African nation.

The alleged statements from Prigozhin come as Russian President Vladimir Putin hosts African leaders for a Russia-Africa summit in his native St. Petersburg.

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