# Three men convicted for Wagner Group-backed arson on Ukraine aid warehouse in London



In a significant case underscoring the covert conflicts spilling onto British soil, a London jury has found three men guilty of aggravated arson for a deliberate attack on a warehouse in east London which stored essential supplies for Ukraine. The defendants—Nii Mensah, Jakeem Rose, and Ugnius Asmena—were convicted of carrying out a firebombing in March 2024 at the Leyton industrial unit, damaging goods valued at approximately £1 million. The warehouse was known to hold Starlink satellite equipment, generators, and other humanitarian aid materials destined for Ukraine’s ongoing defence against Russian aggression.

Authorities have linked the attack directly to the Wagner Group, a Russian mercenary organisation proscribed as a terrorist entity by the UK government. The arson was part of a broader strategy attributed to Moscow and its proxies to disrupt support networks for Ukraine within Europe. The attack was allegedly coordinated through Russian-associated Telegram channels, with a UK resident—Dylan Earl—identified as the primary orchestrator acting on Wagner’s behalf. Earl, alongside Jake Reeves, previously pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit arson and related offences, including violations of the UK’s National Security Act 2023, marking a legal milestone as the first prosecutions under the new counter-terrorism legislation.

The case also revealed a network of recruitment and coordination within the UK, involving individuals motivated by ideological allegiance and financial incentives. For instance, Mensah reportedly filmed the arson and livestreamed the incident to Earl and Reeves to confirm its execution. Evidence submitted during the trial included CCTV footage, digital communications, and forensic links such as DNA traces tying one defendant to a knife found at the scene. Meanwhile, other suspects faced a variety of outcomes; Ashton Evans was convicted of withholding information on related plots, including planned attacks on Mayfair businesses owned by Russian dissidents, while Paul English and Dmitrijus Paulauskas were acquitted on certain charges.

The Metropolitan Police’s Counter Terrorism Command emphasised the serious implications of the case, pointing to the Wagner Group’s use of local proxies to carry out acts of sabotage in the UK. Commander Dominic Murphy highlighted the danger posed by foreign hostile agents exploiting social networks and criminal elements within the UK to fulfil state-directed operations. The Crown Prosecution Service described the convictions as a strong message that such acts of foreign-backed violence will not be tolerated on British soil.

The Russian embassy in London has consistently denied involvement, dismissing the allegations as unfounded accusations by the British government. However, the court’s findings have underscored the complexity and evolving nature of hybrid warfare, where open conflict is supplemented by covert attempts to undermine adversaries through sabotage and terrorism in third countries.

