

# ORSAM REVIEW OF REGIONAL AFFAIRS

No.64, JULY 2017



## THE ROLE OF PRIVATE MILITARY COMPANIES IN RUSSIA'S INTERVENTION IN SYRIA

Halit GÜLŞEN

*Graduated from Ankara University, Department of Russian Language and Literature. Worked in Center for Eurasian Strategic Studies (2008-2009), Center for Eurasian Studies (2009-2012) and Anadolu Agency (2012-2015) respectively. Gülşen is currently pursuing a master's degree in the Department of Security Studies at the TOBB University of Economics and Technology and has been working on security-centered studies oriented on Russia and Post-Soviet geography. Gülşen's works were published in the Armenian Research Journal, Review of Armenian Studies, Eurasian File, Crimes Against Humanity and History, Strategic Analysis and Middle-East Analysis.*

Through its military intervention in Syria, Russia has both protected its stronghold in the Middle East and relieved the political pressure on itself emerging due to the Ukrainian crisis. Having achieved significant military and political gains through its intervention in Syria, Russia has lost very few soldiers while doing this. Whereas Russia has engaged in military intervention from outside, in a complicated region where several national and international actors like Syria are involved in a fight as well as terrorist organizations such as DAESH, YPG, al-Qaeda, it should be underlined that it has lost only 28 soldiers in almost two years. The presence of Russian private military companies in Syria is one of the main reasons why Russia has lost so few soldiers in Syria. This study examines the role of the mentioned military companies in Russia's intervention in Syria and the advantages they provide for Russia and the potential risks regarding them are discussed.

Russian Federation started to recover quickly from the crisis period that emerged after the dissolution of the Soviet Union with Vladimir Putin's coming to power as the Head of State in 2000. After having fulfilled the primary goal of eliminating economic and political instability across the country, Putin government focused on its international interests. Within this scope, the issues which have been emphasized essentially in the national security strategies, foreign policy doctrines, and military security doctrines adopted under Putin's term are the unacceptability of the unipolar world system and the threat posed by NATO enlargement to Russia's national security<sup>1</sup>. Russia reflected its attitude on this matter most clearly at the Munich Security Conference in 2007. The following words uttered in Putin's speech at the conference were considered almost as Russia's ultimatum in respect of the current conjuncture in the international arena.

“What is a unipolar world? However one might embellish this term, at the end of the day it refers to one type of situation, namely one centre of authority, one centre of force, one centre of decision-making. It is world in which there is one master, one sovereign. And at the end of the day this is pernicious not only for all those within this system, but also for the sovereign itself because it destroys itself from within.”<sup>2</sup>

Considering Russia's reactions to the developments in the international arena after the Munich Conference, it is seen that the mentality of the speeches has been applied. In the face of the enlargement strategy of NATO, the intervention in Georgia in 2008, the invasion of Crimea and the de facto intervention in Eastern Ukraine after the “extreme” rapprochement of the EU with Ukraine within the scope of the Eastern Partnership program are the repercussions of this process. Russia's involvement in the Syrian civil war in 2016 is also an issue to be addressed within this scope.

### 1. Intervention in Syria

On 30 September 2015, Russia de facto intervened in the Syrian civil war that broke out in 2011 after the Arab Spring. Even though the intervention was justified by the Assad regime's request for assistance, there are various underlying reasons. These reasons could be listed briefly as follows: maintaining its only military base in the Mediterranean located in Tartus; the feeling of being deceived by the West in the process following Gaddafi's overthrow in Libya; reducing the Western pressure on itself due to the Ukrainian crisis; keeping the conflict away from its own borders as much as possible in its power struggle with the West; the presence of Caucasian fighters with Russian passports in Syria; the desire to fill the vacuum emerging after the US withdrawal; and the increasing Iranian influence in the region.

Considering the situation almost two years after the military intervention, it would not be wrong to say that Russia currently has what it intended

to have. After opening up space for itself and helping the Syrian regime to keep its position, Russia has also gained important advantages in terms of enhancing its military capacity in this country. Furthermore, it has gained a remarkable position in the international arena and has become politically powerful. Within this context, it is seen that Russia's intervention in Syria has led to serious outcomes in military and political terms.

