



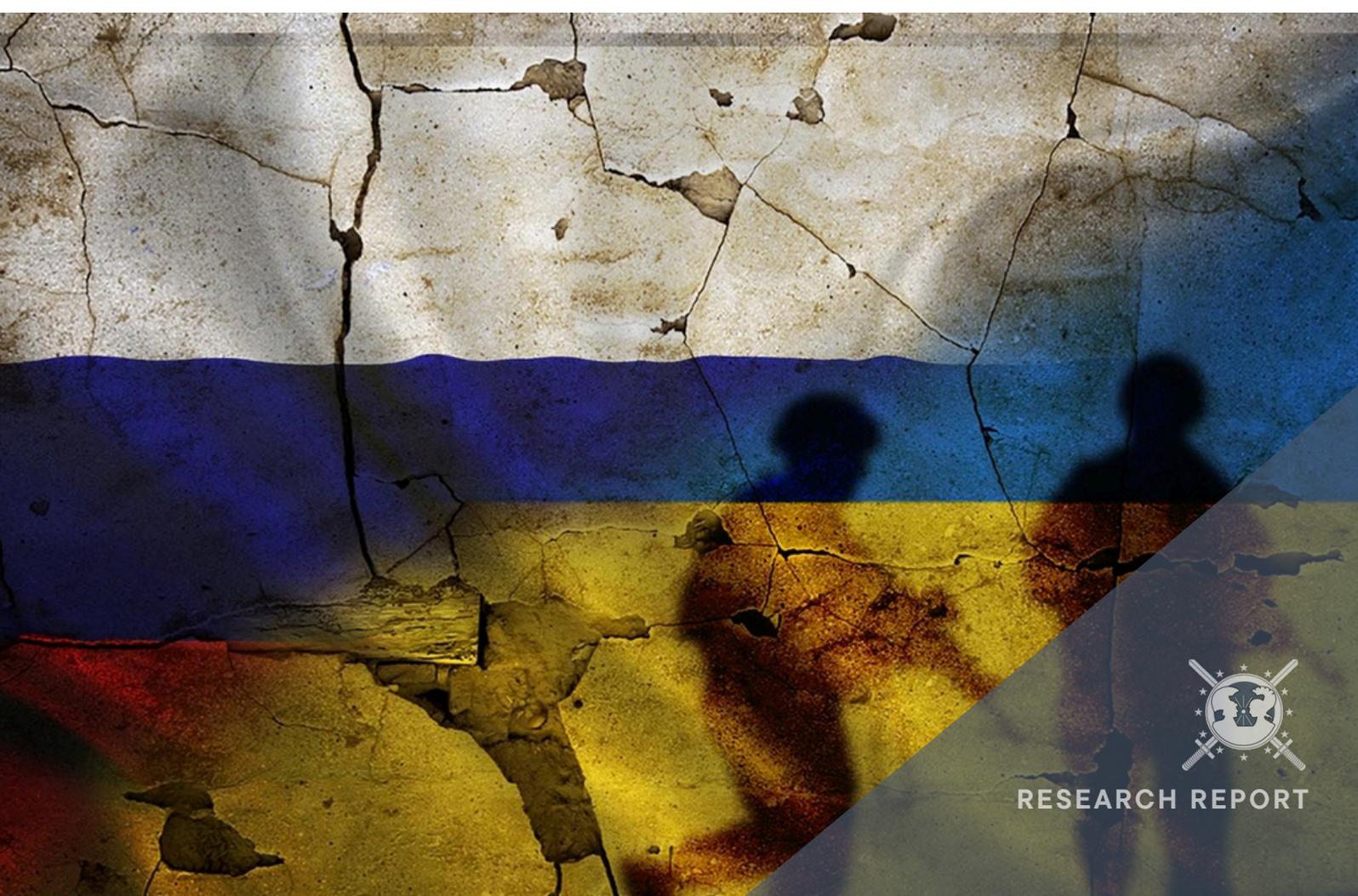
FINABEL
THE EUROPEAN LAND FORCE
COMMANDERS ORGANISATION

MARCH 2026

The Divergent Reliance on PMSCs in the Russo-Ukrainian War: A Comparative Analysis

Alberto Aloni

Defence & Security Research Department



RESEARCH REPORT



FINABEL
THE EUROPEAN LAND FORCE
COMMANDERS ORGANISATION

Defence & Security Research Department

Written by: **Alberto Aloni**

Supervised by: **Finn Seiffert, Élea Huguet**

Edited by: **Alexandra Huggins**

FINABEL's Research Reports are concise, research-driven publications designed to keep Europe's defence community informed about the latest strategic, military, and geopolitical developments. Released three times per week, these short-form papers offer timely analysis on emerging trends affecting European land forces. Each Research Report is produced by the researchers of FINABEL's Permanent Secretariat, in the goal of supporting decision-making across the European defence landscape.



