



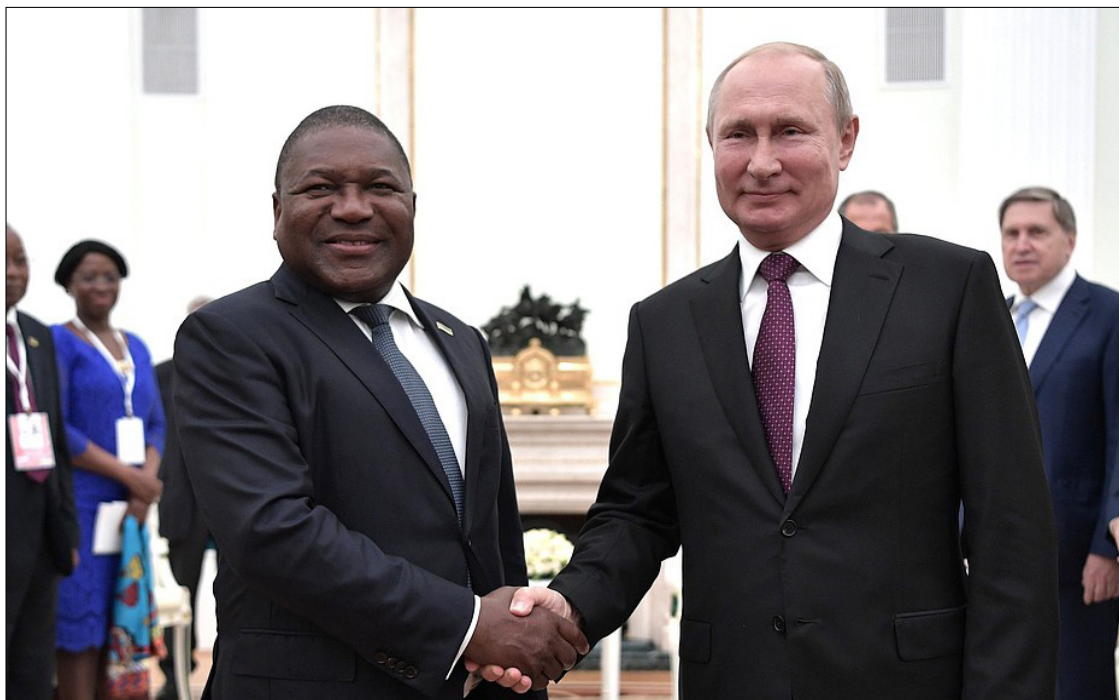
## Russia's Wagner Group Bloodied in Mozambique

**OE Watch Commentary:** As the accompanying article from the South African *Daily Maverick* explains, members of the Wagner Group - variously described as Russian paramilitary forces, mercenaries, or a unit of the Russian military, all depending on the interpretation of their degree of closeness to the Kremlin – appear to have recently been engaged in three battles with jihadists in northern Mozambique. It also appears that the Russians were on the losing end, with 11 reportedly killed, including several that were beheaded, and 25 injured.

Several reasons have been given for the Russian defeats. These include the Wagner Group members being rushed into battle without proper intelligence, training, or knowledge of the terrain. That terrain is comprised mainly of dense, impenetrable undergrowth, which presented a strong challenge to the Russians' three MI 171 SCH helicopters and assorted electronic surveillance gear.

Adding to the Russians' troubles were insurgents dressed in Mozambican army uniforms. This allowed these fake soldiers to launch a surprise attack on the unsuspecting foreigners. Part of the fallout from this is that now the Russians have a deep distrust of the Mozambican military and no longer want to do joint patrols with them.

While it is difficult to ascertain exactly what the Russians are presently doing, they appear to be at their base in Nacala retraining, acclimatizing, and gathering intelligence... all activities that would have helped prevent the deadly debacles they suffered. What they don't appear to be doing, despite reports to the contrary, is abandoning the country. As the article relates, the Russians appear to have long-term goals in Mozambique. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)**



*The Presidents of Russia and Mozambique.*

Source: Kremlin.ru, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/61352>, CC BY-SA 4.0

***“Soldiers of the Russian private military company Wagner have retreated to Mozambique’s port city Nacala, after taking a beating in recent battles with jihadist extremists.”***

**Source:** Peter Fabricius, “Wagner private military force licks wounds in northern Mozambique,” *Daily Maverick (South Africa)*, 29 November 2019. <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2019-11-29-wagner-private-military-force-licks-wounds-in-northern-mozambique/>

*Soldiers of the Russian private military company Wagner, have retreated to Mozambique’s port city Nacala, after taking a beating in recent battles with jihadist extremists*

*The bodies of the first Wagner PMC soldiers killed in Mozambique were delivered to Russia this week, according to The Moscow Times. It quoted Yevgeny Shabaev, chieftain of the Khovrino Cossack society, as saying the families of those killed had been given “impressive” monetary compensation in exchange for their silence about the deaths.*

*At a seminar in Pretoria on Wednesday organised by the European Union and the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) it emerged that experts are still not completely clear how to characterise the “faceless” insurgency in northern Mozambique. 4*

*It erupted in October 2017 with well-coordinated attacks on police stations and other government installations but since then most of the attacks – up to 300 of them – have been on unarmed villagers in which about 500 have been killed, often very brutally by beheading and other mutilations*