

Putin Condemns Wagner 'Mutiny' As 'Stab In The Back,' Vows Punishment For Rebellion

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Russian President Vladimir Putin promised punitive actions against those who have challenged his authority by questioning the war in Ukraine and occupying a key Russian military headquarters, accusing them of "treason" and "betrayal."

Putin's promises come as mercenary warlord Yevgeny Prigozhin and his Wagner military group have occupied Rostov-on-Don, Russia, after leaving their position in Ukraine. Prigozhin has sharply criticized the war in Ukraine, and British intelligence indicates that Prigozhin's men have taken control of Russia's military headquarters in Rostov-on-Don.

"All those who prepared the rebellion will suffer inevitable punishment," Putin said, according to the Associated Press. "The armed forces and other government agencies have received the necessary orders."

Video shows Prigozhin, accompanied by Wagner troops, in the Southern Military District headquarters in Rostov-on-Don yelling at Russia's Deputy Defense Minister Col. Gen. Yunus-bek B. Yevkurov and Deputy Military Intelligence Director Lt. Gen.

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A “counterterrorist regime” has been implemented in Moscow in response to the unrest, and Russian authorities have called for Prigozhin’s arrest.

“We are fighting against anarchy and capitulation. This internal mutiny is a mortal blow to us. It is a blow to our people as a whole,” Putin said. “These people who are responsible will certainly be brought to justice on behalf of our people,”

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said that the unrest revealed Russian weakness.

“Russia’s weakness is obvious. Full-scale weakness. And the longer Russia keeps its troops and mercenaries on our land, the more chaos, pain, and problems it will have for itself later,” he said. The Wagner Group previously took the important city of Bakhmut from Ukraine after months of severe fighting.

Putin referred to the opposition as a “stab in the back,” referencing the hostile relationship between Western nations and Russia. “The entire military, economic, and information machine of the West is waged against us,” Putin said.

Prigozhin referred to his move back into Russia as a “march of justice” and not a “military coup.” The mercenary has accused Russia’s military of killing 2,000 Wagner troops, saying his forces in Ukraine were bombed with rockets and artillery. He has since claimed to have shot down a Russian military helicopter.

“But we will destroy anyone who stands in our way,” he said, claiming that he had 25,000 men with him. “We are moving forward and will go until the end.”

Russia’s lower house of parliament speaker Vyacheslav Volodin said in a statement that the Wagner troops needed to go back to obeying Putin’s orders.

“Wagner fighters must make the only right choice: to be with their people, on the side of

the law, to protect the security and future of the Motherland, to follow the orders of the commander-in-chief," he said.

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