



**Permanent Mission of Ukraine**  
to the International Organizations in Vienna

**Statement by the Representative of Security Service of Ukraine Mr. Mykola Bezrodnov at the 949<sup>th</sup> FSC Plenary Meeting on Private Military and Security Companies**

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(Agenda item 1)

Mr. Chairperson,

The hybrid aggression waged by the Russian Federation on the world's democratic countries, in particular against Ukraine, includes military operations in addition to informational, political and economic activities.

Along with this, the Russian leadership publicly denies the presence of aggressor-country military units on the territory of other states. "Cover legends", which are prepared in advance, are used for the information space: military personnel "on vacation", "lost", "volunteers", "private military company" upon the exposure of such armed units.

The so-called "Wagner Private Military Company" is the most large-scale example of Russia's enacting of such armed units. It is a non-staff military unit of the General Directorate of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces, which is under complete control of Russia's top military and political command.

The main difference between those armed formations enacted by the Russian Federation and true private military companies is that such a company does not officially exist (not in a register of legal entities, neither in the Russian Federation, nor in any other country). Moreover, the organizational and staffing structure of the so-called "Wagner Private Military Company" fully corresponds to that of GRU regular units (structure of the forward tactical group - 6 companies, reinforced by tank platoons, artillery, mortars, MLRS (Multiple Launch Rocket System), anti-aircraft defense, snipers, Electronic Warfare etc.).

Military transport aircraft and vessels of the Russian Federation Navy are used for logistics purposes.

The amendments to the Russian legislation, introduced by the Russian President Vladimir Putin's Decree № 506 as of September 3, 2018, which classified the information concerning the non-staff units performing the tasks of foreign intelligence agencies of the Ministry of Defense, came into force in September,

2018. This once again underscored the real legal status of the so-called "Wagner Private Military Company" as a non-staff unit.

Since the end of May 2014, the so-called "Wagner group", in the status of a non-staff unit of the Russian Federation's GRU, began its activities in Ukraine (the downing of the IL-76 aircraft, Ukrainian Air Forces, assault of the "Luhansk" airport, participation in the hostilities near Debaltseve, Sanzharivka, Utkine). At the same time, the SSU revealed that many Russian citizens, who were members of Wagner Private Military Company since May 2014, entered the Autonomous Republic of Crimea through the Kavkaz-Kerch ferry in February 2014.

The Private Military Company Wagner, after completing tasks on the territory of Ukraine in August 2015, was withdrawn from Ukrainian territory and in the number of 1,350 people, who were transferred to Syria in support of the dictatorial regime of Assad. Subsequently, the permanent contingent of Wagner Private Military Company was increased to almost 3 thousand people.

After the reduction of field operations in Syria, part of the so-called "Wagner Private Military Company" units (from 1 to 4 companies, depending on the needs of a particular period of time) were transferred to support African countries regimes of Kremlin's geopolitical interest (Sudan, CAR, Libya and others).

The regular rotation of personnel from Syria to African countries are performed, in particular, by the "223rd Flight Detachment" of the Russian Defense Ministry. At the same time, foreign passports were issued to personnel for cover purposes. By the way, the foreign passports issued to the Wagner staff, as well as to the GRU officers "Petrov" and "Boshirov", who carried out the terrorist attack in Salisbury, differs only in the last figures in the number.

Structures belonging to Yevhen Prigozhin are used to covertly finance the so-called "Wagner Private Military Company" directly from the Russian state budget. His official companies receive multibillion-dollar government funding from the RF Defense Ministry. Such funding is used to financially support the so-called "Wagner Group" units. There is a detailed scheme of the "business empire" in the investigations: <https://is.gd/V7zQbL>, <https://is.gd/oi321F>.

All evidence concerning the units of so-called "Wagner Private Military Company" involvement in hostilities on the territory of Ukraine and other countries, terrorist acts, are collected and available on the official website of the Security Service of Ukraine (<https://ssu.gov.ua/en/pages/304>).

Thank you.