RESEARCH REPORT

Introduction

The outsourcing and privatisation of state security functions have long been viewed as morally questionable and strategically risky. Contracting private military and security companies (PMSCs) is often seen as undermining the Weberian state's monopoly on the legitimate use of force (Guzzini and Neumann, 2012, p. 51). Still, major global powers such as the US, the UK, and Russia have relied on private military and security companies, a sector estimated to include around 500 firms and be worth several hundred billion dollars, underscoring its strategic relevance. (Mishra, 2025; Kurylev & Ivkina, 2021, p.17). More recently, Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine has reopened the debate over the growing use of PMSCs in contemporary warfare (Foley and Kaunert, 2022, p. 187). The most notorious example is the Wagner Group, which provides active combat services and is widely associated with numerous abuses and alleged war crimes (Çilliler, 2024, p. 1096). Although Wagner's operational capacity has been largely curtailed, it has remained fundamental to Russia's battlefield performance, especially in the seizure of Ukrainian strongholds such as Bakhmut (Cremers & Bouwmeester, 2024, p. 654). Yet, Ukraine's use of private military and security actors, while different, has been understudied, especially in the context of interstate war. Therefore, this paper offers a comparative analysis of the differentiated deployment of PMSCs by both belligerents, underlining the strategic rationale for their mobilisation and the heterogeneous *modi operandi* of such PMSCs. It argues that while Russia has employed a combat-oriented model, dismissing deontological, behavioural, and recruitment standards for PMSCs, Ukraine has mostly leveraged such contingents for self-defence, logistics, training, and humanitarian operations. This divergence in strategy is largely explained by Ukraine's dependence on transatlantic support and on Western accountability standards.

1. Conceptualising PMSCs: definitions, distinctions and legal frameworks

Confusion often arises when defining private companies that provide military and security services, as there is no universally recognised definition. The most cited term is Private Military Company (PMC), which is narrow and typically refers to firms that exclusively carry out military operations and combat-related tasks (Drill & Defense, 2025). However, this definition is restrictive, given that these are rarely the sole activities these actors perform. Rather, they are involved in a variety of ancillary functions that are not necessarily on the battlefield (Macias, 2014, p. 224). These include military training, support, logistics, advisory, and consultancy (Singer, 2005, p. 120). As such, they are better characterised as Private Military and Security Companies (PMSCs) (Macias, 2014; Çilliler, 2025).

To address this ambiguity, Peter W. Singer (2005, pp. 120-121) proposed a classification framework to distinguish among different PMSCs while also capturing their potential security-related services. There exist military provider firms that engage directly in conflicts; military consultant firms that provide training and advisory services; and finally military support firms that deliver logistics, transportation, and operational enabling (Cremers & Bouwmeester, 2024, p. 652). It is also necessary to discern between PSMCs and mercenaries. Surely both forces deal with military matters behind remuneration, but from a legal standpoint, there are crucial dissimilarities. Article 47 of the Geneva Conventions' Additional Protocol I sets out six cumulative criteria for defining a mercenary, with the designation applying only when all are met; those who do not meet all criteria are denied combatant and prisoner-of-war status (see Table 1) (Kinsey, 2003, pp. 4-5).

Table 1. Mercenary Definition under Article 47 of the Geneva Conventions AP I

Legal Definition of a Mercenary

No.	Requirement	Legal Specification
1	Recruitment	Is specially recruited locally or abroad to fight in an armed conflict
2	Participation	Does take direct part in the hostilities
3	Motivation	Is motivated to engage in direct hostilities essentially by the desire for private gain
4	Nationality	Is neither a national of a party to the conflict nor a resident to the territory controlled by a party to the conflict
5	Status	Is not a member of the armed forces of a party to the conflict
6	Authority	Has not been sent by a State which is not a party to the conflict on official duty as a member of its armed forces

Source: (International Committee of the Red Cross, 1977)

However, PMSCs can often evade this classification because two key criteria - direct participation in hostilities and being non-nationals of the conflict parties - are frequently unmet, as illustrated by the Wagner Group (Ortiz, 2010, p. 56). For example, the Wagner Group's forces in Ukraine were largely Russian, meaning it would not qualify as a mercenary contingent even if other conditions were satisfied. Consequently, the 1989 UN Mercenary Convention, which criminalises mercenary combat activities, does not effectively regulate PMSCs that may engage in similar forms of violence (Çilliler, 2025, p. 1095). Nevertheless, it is not uncommon to see the wording "mercenary-like behaviour" used when describing military provider PSMCs involved in abuses or war crimes, as in the Russian cases of Wagner or Redut (Çilliler, 2025, p. 1092).

Historically, the private military and security industry expanded markedly after the Cold War amid Western military downsizing and the rise of privatisation, as states increasingly contracted firms to access cost-efficient and specialised capabilities, albeit alongside high-profile controversies such as the 2007 Nisour Square shooting involving Blackwater personnel and earlier scandals surrounding Sandline International (Holmqvist, 2005; European Parliament, 2011; Tonkin, 2008; Ochiai, 2019). In response, the 2008 Swiss Montreux Document sought to clarify obligations and good practices for PMSCs to follow in active war zones, covering licensing, oversight, contractual processes, and accountability standards (Cockayne, 2008, p. 401-404). Building upon this, the 2010 International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers was introduced, establishing ethical standards for operations to which some companies voluntarily subscribe (Nitkin and Williams, 2020). Similarly, the European Parliament's 2017 resolution invoked clearer EU-wide rules on private security companies, stressing that security and defence are states' ultimate prerogatives and that private actors should not replace national armed forces or undertake combat roles (Kalushi, 2025, pp. 1-2). While none of these initiatives is legally binding per se, and while the development of a more law-enforceable framework is still far from implementation, these actions give a sense of the trajectory the West is taking regarding private security provision. The Russo-Ukrainian war adds another dimension, demonstrating that private military actors remain highly relevant not only in intrastate tensions but also in high-intensity interstate warfare, underscoring the need for regulatory measures.

