

Russian Private Military Companies: Continuity and Evolution of the Model

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Articles & Testimony

In a bid to ensure plausible deniability, address internal rivalries, and advance its competition with the West, the Kremlin has increased its use of such contractors in the Middle East and elsewhere.

The following is an excerpt from a study originally published as part of FPRI's Russian Foreign Policy Paper series. To read the full study, download the PDF or visit [the FPRI website](https://www.fpri.org/article/2019/12/russian-private-military-companies-continuity-and-evolution-of-the-model/)

[\(https://www.fpri.org/article/2019/12/russian-private-military-companies-continuity-and-evolution-of-the-model/\)](https://www.fpri.org/article/2019/12/russian-private-military-companies-continuity-and-evolution-of-the-model/).

Russian private military companies have received much attention in recent years, due in part to their use in hot zones such as Syria and Libya. Although the Russian state has a long history of using such groups, the model has been evolving and expanding under Vladimir Putin, paradoxically highlighting the state's strength and weakness alike. This in-depth study reviews the history of these semi-state military forces and explains the unique way Moscow deploys them, which is different from how Western governments use private contractors. The study then traces the model's rise under Putin, reviewing PMC activities in Ukraine, Syria, and Africa while examining who joins these organizations and why...



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