This case further illuminates the wider geopolitical tensions stemming from Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and the global repercussions of that conflict—showcasing how the battlefield extends beyond Ukraine’s borders, with private armies like Wagner operating clandestinely in major Western cities. The sentencing of those convicted is expected in the coming months, closing a landmark chapter in the UK’s efforts to counter foreign malign influence and protect national security.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2025-07-08/three-men-guilty-for-wagner-group-backed-arson-attack-in-london), [[6]](https://news.sky.com/story/three-men-guilty-of-arson-attack-ordered-by-wagner-group-on-ukraine-linked-warehouse-in-london-13393489), [[2]](https://www.apnews.com/article/a00f7429e0688731ff1718d2c3bb855f)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://www.apnews.com/article/a00f7429e0688731ff1718d2c3bb855f), [[3]](https://www.ft.com/content/0adfde4c-2fd6-4d10-b8ea-94ff3dd35b32), [[4]](https://www.apnews.com/article/0d7a1ec6ab4add8056fd5c5cd20efffc), [[6]](https://news.sky.com/story/three-men-guilty-of-arson-attack-ordered-by-wagner-group-on-ukraine-linked-warehouse-in-london-13393489)
* Paragraph 3 – [[6]](https://news.sky.com/story/three-men-guilty-of-arson-attack-ordered-by-wagner-group-on-ukraine-linked-warehouse-in-london-13393489), [[3]](https://www.ft.com/content/0adfde4c-2fd6-4d10-b8ea-94ff3dd35b32), [[4]](https://www.apnews.com/article/0d7a1ec6ab4add8056fd5c5cd20efffc), [[7]](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-07-09/three-men-guilty-of-russian-sabotage-on-uk/105509664)
* Paragraph 4 – [[6]](https://news.sky.com/story/three-men-guilty-of-arson-attack-ordered-by-wagner-group-on-ukraine-linked-warehouse-in-london-13393489), [[4]](https://www.apnews.com/article/0d7a1ec6ab4add8056fd5c5cd20efffc), [[2]](https://www.apnews.com/article/a00f7429e0688731ff1718d2c3bb855f), [[3]](https://www.ft.com/content/0adfde4c-2fd6-4d10-b8ea-94ff3dd35b32)
* Paragraph 5 – [[6]](https://news.sky.com/story/three-men-guilty-of-arson-attack-ordered-by-wagner-group-on-ukraine-linked-warehouse-in-london-13393489), [[7]](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-07-09/three-men-guilty-of-russian-sabotage-on-uk/105509664), [[1]](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2025-07-08/three-men-guilty-for-wagner-group-backed-arson-attack-in-london)
* Paragraph 6 – [[6]](https://news.sky.com/story/three-men-guilty-of-arson-attack-ordered-by-wagner-group-on-ukraine-linked-warehouse-in-london-13393489), [[7]](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-07-09/three-men-guilty-of-russian-sabotage-on-uk/105509664), [[4]](https://www.apnews.com/article/0d7a1ec6ab4add8056fd5c5cd20efffc)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2025-07-08/three-men-guilty-for-wagner-group-backed-arson-attack-in-london> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.apnews.com/article/a00f7429e0688731ff1718d2c3bb855f> - A UK jury convicted three men—Jakeem Rose, Ugnius Asmena, and Nii Mensah—of aggravated arson in connection with a March 2024 attack on a warehouse in east London that stored supplies for Ukraine, including generators and StarLink satellite equipment. Authorities say the attack was orchestrated by agents of Russia’s Wagner mercenary group, acting on behalf of Russian military intelligence. The arson caused approximately £1 million ($1.35 million) in damage and is seen as part of a broader campaign of disruption across Europe attributed to Moscow and its proxies. Two other men, Dylan Earl and Jake Reeves, had already pleaded guilty to orchestrating the attack for Wagner and to offenses under the UK’s National Security Act 2023. Earl also admitted plotting further attacks and kidnapping a Russian dissident businessman in London. Paul English, 61, was acquitted, claiming ignorance of the arson plot. Ashton Evans was found guilty of withholding information on a related plot, while another accused, Dmitrijus Paulauskas, was acquitted of all charges. The case is notable for being the first to include charges under the UK’s newly implemented National Security Act. Sentencing is scheduled for the fall.
3. <https://www.ft.com/content/0adfde4c-2fd6-4d10-b8ea-94ff3dd35b32> - Three men—Nii Kojo Mensah, Jakeem Rose, and Ugnius Asmena—have been found guilty of aggravated arson for a March 2024 attack on a warehouse in east London, which prosecutors linked to Russia's Wagner paramilitary group. The warehouse belonged to Odyssey, a company aiding Ukraine with humanitarian supplies and Starlink technology. The attack was allegedly orchestrated via Russian-linked Telegram forums. British national Dylan Earl, who previously pleaded guilty to violating the UK’s National Security Act, was accused of coordinating the plot online with a suspected Wagner recruiter known as Privet Bot. Ashton Evans was convicted on a separate count related to an unrealized attack on Russian dissident Evgeny Chichvarkin's Mayfair businesses. Another participant, Jake Reeves, admitted to receiving funds from a foreign intelligence service. Prosecutors emphasized the arson was a targeted act carried out on behalf of Wagner, a group banned in the UK as a terrorist organization. Some defendants were acquitted, including Paul English and Dmitrijus Paulauskas on certain charges. The case highlights the increasing use of social networks like Telegram by foreign entities to recruit UK residents for sabotage operations.
4. <https://www.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 organization 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.
5. <https://news.bloomberglaw.com/white-collar-and-criminal-law/three-men-guilty-for-wagner-group-backed-arson-attack-in-london> - A London jury found three men guilty for carrying out a Russia backed arson attack on a London warehouse of a firm that supplied goods, including Starlink satellite equipment, to Ukraine. The jury convicted UK-residents Nii Mensah, Jakeem Rose and Ugnius Asmena of aggravated arson on Tuesday. The east London attack targeted a Ukrainian businessman’s warehouse where SpaceX-made devices and generators were stored in March last year.