First of all, the military bases that Russia has obtained in Syria constitute one of the significant military consequences of the intervention. Transforming the quasi-base naval facility in Tartus used since 1977 into a literally permanent base is very important for Russia's military presence in the Mediterranean. In this sense, the enlargement of Tartus naval base within the scope of the agreement signed with the Syrian regime paved the way for the entry of Russian navy ships into regional and national waters as well as Syrian ports. In addition, following the agreement signed

After opening up space for itself and helping the Syrian regime to keep its position, Russia has also gained important advantages in terms of enhancing its military capacity in this country.

with Syria, which allows the deployment of Russian air forces at Khmeimim Base for an indefinite term, Russia found the opportunity to deploy a number of its war craft in the region. After the agreement, Russia installed its S-400 and Pantsir air defense systems at the base.<sup>3</sup> The agreement also granted diplomatic immunity for the military personnel at the base and their families as well as the right to be exempt from border control for Russian soldiers while entering Syria. It is also noteworthy that Russia will not pay any rent to Syria in return for its use of the Khmeimim base.

Another important military consequence of the intervention is the deployment of Russian forces in Afrin, in addition to Tartus and Khmeimim, together with PYD forces and the military activities carried out under the name of monitoring center for ceasefire. It is estimated that there are approximately 100 Russian soldiers deployed in the Bifanun Mountain, the 135th Brigade, Tal Ajar, and the vicinity of the

valley between the villages of Kafr Janneh, Deir Ballut, Gaz-zavia, Deir Sufan, and Zeitouna in Afrin. According to the statements of Russian officials, there is no other similar initiative to the Khmeimim base and it is indicated that the centers established in the mentioned regions will monitor the ceasefire.<sup>4</sup>

Secondly, in terms of the political consequences of the military intervention, Bashar al-Assad's remaining in power despite the Western embargo and intervention, enhanced Russia's power over the regional actors as well as international arena. On the other hand, with the Astana process, Russia sat at the same table with Turkey and Iran, which are two most important powers of the region, and it took initiatives through a platform supporting the Geneva Process.

Russia's intervention in Syria also led to serious consequences in terms of the reduction of domestic security risks. A large number of fighters in the Caucasus Emirate, a group active in Russian

territory declared allegiance to DAESH in 2016, left Russia to fight in Syria. Russia, on its part, ensured that both moderate opposition groups and many Caucasian fighters

with Russian passports on the side of DAESH were neutralized through its military intervention in Syria. Therefore, it neutralized Caucasian fighters outside its own territory and

**Table 1: Russian Soldiers Killed in Syria<sup>6</sup>**

Name	Rank/Title	Place	Date
Fedor Juravlev	Private	Uncertain	November/2015
Oleg Peşkov	Lieutenant Colonel/ Pilot	Turkmen Mountain	November/2015
Aleksandr Pozniç	Marine Private	Corps Uncertain	November/2015
Ivan Çeremisın	Colonel	Uncertain	December/2016
Aleksandr Prohorenko	First lieutenant	Palmyra	March/2016
Andrey Akladnikov	Pilot	Homs	April/2016
Viktor Pankov	Pilot	Homs	April/2016
Anton Yerigin	Sergeant	Homs	May/2016
Andrey Timoşenkov	Private	Homs	June/2016
Mihail Şirokapoyas	Sergeant	Aleppo	June/2016
Ryafagat Habibulin	Pilot	Palmyra	June /2016
Yevgeniy Dolgin	Second lieutenant/ Pilot	Palmyra	June /2016
Nikita Şevçenko	Private	Aleppo	June /2016
Asker Bijoyev	Private	Uncertain	August/2016
Nadejda Duraçenko	Surgeon	Aleppo	December/2016
Galina Mihaylova	Surgeon	Aleppo	December /2016
Vadim Kostenko	Private	Latakia	October/2015
Sanal Sançirov	Majör	Palmyra	December /2016
Ruslan Galitskiy	Colonel	Aleppo	December /2016

gained a significant advantage in terms of ensuring domestic security.

Apart from all these, the most important military and political gain of Russia's intervention in Syria was in Ukraine. Russia responded to the sanction policies of the West imposed for the invasion in Crimea, through counter

moves instead of withdrawal, by making a military intervention in Syria. Just as a player stuck in the corner of a "go" board tries to get rid of this situation by making moves at a different corner of the board, Russia, which was stuck in Ukraine, put the "piece" in Syria.