2. Russian PMSCs as military providers: systematic combat deployment and mercenary practices

Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine has brought into sharper focus the role and capabilities of Russian-affiliated private military and security companies (PMSCs). Notably, the country is not a participant in the Montreux Document, and unlike many contemporary Western contractors, most of its PMSCs specialise in military provision and direct combat (Çilliler, 2024, p. 1096; Ber, 2023, p. 2). This is fully in line with the Kremlin's hybrid warfare strategy to expand its sphere of influence while concealing formal involvement and so avoiding direct political repercussions (Kurylev & Ivkina, 2021, p. 18; Foley and Kaunert, 2022, p. 174).

Such a strategy predates the current war in Ukraine, with the critical juncture of PMSCs' mobilisation as instruments of deniable intervention occurring in 2014, the year Russia annexed Crimea and fueled the conflict in Donbas (Østensen & Bukvoll, 2018, p. 14). The Russian model of covert state direction, combined with irregular and semi-private actors, then re-emerged in Syria from 2015 onwards, when its state-backed PMSCs, namely Wagner and Redut, supported the regime of Bashar al-Assad with direct combat roles (Sukhankin, 2019; Marten, 2023, p. 13). The Kremlin's deep ties to the Wagner Group were fully exposed only after the 2023 failed mutiny, which ultimately led to the group's dismissal. (Larsen, 2025; Maddocks, 2023; Cremers & Bouwmeester, 2024, p. 647). Still, the PMSC has been one of Russia's most tactically effective assault formations during Ukraine's early phases of the invasion, playing a particularly significant role in the 2022–2023 siege of Bakhmut (Cremers & Bouwmeester, 2024, p. 647). Its operational impact, nevertheless, has been overshadowed by widespread allegations of severe misconduct, including torture, arbitrary killings, rape, and pillaging, reinforcing its reputation as a highly violent and poorly accountable force (Cremers & Bouwmeester, 2024, p. 647; Çilliler, 2024, p. 1096). Hence, the Wagner Group not only fits the category of “military provider” but also exhibits “mercenary”-type behaviour, mirroring companies such as Sandline International and Blackwater for its ruthless attitude and recruitment standards (Çilliler, 2024, p. 1096).

Wagner is not the only Russia-affiliated PMSC with a deontology resembling that of modern mercenaries. Following Wagner's failed 2023 ousting attempt, the Kremlin sought to establish surrogate formations capable of reproducing Wagner's operational model (Chkhaidze, 2023). One example is Redut, founded in 2008 and becoming a *de facto* PMSC in 2023 when it absorbed Wagner's operations (Chkhaidze, 2023). Beyond providing combat support near Chornobyl and Kharkiv, the group has also been associated with assassination attempts against Volodymyr Zelenskyy, reinforcing its role as a coercive instrument of the Kremlin (OpenSanctions, n.d). Although semi-autonomous, Redut relies on state provision of equipment, logistics, and ammunition, and has been linked to abuses including sexual violence and the extrajudicial execution of prisoners of war and civilians (Chkhaidze, 2023; Cremers & Bouwmeester, 2024, p. 656; EU Neighbours East, 2025). Similarly, other Russia-aligned formations have emerged as potential Wagner substitutes. According to British intelligence reporting, the Kremlin has sought to develop additional PMSCs capable of replicating Wagner's organisational and operational structure, including PMSC Convoy and PMSC Patriot, whose units have engaged directly in combat operations (Cremers & Bouwmeester, 2024, p. 658). Further, personnel associated with the state-owned energy conglomerate Gazprom have been deployed to protect strategic assets, but have also participated in frontline fighting (Seltzer, 2024). This appears to be the case with Potok PMSC, which was reported to have fought in the battle of Bakhmut flanking Wagner forces (Cremers & Bouwmeester, 2024; Seltzer, 2024).

