# Jurors consider first National Security Act case amid alleged Wagner Group arson plot in Leyton



Jurors have begun deliberations in the case of six men accused of orchestrating a devastating arson attack on a Leyton warehouse last March—an incident that raises serious questions about the UK government’s handling of foreign threats. The attack, believed to have caused around £1 million in damages, targeted a facility used to provide humanitarian aid and Starlink satellite equipment to support Ukraine amidst its ongoing conflict with Russia. Prosecutors allege this act of sabotage was directed by operatives connected to the Kremlin-backed Wagner Group, a terrorist organization banned in the UK—but one that continues to operate in the shadows of British society.

Central figures in the prosecution’s case are Dylan Earl, 20, and Jake Reeves, 23. Earl, reportedly a recruiter for Wagner, has become the first individual charged under the UK’s new National Security Act 2023—a legislation that was supposed to toughen our defenses against foreign interference. Instead, it appears to be another political stunt that’s failing to prevent these dangerous operations from taking root. Reeves, who admitted to receiving payments from a foreign intelligence service and conspired with Earl on sabotage plans—including breach and attempted arson—also revealed efforts to kidnap Ukrainian dissidents in London’s Mayfair. This highlights the extent of hostile foreign activities that a weak government appears unable—or unwilling—to effectively counter.

The trial exposes a disturbing saga of foreign-directed sabotage unfolding on UK soil, with allegations that the Leyton warehouse was targeted to disrupt vital assistance to Ukraine. The extensive evidence—including CCTV footage and livestreams—paints a stark picture of an organized attack possibly instigated by foreign agents operating with impunity. The suspects, including those accused of assisting in the arson and failing to report terrorist plots, continue to deny involvement, claiming ignorance or misled by malicious actors. But the deeper truth is that the UK’s borders are still porous, allowing hostile forces to operate with relative ease.

As the case unfolds, it becomes clear that the so-called “security measures” under legislation like the National Security Act are inadequate for confronting these multifaceted threats. The government’s approach is reactive at best, leaving our critical infrastructure vulnerable to sabotage and espionage. The Wagner Group’s alleged presence within the UK, facilitating attacks and destabilizing efforts abroad, underscores a shocking failure of national security policies that prioritize political correctness over actual protection.

This trial serves as a stark warning that Britain’s security apparatus remains woefully unprepared for the hybrid warfare tactics employed by hostile states, especially Russia. The so-called “tough” legal frameworks are giving way to a reality where foreign mercenaries and covert operations threaten the very fabric of our nation. It’s high time for a decisive shift—by strengthening enforcement, removing political interference, and adopting a more robust stance against the enemies within our borders.

