

Wagner's Recruitment Restart in Limbo, Prigozhin Says

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

Russia's Wagner mercenary outfit has not yet decided when to restart recruitment of new fighters, the group's founder Yevgeny Prigozhin [said](#) Monday.

At the beginning of July, Wagner [announced](#) a one-month recruitment suspension in the aftermath of its failed mutiny and as the Russian military's deadline for volunteer units to sign contracts passed.

But Prigozhin's comments published on the Wagner-affiliated Grey Zone Telegram channel suggested the private military outfit would likely extend the recruitment suspension.

"At the moment, the opening time of the recruitment centers has not yet been determined," he [in an audio message](#).

"We have no shortage of personnel for now, [so] we have no plans to recruit again," Prigozhin [added](#).

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Earlier this month, another Wagner-affiliated channel cited a senior commander [saying](#) that around 15,000 mercenaries had gone on vacation and another 10,000 deployed in neighboring Belarus.

In Monday's statement, Prigozhin hinted that work was underway on creating an "additional group to defend the interests of our country" and told future recruits to stay tuned.

Wagner's recruitment suspension had also raised questions about the outfit's operations in Africa and Syria, where the mercenaries have been accused of committing abuses.

In his audio message, Prigozhin said Wagner "continues its activities" in Africa, as well as neighboring Belarus, where the group has been sent after its short-lived march on Moscow to topple Russia's military leadership.

A deal brokered by Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko spared Prigozhin criminal mutiny charges in exchange for moving to Belarus.

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