## 2. Military Losses in Syria

Russia has not faced a serious military loss in its intervention in Syria for almost two years. According to the official statements, so far 28 Russian soldiers have lost their life in Syria. Besides, Russia's two Mi-8, one Mi-28H and one Mi-35 military helicopters have been downed by DAESH in the military operations and its Su-24 war plane has been shot by Turkish war craft on grounds of border breach.<sup>5</sup>

Apart from these 19 soldiers on the table, 5 Russian soldiers also died on the MI-8 military helicopter downed on 1 August 2016. Even though Russian official authorities announced that 5 soldiers died on the helicopter after this attack, the names of the soldiers were not imparted. In April 2017, it was reported that 4 other Russian soldiers were killed.<sup>7</sup>

From a general viewpoint, it is seen that the mentioned loss of Russia, which has launched operations outside the former Soviet borders for the first time since the dissolution of

the Soviet Union, is quite low. In a war that so many different groups and international actors are involved, there are several reasons for Russia's low level of casualty. These reasons can be listed as follows:

- Russia has mostly focused on airstrikes,
- Russian experts acting as military advisors of the Syrian regime for long years are highly familiar with the circumstances and the conditions of the field in the country,
- Russian official soldiers enter a region in large numbers and take control after the region or province is fully secured,
- Private security/military companies are used.

Among these reasons, the use of Russian private security/military companies has a particular role. Especially with the 2008 war in Georgia, the 2014 invasion in Crimea, and the ongoing war in Eastern Ukraine, Russia used its private security companies more intensely in its operations abroad. Russia's preparing ground for private security companies in the region

comes as a primary reason lying under its loss of only 28 soldiers in Syria. Indeed, the legal regulations recently introduced in this field are significant since they show the importance attached to the use of private security companies abroad.

### **3. Private Military Companies in the Intervention in Syria**

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, it is known that various special military units that were not official but mostly comprised of professionals were formed by the military and intelligence officials of the state in Russia. These units were used in several countries such as Bosnia, Montenegro, Moldova, Georgia, and Chechnya in the earlier years.

Especially within the last nine years including Russia's interventions in Georgia in 2008, Ukraine in 2014, and Syria in 2015, new private military companies started to be established in Russia and new legal regulations were put into practice for these. By these means,

Russia increased its capacity of military intervention in foreign countries, without direct state intervention and bypassing the international law. This method was also considered significant since it helped restrain the reactions that might arise among Russian public opinion following the potential losses.

However, it became obligatory in time to grant a legal status for these structures that are active in the field and act in parallel with Russia's interests abroad. Within this scope, the state primarily focused on the legal regulations and four legal regulations were adopted in 2008, 2012, 2013 and 2014. First of all, the law titled "Weaponry Law" was enacted in 2008 and Russian state institutions that have strategic importance, such as Gazprom, Lukoil, and Transneft, were granted with the authority to use weapons in order to ensure the security of their representative offices in foreign countries.<sup>8</sup>

Four years after the first law, in 2012, the United Russia Party in power adopted a bill numbered 288-FZ in Duma. The

Especially within the last nine years including Russia's interventions in Georgia in 2008, Ukraine in 2014, and Syria in 2015, new private military companies started to be established in Russia and new legal regulations were put into practice for these.





«Частные военные компании в России - это инструмент реализации национальных интересов без прямого участия государства»  
Владимир Путин, 11.04.2012

“Russian private military companies are means for the accomplishment of the national interests without the direct intervention of the state.”  
Vladimir Putin, 11.04.2012.

mentioned law provided the introduction of legal regulations to the status related to the presence of private military companies as military reserve bodies (Providing military training in private professional institutions etc.) upon the decision of the head of state.<sup>9</sup>

Under the new law presented by the Deputy Chairman of the State Duma Alexandr Mitrofanov one year later, it was legally guaranteed that private military companies would possess military equipment and it was underlined that the government would control all the

activities of the mentioned companies. In 2014, a legal regulation of similar content was adopted.<sup>10</sup>

It is also seen that Russian official authorities do not hesitate to use explicit statements regarding the use of the mentioned security companies in foreign countries. In a speech made by Russian President Putin in 2012, he indicated what private military companies meant for his country in the following statements: “Russian private military companies constitute a means for the implementation of what should be



done in line with the national interests, without direct intervention of the State.”<sup>11</sup>

Even though a series of legal regulations have been introduced and Putin has also clearly put this into words, there is still a legal dilemma on this matter in Russia. While Russian laws

introduce the aforementioned amendments regarding the private security companies, the participation of private military companies in the operations abroad seems to be illegal under existing Russian laws. It is envisaged that this situation will be changed by the new laws to be enacted. However, this

**Table 2: Private Military Companies in Russia<sup>12</sup>**

	Spetsnaz	SOBR	Spetsnaz	Spetsnaz	Spetsnaz	Spetsnaz	Spetsnaz	Spetsnaz	Spetsnaz	Spetsnaz
SAVAŞA KATILANLAR	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
UKRAYNA	✓	?	✓	?	?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SURİYE	?	✓	?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
DİĞER ÇATIŞMALAR	?	✓	?	✓	✓	?	✓	✓	✓	✓

illegal situation does not (cannot) prevent the use of private military companies as an informal army abroad.

