

The Miami-Haiti Connection: Another Mercenary, Another Day

Emerging details suggest that President Moïse's assassins were Colombians hired by a security firm in Florida. Sound familiar?

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This weekend we found out that the Colombian men arrested in connection with the assassination of Haitian president Jovenel Moïse may have been hired by a [Florida private security company](#) with Venezuelan connections. Furthermore, they might have been deployed on behalf of an Haitian [ex-pat in Miami who wanted to replace Moïse as president](#).

Why does this sound so familiar?

Maybe because it was only last year that 13 men led an unsuccessful coup attempt — known cheekily as the "Bay of Piglets" — against Venezuelan president Nicolas Maduro. Their alleged leader was [a former Navy Seal](#), who also runs a security company in Florida. [Jordan Goudreau](#) was allegedly working with ex-Venezuelan military exiles who wanted to help overthrow Maduro for opposition leader Juan Guaido (he has denied any involvement). They [led an elaborate plan](#) to train fellow ex-Venezuelan military soldiers at a training camp in Colombia. Goudreau wasn't on the boat that day when the May 2020 plot was foiled, but two [former Green Berets](#) (ages 34 and 41) were, and they are doing 20 years in a Venezuelan jail right now, convicted on charges of conspiracy, illicit trafficking of weapons, and terrorism.

The details in both stories are sordid, but the common thread is this: guns for hire have always been around but after our 9/11 wars the proliferation of private military companies with sophisticated weapons, well-trained leaders, and money seeming to burn cannot be ignored. As Sean McFate, author of [The Modern Mercenary: Private Armies and What They Mean for World Order](#) (2015) likes to say, it would be impossible to stuff this genie back into the bottle. Not only did we conjure the djinn of the modern industry by outsourcing security throughout the Iraq and Afghanistan wars — think Blackwater, Dyncorp, Triple Canopy — but made it a lucrative opportunity for the millions of veterans of those wars. And it's not just an American game. Plenty of companies working with governments all over the world see the benefit of waging conflicts under the radar with hired mercenaries — just ask the Russians. According to reports, [the Wagner group](#) has been operating in Ukraine, Libya,

Sudan, Syria, Madagascar, and yes, in 2019 they were reportedly working [to protect Maduro](#) in Venezuela.

And we cannot forget about our prince of peace, Erik Prince, Blackwater founder, who Time magazine [just reported](#) was allegedly approaching the Ukrainian government in 2020 with plans to build a private army to help them against the Russians. The Ukrainians smartly turned them down, as did the Trump administration when Prince was shopping around a plan to [outsource Afghanistan](#). The Somali government [shut down a Prince-related contract](#) in 2011. Meanwhile, he was recently [accused](#) of backing an armed (but aborted) operation that would have helped insurgent Khalifa Haftar overthrow the government in Libya (in violation of UN arms embargo) in 2019. Supposedly, he even offered his services to Maduro, [a year before Goudreau's silly plot](#).

But the UAE was glad to take Prince's sellswords [for royal bodyguards in 2011](#). And guess where they were from (and trained)? Colombia. Soldiers trained there were later sent to fight (and die) in Yemen for the Emiratis.

Privateering is a lucrative business. It's also a highly immoral trade in which governments, non-state actors, and private citizens with the right amount of money can wage an insurgency, repress local populations, or assassinate the leader of another country. The highest bidder wins.

While we are still just learning the Miami connection to Moïse's murder, the very mention of a private security firm raises some uncomfortable questions about financing and the ease with which armed assailants can be trained and armed and transported around for these missions. As McFate would like to say, this won't be the last time.

"A world with more mercenaries is one with more war and suffering," [he has said](#).

Let's just hope Erik Prince doesn't have his finger prints on this one. We sort of created him.

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