These episodes exemplify not only that the PMSCs employed by Russia form part of a broader asymmetric warfare strategy aimed at deniability, but also that their deployment is structural and primarily oriented towards combat. As such, they can be qualified as *military provider* firms. Moreover, they display a *mercenary-like* deontology, characterised by a blatant disregard for human rights and the perpetration of multiple war crimes. While it is difficult to conclusively demonstrate that PMSC actions are part of a deliberate Kremlin strategy, it is worth noting that a similar pattern of behaviour by Wagner, now replaced by Africa Corps, can be discerned in other regional theatres, such as the Central African Republic (Human Rights Watch, 2022). This suggests that these actions may be primarily due to the structure and composition of these groups, which are largely composed of former criminals and convicts (Novaya Gazeta Europe, 2024). However, Moscow has certainly no incentive to dissuade or sanction these behaviours, as, in Ukraine, they align closely with its wider strategy to break the Ukrainian population's morale through terror and intimidation (Amnesty International, 2024). Further, the Russian state itself has been accused of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity in Ukraine (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2025). The key point is that violations have been attributed not only to the Wagner Group but also to semi-autonomous formations such as Redut, which operates under close links to the Russian Ministry of Defence and the GRU (Cremers & Bouwmeester, 2024, p. 656; Chkhaidze, 2023). This suggests that the Kremlin does not actively seek to prevent unlawful conduct by its PMSCs but may instead tolerate or enable it when it serves its strategic and military objectives.

3. Ukraine's use of private force: PMSCs and regulatory efforts for volunteer forces

Whereas the Russian offensive and mercenary-type model has epitomised the conflict's brutality, Ukraine's use of private military and security actors points to a markedly different pattern - one driven by the imperatives of national defence and the pursuit of Western institutional standards. Unlike their Russian counterparts, Ukrainian-sided PMSCs have generally functioned as *military consultant* and *support* firms, operating in ways that are broadly consistent with Western guidelines to ensure greater oversight and governance (see Table 2) (Wouters, 2023). For insurance, Ukraine was one of the first ratifying powers of the 2008 Montreux Document and the defensive nature of its PMSCs is also shaped by its sense of belonging to the West (Cremers & Bouwmeester, 2024, p. 66; Montreux Document Forum, n.d; Çilliler, 2024, p. 1098). The country has notably strengthened its ties with NATO and has held EU candidate status since June 2022 (Çilliler, 2024, p. 1098; NBC News, 2026).

Among the many PMSCs Ukraine has called upon to alleviate its war fatigue, leading domestic firm Omega Consulting Group is one of them. Omega Consulting Group has focused on high-level advisory roles, including tactical training in weapon systems, intelligence collection, and other alleged "clandestine" operations (Englehart, 2023). Another relevant company is the British G4S Risk Management, registered in Ukraine since the mid-1990s, which has historically supplied specialised security and risk management services, while unconfirmed reports suggest it is now also used to protect strategic assets and prominent figures, including President Zelenskyy (Kurylev & Ivkina, 2021, p. 21; Debuglies, 2025; G4S Risk Management Group; n.d.).

Similarly, other major Western companies, such as L3Harris Technologies and Leidos, have been operating in Ukraine throughout the war. The former has been providing technological support to streamline communications and electronic operations; the latter has been helping collect intelligence and data from drones and satellites, enhancing battlefield precision, and ensuring logistics and humanitarian aid (Demarest, 2025; Pettibone, 2022; Mabeus-Brown, 2022; Leidos, n.d.). The US PMSC Mozart Group instead handled civilian evacuation from Bakhmut and coordinated training for Ukrainian troops, even though its activities ceased in 2023 (Cremers & Bouwmeester, 2024, p. 660). Despite alleged reports of Omega Consulting Group’s “clandestine operations” that require further evidence, PMSCs backing Ukraine do not, or have not, engaged in direct combat or activities with limited legal accountability, as seen in the Russian ideal-type (Englehart, 2023). They are registered companies that adhere to Ukrainian law and internationally recognised standards: Omega Consulting Group and G4S Risk management have taken on tasks ascribable to both military consultant and support firms, while G4S, L3Harris Technologies, Leidos, and the Mozart Group are (or were, as in the case of Mozart) all military support PMSCs (Wouters, 2023; Cremers & Bouwmeester, 2024, p. 660).

Table 2. Ukrainian-sided PMSCs: names, services, and types.

PMSC Name	Key Role & Activities	Classification
Omega Consulting	High-level advisory, tactical weapons training, intelligence collection and other “clandestine operations” (further confirmation is needed).	Military Consultant and Support
L3Harris Technologies	Technological support, streamlined communications, and electronic operations.	Military Support
Leidos	Intelligence/data collection (drones/satellites), logistics, and humanitarian aid coordination	Military Support
Mozart (Defunct)	Civilian evacuation and troop training coordination.	Military Support
G4S Risk Management	Risk management, logistics, and alleged strategic asset protection.	Military Support and Consultant

Source: (Englehart, 2023; Kurylev & Ivkina, 2021, p. 21; Debuglies, 2025; G4S Risk Management Group, n.d.; Demarest, 2025; Pettibone, 2022; Mabeus-Brown, 2022; Leidos, n.d.; Cremers & Bouwmeester, 2024, p. 660)

3.1 The Volunteer question and the mercenary debate

A counterargument often raised in the debate over Ukraine's use of private force is that, in the early months of 2022, Ukraine made urgent appeals for European volunteer forces to join the hostilities (Çilliler, 2024, p. 1098). To contract these private contingents, Zelenskyy notified the UN Secretary-General that he would derogate from the rules of the International Convention on the Use of Mercenaries, which condemns the use of mercenaries for offensive purposes (Çilliler, 2024, p. 1098-1100). Some of these soldiers who joined the International Legion had criminal charges and far-right affiliations and were involved not only in direct combat operations targeting Russian convoys and aviation, but also in abuses such as torture, sexual violence, and the use of civilians as human shields (Çilliler, 2024, p. 1099-1100).