#### 4. Leading Companies and Areas of Operation

Russia’s role of private military companies in international operations has gradually

increased in recent years. Especially with the invasion in Crimea in 2014, the conflict environment in Eastern Ukraine, and the military intervention in Syria in 2015 brought the issue of Russia-based private military companies to the agenda again. While some of the mentioned private military companies provide components during the war

against the Ukrainian army, together with pro-Russian groups in Eastern Ukraine, some others provide professional support for the ongoing civil war in Syria. Moreover, it is also seen that certain private military companies transfer the components fighting in Ukraine to Syria upon the increasing violence of the war in Syria.

The report prepared by the staff of the news website “Informnapalm”, which is known for its work over Russia’s military presence in Ukraine and private military companies fighting in Ukraine and Syria and broadcasts in Russian, includes detailed information about the mentioned companies.

Among these companies, those which have a leading role in the Syrian war are PMC Wagner, Moran Security Group, Slavonic Corps, Antiterror Security Group, RSB Group, and Redut Special Unit.<sup>13</sup> The fundamental characteristics and the area of mission of the mentioned companies are examined separately below. For our research on the companies, we looked into official websites of

the companies, reports of independent journalists working in this area, and the information shared by Russian soldiers on social media.

### RSB Group

The Russian Security Systems (RSB)



Group was formed in 2011. Former president of Russian Federal Security

Bureau (FSB) Oleg Krinitsin is the president of the company. The retired soldiers from Russian Border Service are among the founders of the company. It is stated that providing the security of long marine travels, establishing the security of land transport, training, intelligence analysis, technical protection, and mine clearance are among the services offered by the company.

The company has provided security for more than 10 Russian and foreign ships in Somalia. Apart from this, similar services are also offered in Jordan, Egypt, Sri Lanka and Southern

Africa. It is also stated on the official website that the personnel that provides the security of merchant and government vessels of the company at sea is the staff of Russian special forces. Apart from providing the security of the vessels, the security of oil and gas platforms is also among the services of the company.<sup>16</sup>

Another field of the RSB Group is the security of major land transports. At this point, it is stated that the security of various truck convoys is provided in Iraq. The company is also active in providing the security of Russian Embassy in Baghdad.

There is no data regarding the presence of military forces of the company joining the operations on the ground in Syria. However, various sources point out that the company provides security for Russian flagged ships going to Syria and the facilities controlled by Russia.<sup>17</sup>

### **Moran Security Group:**



M o r a n  
S e c u r i t y  
G r o u p  
( M S G )

was formed in 1999. The presidents of the company are Igor Nikov, who served in Russian Naval Forces for long years and has 8 achievement medals, and Sergey Emelin who is also the former member of Russian Naval Forces and has 9 medals. Providing the security of ship brokering at sea and the security of important facilities and convoys on the ground is among the services offered by the company. Furthermore, rescue and consultancy services are also included in the mission of the company.

The company fulfilled its first cross-border mission in the United Arab Emirates between 1991 and 2001. A ship hijacked by Sudanese nationalist groups was rescued upon the request of its owner. Again, 20 oil tankers were transported safely in the line of Iraq-United Arab Emirates-Strait of Hormoz-Gulf of Aden-Southern Europe.

After the United Arab Emirates, the company undertook several missions in Iraq. Within this scope, it fulfilled 6 different missions in 2014 in different regions of Iraq. Some of these missions are as follows:

Among these companies, those which have a leading role in the Syrian war are PMC Wagner, Moran Security Group, Slavonic Corps, Antiterror Security Group, RSB Group, and Redut Special Unit

- Providing the security of a convoy of 70 trucks going from Zakho to the Ministry of Transport in Baghdad,
- Accompanying the transport of certain equipment to an oil field near Tikrit and providing security in the region in case of potential attacks,
- Transporting the petrol drilling equipment to the land-hill region,
- Carrying out the analysis of the 2nd strategic pipeline between Basra and Karbala,
- Providing the security of a convoy of 90 trucks between Zakha, Kirkuk, Baghdad and Basra.<sup>18</sup>

MSG gave trainings to local security forces and provided VIP protection services in Nigeria, Kenya, and Central African Republic, apart from Iraq.

