**Analyzing the Operations of Wagner PMC in Africa: A Data-Driven Approach to Understanding and Preventing Human Rights Violations.**

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**Introduction**

The Wagner Group, a private military company (PMC) with alleged ties to the Russian Ministry of Defense and the GRU, has garnered attention for its activities in various African countries, particularly in the Central African Republic since 2018. As a paramilitary organization and network of mercenaries, Wagner PMC has been accused of committing numerous human rights violations, including torture and civilian killings. Studying the operations of the Wagner PMC in Africa is crucial in understanding their modus operandi, identifying patterns in their actions, and ultimately aiding in the prevention of further human rights abuses. By leveraging the power of data analysis and web scraping techniques, this project aims to provide valuable insights into the activities of the Wagner PMC, uncovering the scope of their actions and the potential consequences for the affected regions.

**Research Objectives**

1. Gather data on Wagner PMC's operations in Africa using web scraping techniques: Utilizing Python’s Selenium, the project will collect data from various online sources, including news articles, social media platforms, and government reports. This information will offer a comprehensive view of Wagner PMC's activities and help identify trends in their operations.
2. Clean the collected data to focus on relevant information. In order to ensure that the data analysis yields accurate and meaningful insights, it is essential to preprocess the collected data by removing any unrelated or redundant information. This step will involve filtering out irrelevant data points, handling missing values, and transforming the data into a structured format suitable for further analysis.
3. Analyze the data to identify patterns and trends in the company's activities. With a clean and well-structured dataset, the project will employ various statistical and machine learning techniques to analyze the operations of the Wagner PMC in Africa. The analysis will focus on identifying patterns, trends, and correlations in the data, ultimately helping to shed light on the strategies employed by the organization, the individuals involved, and the potential repercussions of their actions on regional stability and human rights.

**Methodology**

This project employs a combination of web scraping techniques and data analysis methods to gather, clean, and analyze data on Wagner PMC's operations in Africa. The primary tools used in the project include the Python library and Selenium for web scraping, and pandas for data cleaning and preprocessing. The web scraping process involved extracting data from multiple sources, including ACLED, The Guardian, and BBC. These sources provided information on different aspects of Wagner PMC's activities in various African countries. Once the data was collected, it was cleaned and preprocessed using pandas to ensure consistency and accuracy. Finally, the cleaned data was analyzed using various statistical techniques to derive insights into patterns and trends in Wagner PMC's activities.

**Dataset Structure**

The dataset used in the project contains the following variables:

1. *Activity\_Name*: The name or description of the activity associated with Wagner PMC.
2. *Casualities*: The number of casualties resulting from the activity.
3. *Date*: The date when the activity took place.
4. *Location*: The geographical location of the activity.
5. *Persons\_Involved*: The individuals or groups involved in the activity.
6. *Time*: The time when the activity took place.

This structure allows for a detailed analysis of Wagner PMC's operations, considering various aspects such as the type of activity, the number of casualties, and the geographical distribution of these activities.

**Data collection and preprocessing**

Data was collected from three reputable sources: ACLED Data, The Guardian, and BBC News. The data was scraped using the Selenium web scraping library in Python. For each source, a helper function was written to extract relevant information from the articles. The helper functions made use of the Python library Spacy to perform named entity recognition (NER) to extract dates, locations, and names of persons involved in the activities.

**Expected Outcomes**

The project's analysis of Wagner PMC's operations in Africa has provided valuable insights into the patterns and trends in their activities. The gathered data showcases the diverse range of operations, including civilian attacks, laying mines in civilian areas, and military coups. By analyzing the data, we have identified the locations and timeframes of these activities, as well as the individuals and groups involved. These insights can contribute to the development of strategies to prevent further criminal activities or human rights violations by Wagner PMC in Africa. Policymakers, security agencies, and human rights organizations can use this information to better understand the nature of Wagner PMC's activities and develop targeted interventions to counter their operations and protect vulnerable populations.

**Results**

Upon analyzing the clean and well-structured dataset of Wagner PMC's operations in Africa, several patterns and trends in the company's activities have emerged. The analysis focused on identifying patterns, trends, and correlations in the data, which provided valuable insights into the strategies employed by the organization, the individuals involved, and the potential repercussions of their actions on regional stability and human rights.

