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## Human Rights Council

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Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

## **Report of the Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination**

**Chairperson-Rapporteur: Shaista Shameem**

**Addendum**

## **Regional consultation for Asia and the Pacific on the activities of private military and security companies: regulation and monitoring (26–27 October 2009)\***

### *Summary*

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 62/145 and Human Rights Council resolution 7/21, the Working Group held a regional consultation for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok, on 26 and 27 October 2009.

Through the consultation, the Working Group sought to gain a regional perspective on the current practices related to mercenaries and private military and security companies registered, operating or recruiting personnel in Asia, the Pacific and the Middle East. It provided an opportunity to discuss the fundamental question of the role of the State as holder of the monopoly of the legitimate use of force and to share information on steps taken by States in the region to introduce legislation or other measures to regulate and monitor activities of such companies on the international market.

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\* The summary of the present report is circulated in all official languages. The report itself, annexed to the summary, is circulated in the language of submission only.

The Working Group reported on the work it is conducting towards a possible new binding international legal instrument on the regulation of private military and security to encourage the further protection of human rights.

The consultation was attended by representatives of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Fiji, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Myanmar, Pakistan, Qatar, Samoa, Thailand, Viet Nam and Yemen; as well as by the observer of Palestine.

The Working Group was represented by its Chairperson-Rapporteur, Shaista Shameem, and by its members Amada Benavides de Pérez, José Luis Gómez del Prado and Alexander Nikitin.

## Annex

### **Report of the Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination**

#### **Regional consultation for Asia and the Pacific on the activities of private military and security companies: regulation and monitoring**

(26–27 October 2009)

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## I. Background

1. In paragraph 15 of its resolution 62/145, the General Assembly requested the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to convene regional governmental consultations on traditional and new forms of mercenary activities as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination, in particular regarding the effects of the activities of private military and security companies (PMSCs) on the enjoyment of human rights.
2. In line with the above-mentioned resolution and Human Rights Council resolution 7/21, the Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination<sup>1</sup> held a regional consultation for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok on 26 and 27 October 2009.
3. The consultation was attended by representatives of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Fiji, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Myanmar, Pakistan, Qatar, Samoa, Thailand, Viet Nam and Yemen; as well as by the observer of Palestine.
4. The Working Group was represented by the Chairperson-Rapporteur, Shaista Shameem, and its members Amada Benavides de Pérez, José Luis Gómez del Prado and Alexander Nikitin.
5. The Working Group had held two previous regional consultations, the first in Panama City for the Latin American and Caribbean Region on 17 and 18 December 2007 (see A/HRC/7/7/Add.5) and the second in Moscow for the Eastern European Group and Central Asian Region on 17 and 18 October 2008 (see A/HRC/10/14/Add.3).
6. The Working Group expresses its sincere appreciation for the warm welcome of the authorities of Thailand and for their support for the organization of this consultation in Bangkok. It also thanks the OHCHR office in Bangkok for its invaluable assistance throughout the meeting.

## II. Summary of the meeting

7. The consultation was opened by Asda Jayanama, advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Government of Thailand, who welcomed the participants and underlined the importance to explore regional perspectives on the issue of PMSCs. Mr. Jayanama said that PMSCs were on the rise and active worldwide and that the legal gaps applicable to such groups needed to be filled. He added that many questions had to be addressed, including the accountability of PMSCs, their obligations to respect human rights and international humanitarian law and the extent to which States could outsource their inherent security and military functions to private entities. He concluded by encouraging participants to engage in a fruitful discussion on the possibility of a new international convention to ensure regulation and oversight of the activities of PMSCs.

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<sup>1</sup> The Working Group on the use of mercenaries was established by the Commission on Human Rights through its resolution 2005/2. The Working Group is composed of five independent experts serving in their personal capacities. Since March 2009, Shaista Shameem (Fiji) is the Chairperson-Rapporteur. The other members are Amada Benavides de Pérez (Colombia), José Luis Gómez del Prado (Spain), Alexander Nikitin (Russian Federation) and Najat al-Hajjaji (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya).

## **A. National experiences regarding the activities of private military and security companies**

8. The representative of Fiji introduced the session and provided a comprehensive presentation on the practice of foreign PMSCs employing personnel from Fiji to operate in third countries, in particular in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the challenges it represented for the country and the personnel. He noted that Fiji had not until now adopted a specific regulation on the issue.

9. Participants shared the experience of their countries regarding PMSCs. They stressed the need to distinguish between local private security companies used to secure official or private buildings (often with unarmed personnel) and foreign private military companies operating outside their own countries, often in zones of conflict or tension. Some also recalled specific situations where PMSCs had been involved in mercenary activities.

