



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Written Ministerial Statement

16 September 2010

Promoting High Standards of Conduct by Private Military and Security Companies internationally

1. **The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (William Hague):**
The Government has reviewed options to regulate the Private Military and Security Company industry, with the aim of promoting high standards in the Private Military and Security Company industry internationally, and reducing the risk that the activities of Private Military and Security Companies might give rise to human rights or humanitarian law concerns, or have a negative impact on international security and stability or the UK's foreign policy goals.
2. Taking into account previous consultations, including the public consultation conducted by the previous Government, the Government has decided to:
 - a. Introduce robust regulation in the UK through a trade association based on a voluntary code of conduct agreed with and monitored by the Government;
 - b. Use its leverage as a key buyer of Private Military and Security Company services to promote compliance with the code; and,
 - c. Seek an international agreement on standards consistent with the UK code covering all aspects of Private Military and Security Company organisation and operation worldwide.
3. The Government will now:
 - a. Assess and decide the most suitable trade association to monitor and audit compliance of a UK code of conduct;
 - b. Agree an international code of conduct (an initiative led by the Swiss Government) for the Private Military and Security Company industry, and guiding principles for an accountability mechanism to support their implementation by the end of the year; and,
 - c. Incorporate agreed standards into all HM Government contracts with Private Military and Security Companies.
4. Our work will focus on ensuring that the code is effectively monitored and the industry is held accountable for its activities. The Government will review this policy two years

from its implementation. If it has not met its objective of raising standards of the industry, the Government will consider again alternative options.

5. In my speech, "Britain's values in a networked world", on 15 September, I stressed the importance of businesses upholding high standards when operating overseas. This approach supports that objective. It will also serve to strengthen international frameworks that contribute to human rights and international security.