Even so, these actors were private fighters rather than formally registered private military and security companies (PMSCs). Not to mention that in the second half of 2022, Ukraine committed to regulatory efforts by integrating a large portion of these volunteer soldiers into the formal command cadre of the armed forces, thereby strengthening oversight and accountability mechanisms (Çilliler, 2024, p. 1100; Borlongan, 2023). That is exactly the case of the Azov Battalion. Initially a militia funded by private interests, it was later incorporated into the National Guard and subsequently into the Armed Forces as the Azov Assault Brigade, thereby ending its autonomous status and avoiding the mercenary-like configuration that has characterised the Russian private security sphere (Cremers & Bouwmeester, 2024, p. 659). This suggests that Ukraine resorted to private security to address urgent manpower shortages and to secure temporary operational flexibility, while ultimately prioritising rule-based control and professional integration in the long term. On the other hand, Russia's criminal and offensive mobilisation of PMSCs appears systemic and consistent.

Since 2018, Ukraine has advanced talks about the legal regulation of PMSCs through draft legislation, including the proposed Law on International Defense Companies (Sukhankin, 2020; Ben, 2024). The initiative envisaged mandatory registration, state supervision, and the possibility of providing defence-related services abroad, subject to strict requirements for founders and personnel (Ben, 2024). Although it has not been adopted, the proposal reflects Ukraine's will to, once again, embed private security actors within a defined legal framework, limiting their role to support and consultancy functions rather than participation in hostilities. By enforcing oversight and clarifying permissible activities, they contribute to the crystallisation of a regulatory security architecture compatible with European standards. This, in turn, facilitates Ukraine's integration with the West and reiterates attempts to regulate PMSCs internationally. Earlier debates subsumed arguments for a more offensive deployment of such forces, and concerns were heightened by both the derogation of UN Mercenary Convention rules and the conduct of some private and volunteer fighters during the initial phase of the war (Sukhankin, 2020; Çilliler, 2024, pp. 1099-1100).

Nonetheless, expanding their role to on-the-ground involvement carries far-reaching risks that Ukraine cannot bear in the long run (Sukhankin, 2020). Assault-oriented private actors might provide immediate relief by offsetting battlefield losses and replenishing frontlines; however, they risk exacerbating corruption, becoming tools of oligarchic interests, and undermining Ukraine's EU integration efforts. A potential offensive orientation may also stigmatise Western support (Sukhankin, 2020). Not to mention that an episode like the Wagner mutiny over strategic disputes, an uprising against the government, is an additional danger that fighting for profit can produce; a precedent Ukraine and the West could never afford. As President Zelenskyy has repeatedly framed it, this is fundamentally a war between broader Europe and Russia (Habtom, 2022, p. 81). The country's capacity to sustain a strong and authoritative position in the conflict lingers on continued transatlantic political and military support, not on privately contracted forces employed for offensive combat. Setting forth a tightly regulated, defensive model of private security bolsters that strategic alignment, whereas shifting toward combat-driven privatisation compromises both such a framework and Western alignment. Consequently, Ukraine should avoid using PMSCs for direct combat purposes.

Conclusion

Overall, this paper argues that since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, both sides have relied on Private Military and Security Companies (PMSCs), albeit in diametrically opposed ways. Russia has exploited PMSCs primarily for combat roles. Groups such as Wagner, Redut, Convoy, Patriot, and other entities linked to Gazprom can therefore be classified as military provider firms, though not exclusively so. As widely documented, particularly in the cases of Wagner and Redut, these groups have adopted a *modus operandi* characterised by criminal practices and systematic disregard for human rights that are consistent with Russia's strategy of warfare based on terror and intimidation. They may thus be described as military provider firms displaying mercenary or criminal-like conduct, resembling earlier Western PSMCs of questionable rectitude, such as Sandline International and Blackwater.

Ukraine, by contrast, has privileged a PMSC model focused predominantly on defensive functions: namely, logistics, operational support, training, reconstruction, and civilian evacuation. These companies are more appropriately categorised as military consulting and military support firms. Although in the initial stages of the war, in a desperate attempt to resist the invasion, President Zelenskyy and the Ukrainian authorities contracted private soldiers involved in offensive actions and, at times, criminal activities with far-right affiliations, these actors did not constitute formally registered PSMCs. In any event, the government subsequently sought to regulate their activities by integrating them into the formal state and military apparatus, thereby ensuring greater oversight and a more principled mobilisation in the second phase of the conflict. This trajectory reflects a broader commitment to Western normative standards and best practices enshrined in the 2008 Montreux Document. It is precisely the sustained military and financial support provided by Western partners that enables Ukraine to maintain a strong position in the war, while simultaneously contributing to ongoing European regulatory efforts concerning PMSCs and facilitating Ukraine's gradual integration into the European security architecture. Conversely, legalising PMSCs for offensive operations, while potentially offering short-term strategic gains, risks creating a contentious situation, as exemplified by Wagner, fragmenting the alliance, undermining regulatory efforts, and fostering greater criminality and corruption.

