

Evgeny Prigozhin

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Evgeny Prigozhin is an ex-con who has served time in a Russian prison. He is also a thug and a bully who has plied his trade (leading the mercenary group, Wagner) across Africa for some years. Wagner, led by Prigozhin, has made millions by killing and destroying anything that stands in its way, for whatever a corrupt



government is prepared to pay. He and his hired thugs have made millions off the back of the suffering of others and, meanwhile, his propaganda machine has countered any negative criticism and public outrage.

While Wagner continued to plunder and pillage in Africa, the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian military has been a miserable failure from the outset; a so-called superpower that totally misread the intelligence from its intelligence sources. With the number of dead increasing by the day, Putin called in Prigozhin and his 50,000 plus Wagner Group fighters, many of whom are ex-convicts, murderers and criminals. Prigozhin returned to Russia a hero, as he saw it, to support Putin and Mother Russia in Ukraine.

What followed in Ukraine has been a bloodbath of beheading, killing and raping, leaving significant dead on both sides. The Wagner group made some headway for Russia in Ukraine – but the conflict between Prigozhin and Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu has grown. Numerous firefights have occurred between the Wagner mercenaries and the regular military.

Russia still hasn't been able to recover all that Putin had both promised and expected. Now that Ukraine is on the offensive, questions are being raised about the competence of various political leaders and the military leadership. As internal divisions in the Kremlin break out and Putin's power base continues to shrink and fragment, the scrabble for power begins.

The smell of power is a heady and intoxicating brew – and, without question, was tasted by Evgeny Prigozhin. Putin had previously tolerated the rantings and threats made by the man called 'Putin's chef' but his patience appears to have run out. The current confrontation is the most significant challenge to the Russian state. Could this be the beginning of the end?

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