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U.K. Sanctions Russian Mercenary Groups, Salisbury Poisoning Suspect

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Wagner fighter in Africa. © **Wagner group**

The United Kingdom on Thursday introduced a new round of sanctions targeting Russia's military, private mercenary groups and an intelligence agent suspected of involvement in the 2018 Novichok poisoning in Salisbury.

"New targets include suppliers supporting Russia's military production, Russian-backed mercenary groups operating in Sub-Saharan Africa and a GRU agent involved in the use of a Novichok nerve agent in Salisbury," the U.K. Foreign Office said in a statement.

The sanctions include 28 suppliers of machine tools, microelectronics, drone components and other military goods. These entities are based in China, Turkey, Central Asia and Estonia.

"These sanctions will directly target the supply of goods to Russia's military and constrain vital resources crucial to conduct [President Vladimir] Putin's illegal war in Ukraine," the U.K. Foreign Office added.

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Mercenary-related sanctions target three Kremlin-linked private military groups, three companies affiliated with the Wagner Group and 11 individuals accused of threatening peace and security in Libya, Mali and the Central African Republic, as well as committing human rights abuses across Africa.

The Foreign Office noted that Britain is the first G7 country to sanction Africa Corps, an umbrella organization overseeing security operations in Africa following the reorganization of Wagner after its leader Yevgeny Prigozhin died in a plane crash last year.

The final set of sanctions targets Denis Sergeev, identified by British police in 2021 as "Sergey Fedotov," a Russian GRU agent linked to the Novichok attack on former double agent Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia in March 2018.

The poisoning left a police officer seriously ill, and a local woman who came into contact with the nerve agent later died.

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