MSG provides the security of the military vessels sent from Russia to Tartus and also works at certain security points at the base.<sup>19</sup>

## PMC Wagner

PMC Wagner is the company that is spoken about the most among Russian private military companies in Syria. There is no clear information on the date of establishment of the company. Lieutenant Colonel Dmitriy Utkin who served in the Pskov 2nd Special Forces Brigade until 2013 is among the founders. Having a camp center in the village of Molkindo in Krasnodar Kray, Wagner is located in the same region as the 10th Brigade of the Russian army. It is registered that a part of Russian fighters going to Syria are taken from the Primorsko airport



which is 200 km away from the mentioned village.<sup>20</sup>

The large majority of the staff of “Wagner” fights in Syria. On Russian news websites that report on the Syrian war, there is full information showing that the bodies of Russian people come from Syria to

Sevastopol and these people are the staff of Wagner. For instance, it is registered that 10 bodies arrived in the Sevastopol port on ships on 24 September 2015, followed by 26 others on 20 October 2015.<sup>21</sup>

According to Denis Korothov, a journalist in

**Table 3: PMC Wagner Founder Dmitriy Utkin (right) and Russian Head of State Vladimir Putin**



Petersburg-based Fontanka news website, approximately one thousand people work for Wagner. There is also information about the transfer of the personnel of Wagner fighting in Eastern Ukraine to Syria upon Russia's military intervention. Especially the announcement on a tree in Luhansk, Eastern Ukraine makes the situation more concrete.

In the mentioned announcement, it is asked "Why fighting in Syria is better" and the comparison made between "a person fighting in Donbas for 15 thousand rubles and a person fighting in Syria for 200 thousand rubles" is among the answers.<sup>22</sup> As another striking point, it is indicated that a person fighting in Syria will have a higher status and higher medals. The last point of comparison has an ideological dimension. In response to the question "Who is your enemy", the answer is "Your Orthodox Brothers" for Donbass region and "Islamists" for Syria.<sup>23</sup>

On the other hand, Dmitriy Utkin attended the reception of Homeland Heroes Day organized in the Kremlin on 9

December 2016 and he was awarded a medal for his bravery by President Putin. This is considered as a significant indicator of the link between Wagner and Russian official bodies.<sup>24</sup>

### Slav-Corpus:



SlavCorpus comes forth among the private military companies that act together with Wagner in Syria. The company does not have an official website. Therefore, there is no clear information on the date of establishment. All of its employees are comprised of professionals and those who were all previously assigned in Afghanistan, Iraq, Tajikistan, Northern Caucasia and Serbia are more likely to join the company.

It is indicated in open sources that the company has been active in Syrian territory since 2013. It is said that the armed forces of the company are involved in the conflicts especially in Palmyra and Aleppo. The security of the oil wells in the east of Deir ez-Zor was



also provided by the staff of the mentioned company for a long time. What should be noted at this point is that, like Wagner, SlavCorps also took part in the war in Eastern Ukraine. The personnel of both companies went from here to Syria and were assigned in line with Russia's interests.

However, there were some problems reflected in the press in the period in which the company started its first operations in the field. 267 fighters of the company had to flee on their vehicles when approximately six thousand opposition fighters intercepted them in Homs. Following this incident, mercenary soldiers returning to Russia through Latakia were arrested in Moscow. Vadim Gusev and Evgeniy Sidorov who were among the leaders of the group were also detained within this scope.

At this point Russia's arresting the mentioned staff of the company upon their return despite having been used in Syria may bring two possibilities to the agenda. First, there was a lack of harmony between the groups in the field and FSB. The second possibility is that

Russia arrested these people to show the public opinion that "as a state, it did not recognize or support these groups." At this point, it will be beneficial to add that there is a resistance in the Russian Ministry of Defense against private military companies.<sup>25</sup>

### Anti-Terror Security Company



Anti-Terror Security Company carries out

activities in terms of military and special operations training and provide special training to the security forces to be assigned in the regions where the war risk is high.<sup>26</sup>

Anti-Terror Security Company works with Federal Security Service (FSB) and carries out activities in Iraq and Syria. High ranking soldiers and intelligence officers are among the employees of the company.