Bibliography

Amnesty International. (2024, November 18). *Ukraine: Russian strikes amounting to war crimes continue to kill and injure children*. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/11/ukraine-russian-strikes-amounting-to-war-crimes-continue-to-kill-and-injure-children/>

Ben, B. (2024, August 31). Ukraine mulls legalizing private military companies. *Euromaidan Press*. <https://euromaidanpress.com/2024/08/31/ukraine-mulls-legalizing-private-military-companies/#:~:text=Private%20armies%20on%20the%20horizon,allies%20under%20established%20legal%20procedures.>

Ber, J. (2023). *From Popasna to Bakhmut: The Wagner Group in the Russia-Ukraine war* (OSW Commentary No. 506). Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW). <https://www.ceeol.com/search/gray-literature-detail?id=1162672>

Borlongan, T. (2023, January 18). Foreign fighters integrated into Ukrainian National Guard. *The Science Survey*. <https://thesciencesurvey.com/news/2023/01/18/foreign-fighters-integrated-into-ukrainian-national-guard/>

Chkhaidze, N. (2023, August 30). PMC Redut: The Wagner Group's potential replacement. *Geopolitical Monitor*. <https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/pmc-redut-the-wagner-groups-potential-replacement/>

Çilliler, Y. (2024). (De)legitimization of private soldiers without legal status: The case of Ukraine. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 37(8), 1092–1105. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2024.2380388>

Centre for Information Resilience. (2024, November 23). Open source investigators verify over 2,600 attacks on Ukraine's hospitals, schools, churches and energy supply since Russian invasion. *Eyes on Russia*. <https://www.info-res.org/eyes-on-russia/articles/open-source-investigators-verify-over-2600-attacks-on-ukraines-hospitals-schools-churches-and-energy-supply-since-russian-invasion/>

Cockayne, J. (2008). Regulating private military and security companies: The content, negotiation, weaknesses and promise of the Montreux Document. *Journal of Conflict and Security Law*, 13(3), 401–428. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcsl/krp006>

Cremers, T., & Bouwmeester, H. (2024). Mercenary armies in the Russo-Ukrainian War. *Militaire Spectator*, 193(11), 646–660. https://militairespectator.nl/sites/default/files/bestanden/artikelen/militaire_spectator_11_2024_cremers_bouwmeester.pdf

Demarest, C. (2025, May 7). Ukrainian feedback is fueling L3Harris radio updates. Axios.

<https://www.axios.com/2025/05/07/l3harris-radios-ukraine-russian-jamming>

Debuglies. (2025, April 7). G4S in Ukraine: Private security operations, geopolitical implications and the evolution of corporate warfare in 2025. <https://debuglies.com/2025/04/07/g4s-in-ukraine-private-security-operations-geopolitical-implications-and-the-evolution-of-corporate-warfare-in-2025/>

Drill & Defense. (2025, September 6). What exactly is a private military company (PMC)? <https://drillanddefense.com/what-is-private-military-company-pmc/>

Englehart, G. (2023, December 9). Omega Consulting Group: Omega PMC. Grey Dynamics. <https://greydynamics.com/omega-consulting-group-omega-pmc/>

EU Neighbours East. (2025, November 4). Europol identifies 654 war crimes suspects tied to Russian paramilitary. <https://euneighbourseast.eu/news/latest-news/europol-identifies-654-war-crimes-suspects-tied-to-russian-paramilitary/>

European Commission. (2026, January 23). EU deploys emergency generators as Russian strikes left one million Ukrainians without power in -20°C. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_26_193

European Parliament. (2011). The role of private security companies in CSDP missions and operations. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2011/433829/EXPO-SEDE_ET\(2011\)433829_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2011/433829/EXPO-SEDE_ET(2011)433829_EN.pdf)

Foley, E., & Kaunert, C. (2022). Russian private military and Ukraine: Hybrid surrogate warfare and Russian state policy by other means. *Defence and Security Analysis*, 16(3), 172–192. <https://doi.org/10.51870/UIJU5827>

G4S Risk Management Group. (n.d.). G4S Security Solutions Ukraine. <https://www.g4sriskmanagement.com/global-reach/ukraine#:~:text=G4S%20Risk%20Management%20Ukraine%20is,Download%20our%20Brochure%20here>

Guzzini, S., & Neumann, I. B. (2012). *The diffusion of power in global governance: International political economy meets Foucault*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137283559>

Habtom, N. K.-T. (2022). The composition and challenges of foreign fighters in Ukraine. *Scandinavian Journal of Military Studies*, 5(1), 173–186. <https://sjms.nu/articles/10.31374/sjms.151>

Holmqvist, C. (2005). *Private security companies: The case for regulation* (Policy Paper No. 9). Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. <https://www.sipri.org/publications/2005/sipri-policy-papers/private-security-companies-case-regulation>