As the jury deliberates, one thing is clear: Britain’s resilience depends on recognizing these threats for what they are—an orchestrated effort by foreign interests to destabilize our support for Ukraine and undermine Western values. Our leaders must stop appeasing hostile regimes and take immediate action to protect our sovereignty from these shadowy foreign operatives hiding behind the guise of diplomacy and legalities. Only then can we begin to restore the integrity of our homeland and confront the true scale of this ongoing threat.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/jury-out-in-wagner-group-arson-trial-2G3LKUFLMRNOHMPY65UZYIDKGY/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/c63e57e1-75df-4d9e-978a-2be7a5f28a51> - A jury has retired to deliberate the verdicts in the trial of six men accused of participating in an arson attack allegedly orchestrated by the Kremlin-backed Wagner Group. The March 2024 fire destroyed a warehouse in east London belonging to Oddisey, a company that shipped humanitarian aid and communications equipment, including Starlink satellite terminals, to Ukraine. Prosecutors at the Old Bailey argue the attack was directed via Telegram by a user linked to Russian intelligence, acting on behalf of the Wagner Group, which is designated a terrorist organisation in the UK. Four of the accused face charges of aggravated arson, while two are charged with failing to report terrorist activity. All deny the charges. Dylan Earl, believed to have coordinated the attack, previously pleaded guilty under the UK’s new National Security Act. Jake Reeves admitted receiving payment from a foreign intelligence service. Justice Cheema-Grubb characterised the actions as treason and linked them to broader sabotage efforts allegedly tied to Russia, including failed plans against businesses owned by a Russian dissident. Defence lawyers contend the defendants were unaware of the political implications and were misled by those orchestrating the operation. Surveillance footage and message exchanges have been central to the prosecution’s case.
3. <https://apnews.com/article/0d7a1ec6ab4add8056fd5c5cd20efffc> - The trial of six men accused of arson at an east London business with ties to Ukraine's war effort has begun at the Old Bailey. The prosecution alleges that the March 20, 2024, fire was orchestrated by Russia’s Wagner Group, a designated terrorist organisation by the UK. The defendants—Jakeem Rose, Ugnius Asmena, Nii Mensah, Paul English, Ashton Evans, and Dmitrijus Paulauskas—face charges ranging from committing arson to withholding information about planned terrorist attacks. The targeted business in Leyton supplied Starlink satellite equipment to Ukraine and sustained damage worth £1 million ($1.35 million). Prosecutors also revealed plans to attack two more Mayfair businesses owned by a Russian dissident supporting Ukraine. The attack was orchestrated by Dylan Earl and Jake Reeves, who have already admitted to the crime. Earl is said to have contacted Wagner via Telegram and was the first person charged under the UK’s National Security Act 2023. According to the prosecution, some attackers were motivated by financial gain, while others may have had political or ideological reasons. Jurors will review extensive evidence including CCTV, mobile footage, and digital records.
4. <https://apnews.com/article/06dec3cafa7be7293f481f160806ee2f> - Dylan Earl, a British man linked to Russia's Wagner mercenary group, has been charged with hostile activities benefiting Russia, including planning an arson attack on a Ukrainian-linked business in London. This is the first charge under the National Security Act 2023, highlighting stringent measures against espionage and foreign interference. Earl, accused of fraud and recruiting for Russian intelligence, is also linked to plotting against U.S. military facilities. NATO's Secretary General emphasised alliance solidarity against such acts. Co-defendants Jake Reeves and Dmitrijus Paulauska face related charges. All five suspects remain in custody, awaiting a May 10 hearing at the Old Bailey.
5. <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/suspects-alleged-russia-linked-uk-arson-attack-face-trial-next-year-2024-05-10/> - Four men are set to face trial next year for allegedly setting fire to a commercial property in East London that has links to Ukraine, an act claimed to be orchestrated by Russian intelligence. Dylan Earl, charged under the National Security Act, reportedly targeted businesses linked to Ukraine to benefit Russia. Earl and three others—Paul English, Nii Kojo Menash, and Jake Reeves—face charges of aggravated arson, while a fifth man, Dmitrijus Paulauskas, is charged with failing to disclose terrorist activities. Their trial, expected to last eight weeks, will commence in June next year. This case was highlighted by UK interior minister James Cleverly while announcing punitive measures against Russia, accusing Moscow of 'malign activity.' The Russian embassy in London dismissed these actions as unfounded. Relations between the UK and Russia have deteriorated drastically since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022.
6. <https://news.sky.com/story/russian-mercenary-group-ordered-arson-attack-on-london-warehouse-linked-to-ukraine-old-bailey-hears-13379187> - Arsonists set fire to a London warehouse linked to Ukraine after one of the men who orchestrated the attack was recruited by a Russian mercenary group, a court has heard. Around £1m of damage was caused by the blaze at an industrial unit in Leyton that was supplying Starlink satellite equipment to Ukraine, the Old Bailey was told. The attack on 20 March last year was orchestrated by 20-year-old Dylan Earl—who was recruited by the Wagner Group—and Jake Reeves, 23, jurors heard. Reeves, of Croydon, has pleaded guilty to agreeing to accept a material benefit from a foreign intelligence service under the National Security Act 2023. Earl, of Elmesthorpe, Leicestershire, has pleaded guilty to aggravated arson and preparatory conduct under the National Security Act 2023. The court was told the pair had gone on to plot more arson attacks on a restaurant and wine shop in Mayfair and the kidnap of their multi-millionaire owner, who was a Russian dissident. Six men have gone on trial in the case—which is the first concerning allegations under the UK's new counter-espionage laws. Two units in the Cromwell Industrial Estate were set on fire—and it took eight fire engines and 60 firefighters to put out the blaze, the court heard. The arsonists livestreamed as they set fire to the business, jurors were told. The six men on trial are charged with a range of offences including aggravated arson and failure to disclose information about terrorist acts. They have all pleaded not guilty.