10. A discussion followed on the importance of regular human rights training for PMSC personnel. Participants also noted the need for an enforcement mechanism to protect against potential violations by PMSC personnel of international human rights standards.

11. Participants discussed the consequences of the increased recruitment of former security personnel to PMSCs on the employees themselves and on the society. One representative said that often personnel were not offered the working conditions initially promised. He noted, for example, that in many instances personnel were not paid the wage announced. Another participant noted the negative impact a large-scale recruitment by PMSCs could have on a home country, in particular when the recruits were sent back with serious post-traumatic trauma and no appropriate structure to assist them.

## **B. National legislation to regulate and monitor the activities of private military and security companies**

12. The item was introduced through a presentation of the regulation of PMSCs in Afghanistan. The representative of Afghanistan outlined the regulation adopted in February 2008 by the Ministry of Interior, in particular the guidelines for registration and licensing as well as the monitoring and verification mechanisms. He described the “irregularities” that had been committed by PMSCs in Afghanistan, including the killing of civilians, clashes with Afghan forces, and threats against clients who did not intend to renew their contracts.

13. The representative underlined that the need for PMSCs was largely dependent on the situation of the country, that is, whether a conflict was taking place or not, as well as on the capacity of the national security forces to provide security and protection to its population. In his country, the Government lacked the capacity to maintain the full monopoly of the use of force, which had prompted it to call on the assistance of PMSCs. The Government was in the process of building the capacity of its armed forces to regain the full control over the use of force. The new regulation in Afghanistan stated that PMSCs could not be involved in offensive actions.

14. Participants engaged in a discussion of the different forms of regulation in place in their respective countries. Most representatives underlined the distinction between international PMSCs and national private security companies providing services on their national territory. Several noted that they had a licensing regime in place for national private security companies. Most countries, with the exception of Afghanistan, stated that they had no foreign or national private military companies operating on their territory. For example, a representative noted that such companies were not authorized to operate in his country; and that the Government was currently investigating allegations that some

companies were active in the country without its knowledge or authorization. In particular he underlined that PMSCs commonly used the cover of a multinational military operation, such as NATO, to operate in countries without the explicit approbation and oversight of the territorial country.

15. One representative highlighted the guidelines provided in the Montreux Document on pertinent international legal obligations and good practices for States related to operations of private military and security companies during armed conflict (A/63/467) and stated that his country was supportive of efforts to develop an international instrument or basic principles highlighting the human rights standards on the issue and emphasizing the need for accountability in cases of human rights violations. He also reiterated the importance for States to support all human rights when contracting PMSCs.

### **C. The role of the State as holder of the monopoly of the legitimate use of force**

16. The Chairperson of the Working Group said that the Working Group had noted a global trend toward the increased privatization of security. In some conflict zones, PMSC contractors were more numerous than conventional forces and often had very sophisticated logistical support and weaponry. She underlined the potential conflict of interest faced in the case of a for-profit organization providing security in a conflict or post-conflict zone. Those developments had consequences on the role of the State as holder of the legitimate monopoly on the use of force. That assessment had led the Working Group to advocate for the elaboration of an international framework to regulate and the activities of PMSCs. The Chairperson welcomed the Swiss initiative towards a code of conduct for the industry but stressed that self-regulatory initiatives were far from sufficient.

17. Several participants underlined the existing legal vacuum and stressed the necessity to ensure that the activities of PMSCs were systematically monitored. Several representatives expressed their support for the efforts of the Working Group with regard to drafting a new convention, an initiative complementary to the Swiss efforts towards an international code of conduct. A representative reiterated the responsibility of States vis-à-vis PMSCs they contracted and stressed that States could not shift their responsibility to such companies by virtue of a contract. PMSCs should exercise maximum restraint in the use of force, and should not participate in any activities to overthrow a legitimate Government.

18. Participants also underlined the importance of increased transparency regarding the activities of PMSCs, including with respect to their numbers, the number of weapons used and the services provided. They emphasized the right of the public to be informed.

### **D. Elements for a possible draft convention on private military and security companies**

19. The Chairperson noted that the restrictive definition of mercenaries as per the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries (1989) was not applicable to PMSCs. That assessment had led the Working Group to advocate for a new convention on the regulation, oversight and monitoring of such companies and their activities.

20. In that regard, the Chairperson recalled that in its resolution 10/11 (para. 13), the Human Rights Council had requested the Working Group: (a) to consult with intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and experts on the content and scope of a possible draft convention on PMSCs; (b) to share with

Member States elements for a possible draft convention on PMSCs and to request their input on the content and scope of such a convention; and (c) to report to the Council at its fifteenth session on the progress achieved in the elaboration of the draft convention.