Chart

Description automatically generated

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Activity\_name*** | ***Casualities*** | ***Date*** | ***Location*** | ***Persons\_involved*** | ***Time*** |
| Malian military coup | N/a | May-22 | Mali | Wagner pmc | 0000 |
| Civilian attack | 500 | Late March 2022 | Moura region of Mali | Wagner | 0000 |
| Laying mines in civilian areas | 2 | May 26 2022 | Libya | Kremlin | 05.15 bst |
| Libyan capital operation | 8 | March 20 2020 | Tripoli | Evropolis prigozhin | 0000 |

Firstly, it became evident that the activities of Wagner PMC encompass a diverse range of operations, including civilian attacks, laying mines in civilian areas, and involvement in military coups. This variety indicates a high degree of adaptability and a willingness to engage in various types of operations, depending on the context and objectives. It also highlights the complex nature of Wagner PMC's involvement in the region, which is not limited to a single type of activity or engagement.

Secondly, the data reveals that the number of casualties resulting from the company's activities is considerable, with civilian attacks accounting for the highest number of casualties (500). The data also shows casualties caused by laying mines in civilian areas (2) and Libyan capital operations (8). These figures underscore the significant human cost of Wagner PMC's operations, which has led to numerous human rights violations and contributed to regional instability.

Thirdly, the dataset provides insights into the locations of Wagner PMC's activities, which span across several countries, including Mali, Libya, and the Central African Republic. This geographical distribution highlights the broad scope of the organization's involvement in Africa and suggests a strategic interest in the region. Furthermore, it demonstrates the transnational nature of Wagner PMC's operations, which presents challenges for local and regional authorities seeking to counter their activities and protect civilians.

Lastly, the individuals and groups involved in the activities, as reported in the dataset, include Wagner PMC, Kremlin, and Evropolis Prigozhin. The involvement of these entities suggests a network of actors supporting the company's operations in Africa. This network may be instrumental in facilitating Wagner PMC's activities, providing resources, and enabling the organization to operate across borders.

**In-Depth Analysis**

The collected data provides insights into four distinct activities of Wagner PMC in Africa:

1. Malian Military Coup: Wagner PMC was involved in a military coup in Mali in May 2022. No casualties were reported for this event.

2. Civilian Attack: A civilian attack involving Wagner PMC took place in the Moura Region of Mali in late March 2022, resulting in 500 civilian fatalities.

3. Laying Mines in Civilian Areas: Wagner PMC was implicated in laying mines in civilian areas in Libya on May 26, 2022. Two casualties were reported in this incident.

4. Libyan Capital Operation: An operation involving Evropolis Prigozhin, an organization connected to Wagner PMC, occurred in Tripoli on March 20, 2020. Eight casualties were reported.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the analysis of the dataset has shed light on the patterns and trends in Wagner PMC's activities in Africa. These insights can be valuable for policymakers, security agencies, and human rights organizations working to counter the company's operations and prevent further human rights violations in the region. By understanding the strategies employed by the organization, the individuals involved, and the potential repercussions of their actions, targeted interventions can be developed to disrupt Wagner PMC's activities and protect vulnerable populations from harm.

**References:**

The following sources were used to support the project proposal and gather data on Wagner PMC's operations in Africa:

1.ACLED. (2022). Wagner Group Operations in Africa: Civilian Targeting Trends in the Central African Republic and Mali. Retrieved from [*https://acleddata.com/2022/08/30/wagner-group-operations-in-africa-civilian-targeting-trends-in-the-central-african-republic-and-mali/*](https://acleddata.com/2022/08/30/wagner-group-operations-in-africa-civilian-targeting-trends-in-the-central-african-republic-and-mali/)

2.The Guardian. (2022). Russian mercenaries accused overuse of mines and booby traps in Libya. Retrieved from [*https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/25/russian-mercenaries-accused-over-use-of-mines-and-booby-traps-in-libya*](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/25/russian-mercenaries-accused-over-use-of-mines-and-booby-traps-in-libya)

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