6. <https://news.sky.com/story/three-men-guilty-of-arson-attack-ordered-by-wagner-group-on-ukraine-linked-warehouse-in-london-13393489> - Three men have been found guilty of an arson attack on a London warehouse linked to Ukraine on behalf of the terrorist Wagner Group. Around £1m of damage was caused by the blaze at an industrial unit in Leyton, east London, that was supplying StarLink satellite equipment to Ukraine, a court heard. The StarLinks are often used by the Ukrainian military in its fight against Russia following the full-scale invasion by President Vladimir Putin's forces which started in February 2022. Nii Mensah, 23, Jakeem Rose, 23, and Ugnius Asmena, 20, were convicted of aggravated arson with intent to endanger life following an Old Bailey trial. Paul English, 61, was cleared of the same charge. The attack at the Cromwell industrial estate on 20 March last year was orchestrated by 20-year-old Dylan Earl - who was recruited by the Wagner Group - and Jake Reeves, 23, the trial previously heard. The group of Russian mercenaries effectively acts as a private army for the state. Reeves, of Croydon, pleaded guilty to agreeing to accept a material benefit from a foreign intelligence service under the National Security Act 2023. Earl, of Elmesthorpe, Leicestershire, pleaded guilty to aggravated arson and preparatory conduct under the National Security Act 2023. It was alleged they recruited a group of men to carry out the attack as part of a series of planned missions for the terrorist group. The court was previously 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 Evgeny Chichvarkin, who is a Russian dissident. Warehouse arson attack was livestreamed The Metropolitan Police said an analysis of Earl's Telegram messages showed the first person he recruited for the warehouse arson plot was Reeves, who then recruited his friend Mensah to carry out the attack. In turn, Mensah recruited his friend Rose. Asmena was also recruited to take part. Mensah, Rose and Asmena met up on the evening of 20 March 2024 and travelled in a red Kia Picanto to the scene of the arson. Officers found evidence that Mensah filmed the warehouse being set alight and livestreamed it on FaceTime to Earl and Reeves. The video was recovered by police. A knife found at the scene was linked to Rose through DNA analysis. The case is the first concerning allegations under the UK's new counter-espionage laws. Prosecutor Duncan Penny said Earl was "knowingly acting at the behest of the Wagner Group", banned as a terrorist organisation, and "knew he was acting against Ukrainian, and for Russian interests". Commander Dominic Murphy, head of the Met's Counter Terrorism Command, said: "This case is a clear example of an organisation linked to the Russian state using 'proxies' - in this case British men - to carry out very serious criminal activity in this country on their behalf." He said that the ringleaders Earl and Reeves "willingly acted as hostile agents on behalf of the Russian state". And he added that it was "only by good fortune nobody was ... ". The Crown Prosecution Service called the convictions a "significant moment" and they "send a very clear message that this type of offending will not be tolerated on UK soil". The Russian embassy in London has rejected any part in the warehouse fire, saying the British government repeatedly blames Russia for anything "bad" that happens in the UK.
7. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-07-09/three-men-guilty-of-russian-sabotage-on-uk/105509664> - The court heard the attack on March 20, 202 ... targeted businesses linked to Ukraine and was planned by agents of Wagner Group, acting on behalf of Russian ... warehouse targeted by the trio stored aid and Starlink satellite devices vital for Ukraine's defence against Russia's continuing invasion. The jury found Jakeem Rose, Ugnius Asmena and Nii Mensah guilty of aggravated arson. CCTV shown to the court showed Rose and Mensah near the warehouse shortly before setting fire to it. The fire caused around 1 million ... 2 million) worth of damage. A fourth man, Paul English, ... cleared of any wrongdoing. Prosecutors said the attack ... had previously pleaded guilty to aggravated arson ... . Dylan Earl, left and Jake Reeves, right, pleaded guilty to orchestrating the attack on behalf of Wagner. Earl also became the first person convicted under the National Security Act when he admitted his role in a plot targeting a wine shop and restaurant in London's upmarket Mayfair district, with plans to kidnap the owner, a high-profile critic of Russian President Vladimir Putin. Earl exchanged hundreds of messages with an apparent Wagner handler who encouraged him to find links with soccer hooligans, Irish republican militants and high-profile criminal groups. Arson is latest Russia-linked incident The arson attack was the latest incident involving allegations of malign activity by Moscow in Britain. Commander Dominic Murphy, head of the London police's Counter Terrorism Command, said both plots involving Earl showed "the Russian state projecting activity into the United Kingdom". He said Russia and other states such as Iran had adapted to British authorities' response to hostile activity, with some 20 per cent of counterterrorism police's work coming from foreign states. The warehouse in East London was storing Starlink satellite equipment bound for Ukraine. The Kremlin has denied the accusations, and its embassy in London has rejected any part in the warehouse fire, saying the British government repeatedly blames Russia for anything "bad" that happens in Britain. In March, a group of Bulgarians were convicted of being directed by Wirecard fugitive Jan Marsalek to spy for Russian intelligence. British authorities say that, since the expulsion of Russian spies following the 2018 poisoning of Russian double agent Sergei Skripal, Moscow has had