### Redut Special Unit



Redut Special Unit comes forth as a

For Russia, there are also certain risks of using such kind of military companies. Above all these risks, it is important to raise concern over the control of the personnel of private companies.



security company established in 2008, mostly by the retired staff of Russian Military Intelligence Service (GRU) and the personnel of Domestic Intelligence Service (MVD). Most of its employees have experience in Afghanistan, the Middle East, Iraq, and Caucasia.<sup>27</sup>

In this sense, it consists of a team that is experienced for the operations in the mentioned geography. While the group comes forth especially with its sharpshooting experience, it is estimated that the mercenary soldiers receiving the training are assigned in Ukraine and Syria.

### **5. Advantages and Risks**

The use of mercenary soldiers of the Russian private security companies in the Syrian war has advantages and disadvantages. As to advantages, the losses suffered by Russian private security companies in Syria are not reflected much in the press and even if they are reflected, they do not create so many effects as the decease of an official soldier.

On the other hand, when the personnel of private military companies fails in an operation in Aleppo, Homs, Palmyra or another province, the price for this is not paid by Russian army or the Ministry of Defense, which is a significant advantage for Russian decision makers.

In addition, it is noteworthy that when the personnel of the mentioned company commit a crime against the international law, Russia is not held responsible for this situation since they are not official soldiers. Furthermore, when it is necessary for Russia to launch an operation that is of strategic importance for its own interests but forbidden by the international law in a region in Syria, the mentioned companies come into play and give the possibility of removing state responsibility.

For Russia, there are also certain risks of using such kind of military companies. Above all these risks, it is important to raise concern over the control of the personnel of private companies. Indeed, when two people working at Slavcorps company

returned to Russia after they had to withdraw from an operation in Syria, they were arrested by FSB, which is the clearest example of this. Since there is no specific command echelon, the command and control of the personnel of private military companies is considered as a more complicated issue than that of a soldier of an ordinary army. It is inevitable that such control will be more difficult in a foreign land, especially in Syria, where there are tens of different groups of fighters.

## **Conclusion**

Russia has had important gains in respect of the preservation of the national interests in Syria with the military intervention

for almost two years. At this point, it seems to have reached for now the military and political goals set in the outset. The loss of very few soldiers in the operations carried out while reaching these goals is a positive outcome that has prevented Russia from drawing the reactions of the national public opinion. Within this context, it appears that the influence of private military companies used in the field is of great importance. However, a question mark remains in respect of whether this method will lead to different problems arising from the international law in the medium or long term even though it provides advantages to Russia in the field in the short term.

## References:

- Выступление и дискуссия на Мюнхенской конференции по вопросам политики безопасности, 10 февраля 2007 года, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24034>.
- Алексей Егоров, С-400 охраняют авиабазу Хмеймим в Сирии - уникальные кадры, Звезда, 11 июня 2017, <https://tvzvezda.ru/news/forces/content/201706110844-9834.htm>.
- Terör örgütü PYD/PKK kontrolündeki Afrin'de Rus varlığı, Anadolu Ajansı, 2 Mayıs 2017, <http://aa.com.tr/tr/turkiye/teror-orgutu-pyd-pkk-kontrolundeki-afrinde-rus-varligi/809706>.
- Герои войны: потери Вооруженных сил РФ в ходе сирийской операции, ТАСС Государственное Информационное Агентство России, 21 декабрь 2016.
- Михаил Малаев, Ольга Калинина, Евгений Федуненко, Дмитрий Шелковников, Что известно о погибших в Сирии российских военных, *Коммерсантъ*, 07 декабрь 2016, <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2946383>.
- Вячеслав Гусаров, Частные военные компании России как инструмент узаконенного террора, InformNapalm, 23 ноябрь, 2015, <https://informnapalm.org/15878-rossyjskiye-chvk/>.
- Michael Weiss, "The Case of the Keystone Cossacks", Foreign Policy, December, 2013, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/11/21/the-case-of-the-keystone-cossacks/>. 02.05.2017.
- RSB Grup Resmi blog sayfastı, <http://pmc.rsb-group.ru/>.
- RSB Grup Resmi İnternet Sitesi, <http://rsb-group.org/>.
- RSB Grup Resmi İnternet Sitesi, <http://rsb-group.org/>.
- Moran Güvenlik Grubu Resmi İnternet Sitesi, <http://moran-group.org>
- The Last Battle of the "Slavonic Corps", The Interpreter, 16 November 2013, <http://www.interpretermag.com/the-last-battle-of-the-slavonic-corps/>.
- Денис Коротков, Кремль признал атамана Диму, Фонтанка, Декабрь, 2016, <http://www.fontanka.ru/2016/12/15/142/>.
- Russia's Wagner group fighters sighted in Syria, RBTH, 31 August 2016, [https://in.rbth.com/economics/defence/2016/08/31/russias-wagner-group-fighters-sighted-in-syria\\_625551](https://in.rbth.com/economics/defence/2016/08/31/russias-wagner-group-fighters-sighted-in-syria_625551).
- James Miller, The Insane Story Of Russian Mercenaries Fighting For The Syrian Regime, The Huffington Post, November, 2013, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/james-miller/the-insane-story-of-russi\\_b\\_4317729.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/james-miller/the-insane-story-of-russi_b_4317729.html).
- Maria Tsvetkova and Anton Zverev, Ghost Soldiers: Russians Secretly Dying While Fighting For Assad In Syria, Reuters, November, 2016, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-russia-insight-idUSKBN12Y0M6>.
- Денис Коротков, Как И Где Набирают Добровольцев В Сирию, *REUKRAINE*, May, 2016, [http://reukraine.blogspot.com.tr/2015/10/blog-post\\_90.html](http://reukraine.blogspot.com.tr/2015/10/blog-post_90.html).
- Песков подтвердил присутствие командира ЧВК Вагнера на приеме в Кремле, ТАСС Государственное Информационное Агентство России, 15 декабря 2016, <http://tass.ru/politika/3875744>.
- Командиры «Славянского корпуса» в Сирии осуждены за наемничество, Фонтанка, 28 октября 2014, <http://www.fontanka.ru/2014/10/28/129/>.
- Redut Özel Birliği Resmi İnternet Sitesi, <http://redut-czentr.narod.ru/>.

