



Latest update date 19 July 2021

Yevgeny Prigozhin

Person

All actors • Russia

Official position/function regarding the conflict

Yevgeny Prigozhin is a businessman, one of those close to President Putin. Officially, Prigozhin's structures are involved in construction, development, catering for schools, catering for senior officials, and for high-level official events (for which he was nicknamed "Putin's chef"). Unofficially, the circle of affairs of Prigozhin's shadow empire is much wider.

Prigozhin's functions in relation to the conflict are in his tacit support of covert operations on the territory of Ukraine, as well as in the creation and financing of formations of professional mercenary fighters – private military companies (PMCs), including those participating in hostilities in Donbas.

[Since 2016, Prigozhin, a number of employees of the "troll factory" and his companies have been included in the U.S. sanction list. This list is being supplemented. The last time agents of Prigozhin's media were included in the list was in July 2020. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, VKontakte, and YouTube are clearing out fake troll accounts and blocking new ones.](#)

Interests/goals in the conflict region

Prigozhin's activities in relation to the conflict are aimed at supporting hybrid warfare by military and non-military means.

Actions regarding the conflict

As a close friend of the President, Prigozhin is entrusted with the most serious and delicate assignments, including:

1. "Military" operations - the creation and support of private military companies that are involved in hostilities in different parts of the world, incl. in Ukraine, carry out sabotage operations, guard strategic facilities (for example, oil pipelines in Syria).
2. "Non-military" operations - the creation and support of the "troll factory" and media factory" that are network organizations aimed at propaganda work in social networks, the creation of media, the purpose of which is to fight the Russian opposition, undermine democracy around the world, interfere in the affairs of other countries, including in elections (for example, the U.S. in 2016, etc.).

[This activity is not funded by the state directly, but is facilitated through the laundering of public funds - Prigozhin's structures receive large public contracts from the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation \(MO\), which are then used as private money. According to investigative journalists, the company is supervised by the Main Intelligence Directorate of the Ministry of Defense.](#)

[In 2014, the Wagner PMC militants, along with the paratroopers of the Black Sea Fleet, took part in the occupation of Crimea as "polite people:" they seized administrative facilities, disarmed Ukrainian military bases, etc. In 2014-2015, they participated in hostilities in Donbas.](#)

"Troll Factory" (official name is "Internet Investigation Agency") is a media structure created with the aim of spreading disinformation, influencing public opinion, discrediting the opposition, mainly on social networks. The agency uses fake accounts from which the "trolls" - paid employees, mostly young people 20-30 years old - share fake information through the network, provoke and insult other users, enter into a skirmish with them, defend the position of the authorities, in particular, on armed conflict in eastern Ukraine.