Human Rights Watch. (2007, December 14). *Blackwater in Baghdad: "It was a horror movie"*. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2007/12/14/blackwater-baghdad-it-was-horror-movie>

Human Rights Watch. (2022, May 3). *Central African Republic: Abuses by Russia-linked forces: Killings, torture of civilians*. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/05/03/central-african-republic-abuses-russia-linked-forces>

International Committee of the Red Cross. (1977, June 8). *Protocol additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the protection of victims of international armed conflicts (Protocol I)*. <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/api-1977/article-47>

Johnston, K. (2009). Private military contractors: Lessons learned in Iraq and increased accountability in Afghanistan. *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, 10(2), 93–100. https://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/geojaf10&div=40&g_sent=1&casa_token=&collection=journals

Kalushi, J. (2025, October 1). The role of PMSCs in the EU's security and defence policy: A temporary complementary tool. *FINABEL – The European Land Force Commanders Organisation*. <https://finabel.org/the-role-of-pmscs-in-the-eus-security-and-defence-policy-a-temporary-complementary-tool/>

Kinsey, C. (2003). International law and the control of mercenaries and private military companies. *Cultures & Conflicts*, 52, 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.4000/conflicts.11502>

Kurylev, K., & Ivkina, N. (2021). The Ukrainian experience of using private military campaigns. *Post-Soviet Studies* 4(1), 17–25. <https://doi.org/10.24412/2618-7426-2021-1-17-25>

Larsen, K. P. (2025, January 9). *The rise and fall of the Wagner Group: Russia is seeking control over its 'private' military companies*. DIIS Policy Brief. Danish Institute for International Studies. <https://www.diis.dk/en/research/the-rise-and-fall-of-the-wagner-group>

Mabeus-Brown, C. (2022, August 23). Leidos to partner with Project HOPE to aid Ukraine. *Virginia Business*. <https://viriniabusiness.com/leidos-to-partner-with-project-hope-to-aid-ukraine/>

Macias, A. (2014). *The impact of PMSC on the role of today's military*. SSRN. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2388287>

Maddocks, J. (2023, June 30). Putin admits to funding the Wagner Group: Implications for Russia's state responsibility. *Articles of War, Lieber Institute at West Point*. <https://lieber.westpoint.edu/putin-admits-funding-wagner-group-implications-russias-state-responsibility/>

Marten, K. (2023). Russian foreign paramilitary outfits beyond Wagner. *Russian Analytical Digest*, (303), 12–16. <https://doi.org/10.3929/ethz-b-000636561>

Mishra, T. (2025, October 12). 7 countries that use mercenaries and private armies to fight their wars. *WION*. <https://www.wionews.com/photos/7-countries-that-use-mercenaries-and-private-armies-to-fight-their-wars-1760216301075/1760216301076>

Montreux Document Forum. (n.d.). *Participating states and international organisations*. <https://www.montreuxdocument.org/about/participants.html>

NBC News. (2026, January 12). E.U. executive weighs idea of quick, but limited membership for Ukraine. <https://www.nbcnews.com/world/ukraine/eu-executive-weighs-idea-quick-limited-membership-ukraine-rcna254402>

Nikitin, A., & Williams, F. (2020, April 22). Private military and security companies: Views from the UK and Russia on regulation and accountability. Royal United Services Institute. <https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/private-military-and-security-companies-views-uk-and-russia-regulation-and-accountability/>

Novaya Gazeta Europe. (2024, June 10). Investigation finds that almost 50,000 Russian prisoners were recruited by Wagner to fight in Ukraine. <https://novayagazeta.eu/articles/2024/06/10/investigation-finds-that-almost-50000-russian-prisoners-were-recruited-by-wagner-to-fight-in-ukraine-en-news>

Ochiai, T. (2019). United Nations sanctions against Sierra Leone and the Sandline affair in the United Kingdom, 1997-98. *Lagos Notes and Records*, 25(1), 1–20. <https://ihafa.unilag.edu.ng/index.php/lnr/article/view/894>

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2025, October 28). Russian authorities committed crimes against humanity targeting civilian population through drone attacks as well as war crimes of forcible transfer and deportation of civilians [Press release]. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/10/russian-authorities-committed-crimes-against-humanity-targeting-civilian>

OpenSanctions. (n.d.). Private military company Redut. <https://www.opensanctions.org/entities/NK-9iEp7sqxGYKEzvhd2qyeWC/>

Ortiz, J. C. (2010). *Private armed forces and global security: A guide to the issues*. Praeger. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9798216001409>

Østensen, Å. G., & Bukkvoll, T. (2018). *Russian use of private military and security companies: The implications for European and Norwegian security* (FFI-rapport no. 18/01300). Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (FFI). <https://www.cmi.no/publications/6637-russian-use-of-private-military-and-security>

Pettibone, R. (2022, August 2). L3Harris and Air Tractor win \$3 billion Armed Overwatch competition. *Defense Security Monitor*. <https://dsm.forecastinternational.com/2022/08/02/l3harris-and-air-tractor-win-3-billion-armed-overwatch-competition/>

