

Abstract

The Wagner Group is an umbrella term referring to a network of mercenary groups, extraction companies, and political strategists linked to the Kremlin by oligarch Yevgeny Prigozhin. Wagner has spread throughout Africa, the Middle East, and South America. Characterized by obscured activities and denied by the Kremlin, Wagner escapes conventional definitions of a Private Military and Security Company (PMSC) in both practice and theory. The pervasive labelling of Wagner as a “PMC” makes it difficult to effectively engage with the group at either an academic or policy level. Therefore, a scholarship situating Wagner in relation to PMSC literature would provide a platform to address Wagner across academic and political platforms. This project aims to fill that gap by situating Wagner in relation to current PMSC and mercenary literature. This will be accomplished by an extensive review of the current literature, followed by synthesizing PMSC definitions and categories that are relevant into the contemporary field. Once this has been established a comparative analysis of a variety of the Wagner Group’s global activities will allow us to assess where Wagner sits amongst these definitions and categories. Addressing this gap in the literature will provide a new and effective platform for engaging with Wagner and an academic level, as well as providing a significantly clearer lens from which to examine them