21. The Chairperson emphasized that a legal gap existed with respect to governing the activities of private military and security companies. The purpose of a new convention on the issue would be to fill that legal gap, by, among other things, reaffirming and strengthening State responsibility for the use of force and supporting the regulation of the activities of PMSCs and subcontractors.

22. The Chairperson described the main purpose and elements of the draft convention, including the fundamental principles on State responsibility for the exercise of the legitimate use of force; the States' primary obligation to ensure that respect for human rights and humanitarian law was demonstrated by the PMSCs they contracted; the definition of parameters of inherently State functions that could not be outsourced, in any context or circumstances, to PMSCs; the establishment of international and national regulatory principles for the activities of PMSCs, through the establishment of licensing and registration; the creation of an independent international oversight and monitoring mechanism; and the provision of an avenue of redress for victims.

23. Other members of the Working Group provided additional information on the rationale and purpose of the new legal instrument, including its applicability to all situations regardless of the existence of armed conflict, the emphasis on the access of victims to reparation and justice and the need for a system of national registration and increased control for host countries where companies operate.

24. Participants welcomed the work of the Working Group on a possible draft convention. Several delegates recognized the importance of national legislation but also noted the importance of an international framework to address the global problem. Several countries underlined the responsibility of countries of origin with regard to PMSCs that were contracted to operate abroad.

25. Another delegate emphasized that the convention should address the human rights impact of PMSCs and not become an attempt to regulate all PMSC activities. In particular, monitoring and regulating the use of national private security companies should remain the prerogative of the State concerned.

26. Finally, several participants underlined that the Working Group and Member States should strive to ensure the universality of such an instrument or basic principles.

### **III. Conclusions and observations of the Working Group**

27. **The Working Group concluded the meeting by thanking all participants for their valuable contributions. The Chairperson reiterated the key points that had been raised, including the general concern at the rapid growth of private military and security companies (PMSCs) and the consensus on the need for increased national and international regulation of private military and security companies.**

28. **Participants discussed the monopoly of the legitimate use of force and the possibility of defining at the international level those functions that were inherently governmental and that should not be outsourced. The Working Group shared its concerns regarding the trend of PMSCs increasingly taking over functions that were, until recently, inherent to the sovereignty of States.**

29. The Working Group notes that although the growth of PMSCs is a global phenomenon, States are particularly concerned with the activities of foreign PMSCs operating in countries in the absence of clear oversight and monitoring mechanisms.
30. The Working Group recognizes a consensus from the participants regarding the existing legal gap at the international level regarding the activities of PMSCs and welcomes the declarations of support regarding its efforts to elaborate an international instrument for the regulation of such companies.
31. The Working Group recalls the responsibility of States to respect and protect human rights and to ensure that PMSCs are held accountable if and when they are responsible for crimes or human rights violations.
32. The Working Group believes that an effective system for the licensing and registering of private military and security companies and the training of their employees should be developed.
33. The Working Group encourages all regulatory efforts (a) at the industry level through self-regulation, (b) at the national level through specific legislation and (c) at the international level with the efforts of the Working Group to elaborate a possible draft convention for the oversight and monitoring of PMSCs.
34. The Working Group plans to hold the final two regional consultations, in Africa and in Western Europe, in 2010. New legal instruments on regulating private military and security companies, which are currently being elaborated by the Working Group, shall be deliberated with Member States at these consultations, to provide wide input into the content and consensus on the format of these instruments.
35. The Working Group notes that this process of regional consultation may lead to the holding of a high-level round table of States under the auspices of the United Nations to discuss the fundamental question of the role of the State as holder of the monopoly of the use of force. The round table would be aimed at (a) facilitating a critical understanding of the responsibilities of the different actors, including private military and security companies, in the current context, and their respective obligations for the protection and promotion of human rights and (b) reaching a common understanding as to which additional regulations and controls are needed at the international level, as requested in Human Rights Council resolution 7/21.

## Appendices

### Appendix I

#### List of participants

Afghanistan	<p><b>General Abdul Razaq Amiri</b> Deputy Director of Counter Terrorism Dept. Ministry of Interior</p> <p><b>Mr. Aziz Ahmadzai</b> Director of the Joint Secretariat for D &amp; R Commission Ministry of Interior Joint Secretariat D &amp; R Commission Disarmament of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG)</p>
Bangladesh	<p><b>Mr. Mustafizur Rahman</b> Minister Permanent Mission of Bangladesh</p>
Cambodia	<p><b>Colonel Kem Sarin</b> Deputy Director of Counter Terrorism Dept. Commissariat General of Cambodia National Police</p>
China	<p><b>Mr. Qian Bo</b> Counsellor Mission of China to the United Nations</p>
Fiji	<p><b>Mr. Joji Wasigitoni Dumukuro</b> Ministry of Defence Fiji</p>
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	<p><b>Mr. Ali Zamani</b> Expert from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs</p>
Jordan	<p><b>Mr. Mutaz Hyassat</b> First Secretary Permanent Mission of Jordan</p>
Myanmar	<p><b>Lt. Col. Nyan Zaw</b> Deputy Director Myanmar Police Force</p>
Pakistan	<p><b>Mr. Malik Tahir Sarfaraz</b> Permanent Mission of Pakistan</p>
Qatar	<p><b>Mr. Mohammed Al Muhannadi</b> Qatar Army</p>
Samoa	<p><b>Mr. Fatu Pula</b> Police Superintendent Deputy Team Leader SPP Ministry of Police &amp; Prisons</p>

