

Russian Mercenary Convicted for Murder Speaks at School – Reports

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Wagner fighter and students. **Social media**

A Russian mercenary twice convicted of homicide before he fought in Ukraine was invited to speak with young teenagers at a public school this month, media [reported](#) Thursday.

Wagner fighter and assault machine gunner Alexander Raspravin was welcomed as a local hero with war stories from Russia's nearly 20-month invasion of Ukraine.

Raspravin was [photographed](#) in full camouflage inside a seventh-grade classroom in Vyezdnoye, a town in the Nizhny Novgorod region 400 kilometers east of Moscow.

A rocket-propelled grenade was featured prominently in the classroom session, with classmates seen closely examining the weapon and one student mounting it on his shoulder.

"[Raspravin] spoke about living conditions at the front and the importance of the support of ordinary citizens," the school said in a social media post on Oct. 5.

Related article: [Murders, Drugs and Brawls: Russia's Pardoned Ex-Convicts Return Home After Fighting in Ukraine](#)

The two-week-old post on the popular social network VKontakte was first reported Thursday by the online news outlet Govorit NeMoskva.

“Raspravin spoke about how he had rescued 16 of our troops from captivity, how he himself was wounded and received combat awards for that,” the school added.

The school's VKontakte page said the seventh-graders “very much enjoyed” Raspravin's visit.

Govorit NeMoskva reported that Raspravin was [sentenced](#) to 12 years in prison in 2017 for striking a man 40 times during a drunken brawl.

He had previously been [sentenced](#) to six years in prison in 2010 for beating to death his own grandfather, according to the independent Mediazona news website.

The verdict remains [unknown](#) in another criminal case against Raspravin into grievous bodily harm.

The Wagner Group recruited prisoners for the war in Ukraine to reverse widely reported manpower shortages until Russia's Defense Ministry took over prison recruitment efforts in early 2023.

President Vladimir Putin, who was reported to have [personally pardoned](#) the recruited convicts in exchange for their service, said last month that Russian prisoners who died in Ukraine had [redeemed](#) themselves in the eyes of society.

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