Seltzer, J. (2024). *Sanctioned sector analysis: Russian private military companies (PMCs)*. Wisconsin Project on Nuclear Arms Control. <https://www.wisconsinproject.org/sanctioned-sector-analysis-russian-private-military-companies-pmcs/>

Singer, P. (2005). Outsourcing War, *Foreign Affairs*, 84, (2), 119-132. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/outsourcing-war>

Sukhankin, S. (2019). *Unleashing the PMCs and irregulars in Ukraine: Crimea and Donbas*. The Jamestown Foundation. https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/60475547/120190903-80487-x2myyq-libre.pdf?1567524502=&response-content-disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DUnleashing_the_PMCs_and_Irregulars_in_Uk.pdf&Expires=1771846175&Signature=GmtzwZUIf75Ta9eEuT7ioc8WOPO3J~ydKe8Xr20ON3Z6toLkL8SdAjLWuNZMRQKA4nEzbtamHMtHESiq-1u~TC8EczPFPiNMRr40YEIHA2WTsGYicdokGyZM0HRoY2LreGex0m4tY-HdSU2~Q5IafbGFDyIf3AAaN2IFD3caynJNQ6UiHKjE8rfHZQ1eNfoFb6exJYGz8NtSZTzlbQ9eH1pPUCMovmjMItw58zH5qOap7JOtlU4jNdY5XVp~LxmyuZPC8LxurNh3naHQX8byzqWEwmVy93BShq d7OASEc6QqbYf410UnJt6hayU~X-5IresZRQuIcIPL-iYNdvx7Vg__&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA

Sukhankin, S. (2020, March 31). The legalization of Ukrainian PMCs: Challenges and opportunities. *Eurasia Daily Monitor*. https://www.academia.edu/42456055/The_Legalization_of_Ukrainian_PMCs_Challenges_and_Opportunities

Tonkin, H. (2008). *State control over private military and security companies in armed conflict*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511993367>

Ortiz, J. C. (2010). *Private armed forces and global security: A guide to the issues*. Praeger. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9798216001409>

Østensen, Å. G., & Bukkvoll, T. (2018). *Russian use of private military and security companies: The implications for European and Norwegian security* (FFI-rapport no. 18/01300). Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (FFI). <https://www.cmi.no/publications/6637-russian-use-of-private-military-and-security>

Pettibone, R. (2022, August 2). L3Harris and Air Tractor win \$3 billion Armed Overwatch competition. *Defense Security Monitor*. <https://dsm.forecastinternational.com/2022/08/02/l3harris-and-air-tractor-win-3-billion-armed-overwatch-competition/>

Seltzer, J. (2024). *Sanctioned sector analysis: Russian private military companies (PMCs)*. Wisconsin Project on Nuclear Arms Control. <https://www.wisconsinproject.org/sanctioned-sector-analysis-russian-private-military-companies-pmcs/>

Singer, P. (2005). Outsourcing War, *Foreign Affairs*, 84, (2), 119-132. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/outsourcing-war>

Sukhankin, S. (2019). *Unleashing the PMCs and irregulars in Ukraine: Crimea and Donbas*. The Jamestown Foundation. https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/60475547/120190903-80487-x2myyq-libre.pdf?1567524502=&response-content-disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DUnleashing_the_PMCs_and_Irregulars_in_Uk.pdf&Expires=1771846175&Signature=GmtzwZUIf75Ta9eEuT7ioc8WOPO3j~ydKe8Xr20ON3Z6toLkL8SdAjLWuNZMRQKA4nEzbtamHMtHESiq-1u~TC8EczPFPiNMRr40YEIHA2WTsGYicdokGyZM0HRoY2LreGex0m4tY-HdSU2~Q5IafbGFDyIf3AAaN2IFD3caynJNQ6UiHKjE8rfHZQ1eNfoFb6exJYGz8NtSZTzlbQ9eH1pPUCMovmjMItw58zH5qOap7JOtlU4jNdY5XVp~LxmyuZPC8LxurNh3naHQX8byzqWEwmVy93BShq d7OASEc6QqbYf410UnJt6hayU~X-5IresZRQuIcIPL-iYNdvx7Vg__&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA

Sukhankin, S. (2020, March 31). The legalization of Ukrainian PMCs: Challenges and opportunities. *Eurasia Daily Monitor*. https://www.academia.edu/42456055/The_Legalization_of_Ukrainian_PMCs_Challenges_and_Opportunities

Tonkin, H. (2008). *State control over private military and security companies in armed conflict*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511993367>

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2025, October 28). *Russian authorities committed crimes against humanity targeting civilian population through drone attacks as well as war crimes of forcible transfer and deportation of civilians* [Press release]. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/10/russian-authorities-committed-crimes-against-humanity-targeting-civilian>

Wouters, P. (2023, April 11). *Strategic priorities for the Russian PMC WAGNER: Geopolitics, propaganda and mercenary business*. (Policy Brief No. 303). Egmont – Royal Institute for International Relations. https://www.egmontinstitute.be/app/uploads/2023/04/Patrick-Wouters_Policy_Brief_303.pdf?type=pdf



F I N A B E L

THE EUROPEAN LAND FORCE
COMMANDERS ORGANISATION