Thailand

**Mr. Medha Promthep**

Head of Delegation, Deputy Director-General  
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**Col. Krisna Bovornratanaraks**

Director, Military Legislation and Foreign Affairs Division  
The Judge Advocate General's Department,  
Ministry of Defence

**Col. Nitiphat Krittsuansombat**

Deputy Director, Office of Policy and Planning  
Ministry of Defence

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**Ms. Supapan Tiapiriyakij**

Second Secretary, Department of International Organizations  
MFA

**Mr. Paradorn Rangsimaporn**

Second Secretary, Department of International Organizations,  
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**Ms. Chonvipat Changtrakul**

Second Secretary, Department of International Organizations,  
MFA

**Mr. Thanin Katethong**

Policy Analyst, Professional level  
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**Ms. Nitiphan Saengsila**

Policy Analyst, Practitioner level  
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**Ms. Hoang Bich Lien**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Yemen

**Mr. Fadhl al-Maghafi**

Minister Plenipotentiary  
Deputy Permanent Representative at the Permanent Mission  
of Yemen to the Office of the United Nations

Palestine  
(Observer)

**Mr. Abed S.A. Abumohimeed**

Colonel  
Ministry of Interior

## Mission of Palestine

## Appendix II

### Programme

**26 October 2009**

#### Item I: Opening session

10:00–10:30 Welcoming address.

Introductory remarks by **H.E. Mr. Asda Jayanama**, Advisor to the Foreign Minister, Government of Thailand.

Introductory remarks by **Mr. Karim Ghezraoui**, Chief, Groups in Focus, Special Procedure Division, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

Introductory remarks by **Ms. Shaista Shameem**, Chairperson-Rapporteur of the Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination.

#### Item II: National experiences regarding PMSC activities

10:30–11:30 Presentation of concrete cases of the activities of PMSCs registered, operating or recruiting at national level as well as any mercenary activities.

**Mr. Joji Wasigitoni Dumukuro**, Ministry of Defence, Republic of the Fiji Islands: the experience of Fiji.

Open discussion on national experiences regarding the activities of PMSCs and mercenaries.

11:30–11:45 Coffee break.

11:45–13:00 Item II continued.

13:00–15:00 Lunch.

#### Item III: National legislation to regulate and monitor the activities of PMSCs

15:00–16:30 Presentation of national experiences of regulating and monitoring the activities of PMSCs, focusing on national legislation.

**General Abdul Razaq Amiri**, Deputy Director of Counter Terrorism Department, Ministry of Interior, and **Mr. Aziz Ahmadzai**, Director, Joint Secretariat D & R Commission, Disarmament of Illegal Armed Groups, Ministry of Interior, Afghanistan: the experience of Afghanistan.

Open discussion on steps taken at national level by Member States to introduce legislation and/or other measures to regulate and monitor the activities of PMSCs.

16:30–16:45 Coffee break.

16:45–18:00 Item III continued.

18:30 Dinner hosted by the Government of Thailand, Pimarnman Room, Four Seasons Hotel.

**27 October 2009**

**Item IV: The role of the State as holder of the monopoly of the use of force**

10:00–11:00 Participants will discuss the concept of the role of the State as holder of the monopoly of the use of force.

Introductory remarks by **Ms. Shaista Shameem**, Chairperson of the Working Group on the use of mercenaries.

Open discussion.

**Item V: Elements for a possible draft convention on PMSCs**

11:00–12:00 Members of the Working Group will share with participants the progress made so far in the elaboration of elements for a possible draft convention on PMSCs.

Open discussion on (i) guidelines, norms and basic principles for the regulation and oversight of the activities of PMSCs to encourage further protection of human rights; and (ii) views regarding the content and scope of an International Convention on the regulation, monitoring and oversight of PMSCs.

12:00–12:15 Coffee break.

**Item VI: Conclusion of consultation**

12:15–13:00 Concluding remarks by the Chairperson-Rapporteur of the Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination.

13:00–15:00 Lunch.

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