## Endnotes

1. Russia has adopted three National Security Strategies (2000, 2009 and 2016), three military security doctrines (2000, 2010, 2014) and three foreign policy doctrines (2000, 2008, 2013) since 2000. The foreign policy doctrine adopted in 2013 was updated in 2016.
2. Выступление и дискуссия на Мюнхенской конференции по вопросам политики безопасности, 10 февраля 2007 года, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24034>. Accessed on 02 April 2017.
3. Алексей Егоров, С-400 охраняют авиабазу Хмеймим в Сирии - уникальные кадры, Звезда, 11 июня 2017, <https://tvzvezda.ru/news/forces/content/201706110844-9834.htm>. Accessed on 14 June 2017.
4. Terör örgütü PYD/PKK kontrolündeki Afrin'de Rus varlığı (Russian presence in Afrin under the control of PYD/PKK terrorist organization), Anadolu Agency, 2 May 2017, <http://aa.com.tr/tr/turkiye/teror-orgutu-pyd-pkk-kontrolundeki-afrinde-rus-varligi/809706>. Accessed on 25.05.2017.
5. Герои войны: потери Вооруженных сил РФ в ходе сирийской операции, ТАСС Государственное Информационное Агентство России, December, 2016.
6. Герои войны: потери Вооруженных сил РФ в ходе сирийской операции, ТАСС Государственное Информационное Агентство России, December, 2016.
7. Михаил Малаев, Ольга Калинина, Евгений Федуненко, Дмитрий Шелковников, Что известно о погибших в Сирии российских военных, Коммерсантъ”, 07 декабрь 2016, <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2946383>. Accessed on 5 March 2017.
8. Вячеслав Гусаров, Частные военные компании России как инструмент узаконенного террора, InformNapalm, 23 ноябрь, 2015, <https://informnapalm.org/15878-rossyjskyechvk/>. Accessed on 21 January 2017.
9. Вячеслав Гусаров, Частные военные компании России как инструмент узаконенного террора, InformNapalm, 23 ноябрь, 2015, <https://informnapalm.org/15878-rossyjskyechvk/>. Accessed on 21 January 2017.
10. Вячеслав Гусаров, Частные военные компании России как инструмент узаконенного террора, InformNapalm, 23 ноябрь, 2015, <https://informnapalm.org/15878-rossyjskyechvk/>. Accessed on 21 January 2017.
11. Michael Weiss, “The Case of the Keystone Cossacks”, Foreign Policy, December, 2013, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/11/21/the-case-of-the-keystone-cossacks/>. Accessed on 2 May 2017.
12. Вячеслав Гусаров, Частные военные компании России как инструмент узаконенного террора, InformNapalm, 23 ноябрь 2015, <https://informnapalm.org/15878-rossyjskyechvk/>. Accessed on 11 August 2016.
13. Вячеслав Гусаров, Частные военные компании России как инструмент узаконенного террора, InformNapalm, 23 ноябрь 2015, <https://informnapalm.org/15878-rossyjskyechvk/>. Accessed on 11 August 2016.
14. RSB Group Official Blog, <http://pmc.rsb-group.ru/>. Accessed on 15 March 2017.

15. RSB Group Official Website, <http://rsb-group.org/>. Accessed on 15 March 2017.
- 16.
17. RSB Group Official Website, <http://rsb-group.org/>. Accessed on 8 February 2017.
18. Moran Security Group Official Website, <http://moran-group.org>
19. The Last Battle of the “Slavonic Corps”, The Interpreter, 16 November 2013, <http://www.interpretermag.com/the-last-battle-of-the-slavonic-corps/>. Accessed on 15 September 2016.
20. Денис Коротков, Кремль признал атамана Диму, Фонтанка, Декабрь , 2016, <http://www.fontanka.ru/2016/12/15/142/>. Accessed on 9 January 2017; Russia’s Wagner group fighters sighted in Syria, RBTH, 31 August 2016, [https://in.rbth.com/economics/defence/2016/08/31/russias-wagner-group-fighters-sighted-in-syria\\_625551](https://in.rbth.com/economics/defence/2016/08/31/russias-wagner-group-fighters-sighted-in-syria_625551). Accessed on 3 May 2017.
21. James Miller, The Insane Story Of Russian Mercenaries Fighting For The Syrian Regime, The Huffington Post, November, 2013, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/james-miller/the-insane-story-of-russi\\_b\\_4317729.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/james-miller/the-insane-story-of-russi_b_4317729.html). Accessed on 28 March 2017. ; Maria Tsvetkova and Anton Zverev, Ghost Soldiers: Russians Secretly Dying While Fighting For Assad In Syria, Reuters, November, 2016, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-russia-insight-idUSKBN12Y0M6>. Accessed on 6 February 2017.
22. Денис Коротков, Как И Где Набирают Добровольцев В Сирию, REUKRAINE, May, 2016, [http://reukraine.blogspot.com.tr/2015/10/blog-post\\_90.html](http://reukraine.blogspot.com.tr/2015/10/blog-post_90.html). Accessed on 5 November 2016.
23. Денис Коротков, Как И Где Набирают Добровольцев В Сирию, REUKRAINE, May, 2016, [http://reukraine.blogspot.com.tr/2015/10/blog-post\\_90.html](http://reukraine.blogspot.com.tr/2015/10/blog-post_90.html). Accessed on 5 November 2016.
24. Песков подтвердил присутствие командира ЧВК Вагнера на приеме в Кремле, ТАСС Государственное Информационное Агентство России, 15 декабря 2016, <http://tass.ru/politika/3875744>. Accessed on 10 February 2017.
25. Командиры «Славянского корпуса» в Сирии осуждены за наемничество, Фонтанка, 28 октября 2014, <http://www.fontanka.ru/2014/10/28/129/>. Accessed on 25 April 2017.
26. Maria Tsvetkova and Anton Zverev, Ghost Soldiers: Russians Secretly Dying While Fighting For Assad In Syria, Reuters, November, 2016, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-russia-insight-idUSKBN12Y0M6>. Accessed on 15 February 2017.
27. Redut Special Unit Official Website, <http://redut-czentr.narod.ru/>.

ORSAM is an independent think-tank specializing on Middle Eastern affairs. ORSAM seeks to diversify sources of knowledge on the region and establish a channel of communication between the local experts and Turkish academic and policy circles. Toward that end, ORSAM facilitates the exchanges of officials, academics, strategists, journalists, businesspeople and members of civil society from the region with their Turkish counterparts. ORSAM conducts studies on the regional developments and disseminates their results to the policy and academic circles as well as the wider public through various publication outlets. ORSAM publications include books, reports, bulletins, newsletters, policy briefs, conference minutes and two journals *Ortadoğu Analiz* and *Ortadoğu Etütleri*.

© Content of this report is copyrighted to ORSAM. Except reasonable and partial quotation and use under the Act No. 5846, Law on Intellectual and Artistic Works, via proper citation, the content may not be used or re-published without prior permission by ORSAM. The views expressed in this report reflect only the opinions of its authors and do not represent the institutional opinion of ORSAM.



**Ortadoğu Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi (ORSAM)**

Süleyman Nazif Sokak No: 12-B Çankaya / Ankara

Tel: 0 (312) 430 26 09 Fax: 0 (312) 430 39 48

[www.orsam.org.tr](http://www.orsam.org.tr)