

PMSC Bulletin

Issue number 4 – 30 Apr 2013

Private Military & Security Companies and their impacts on human rights: Recent developments

The items included here are from October 2012 to April 2013.

1. Key alleged abuses by PMSCs & concerns

- Afghanistan: Former Aegis Defense Services workers say [inadequate training & excessive working hours](#) left US embassy in Kabul vulnerable to violent attacks. Aegis' parent company response provided.
- Afghanistan: Govt. dissolves six private security firms over alleged [involvement in highway robberies & kidnappings](#).
- Afghanistan & Iraq: Documentary claims [US security firms recruit former child soldiers](#) as mercenaries. [Comments](#) by International Stability Operations Association, US industry group, provided.
- Canada: NGO says surge in use of private security firms raises concerns over [discrimination & excessive force](#); 1000 complaints filed in past five years.
- Germany: Amazon.com ends contract with security firm for allegedly [harassing temporary workers](#).
- Israel: NGOs report a rise in domestic violence cases allegedly perpetrated by [security guards using work-issued weapons](#).
- Israel & Occupied Palestinian Territories: Campaigners call on G4S to end contracts with Israeli prisons after [alleged torture & death of a Palestinian prisoner](#).
 - Electronic Intifada claims G4S provides security services for Israeli prisons holding [Palestinian children in solitary confinement & Palestinian women](#), in alleged violation of the Geneva Convention. G4S refers to its [April 2012 statement](#) in response.
 - [G4S says it will quit key contracts](#) by 2015 amid protests against its operations in the West Bank.
- Israel & Occupied Palestinian Territories: Danish firm ISS [allegedly provides cleaning & catering services to "illegal" Israeli settlements in Occupied Palestinian Territories](#). ISS response provided.
- Libya: Blue Mountain Group security guards on duty at US consulate during Sep 2012 attack in Benghazi allegedly [poorly trained & screened](#). Company says it has no comment.
- Peru: Human rights civil society coalition warns that [extractive companies are effectively "privatising the police"](#), putting human rights at risk.
- Somalia: UN Monitoring Group on Somalia & Eritrea raises human rights concerns about Sterling Corporate Services' (formerly Saracen Intl.) operations, including [links to torture & deaths](#). Company response provided.
- So. Africa: Unconfirmed accounts claim that [security guards injured several protesters & killed a farmworker during Western Cape protests](#). Security companies deny involvement.
- So. Africa: Security guards at Forbes & Manhattan Coal mine allegedly [shoot & kill two workers](#) during wage protest.
- Swaziland: Companies warned not to contract [security companies violating labour, health & safety laws](#).

2. Lawsuits against PMSCs

- US court dismisses [claims that CACI conspired to torture Iraqi Abu Ghraib prisoners](#). Some plaintiffs preparing for trial were [denied entry to USA](#) to provide depositions (our case profile is available [here](#)).
- Engility, formerly part of L-3 Communications, pays \$5 million to [settle lawsuit](#) alleging torture, filed by Iraqis held at Abu Ghraib prison.
- US court [rules in favour of DynCorp](#) in aerial spraying lawsuit brought by Ecuadorians alleging injury from chemical exposure. Ecuadorian plaintiffs plan to [appeal dismissal](#) (our case profile is available [here](#)).
- US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission brings [disability discrimination suit](#) against Florida Commercial Security Services & [pregnancy discrimination suit](#) against Quest Intelligence.

- US Govt. to bring [new criminal charges against former Blackwater security guards](#) for alleged manslaughter in Iraq.
- Swiss court holds [Nestlé & Securitas liable](#) for secret infiltration of NGO in Switzerland (*also in Spanish*).
- UK: Former private soldier [sues Aegis Defence](#) over spinal injury suffered while training in Iraq.

3. International initiatives & positive steps

- Participants in the Intl. Code of Conduct for Private Security Services Providers (ICoC) [drafting conference held in Montreux](#), Switzerland, between 19 & 22 February 2013, [adopted an oversight mechanism charter \(full text\)](#) (*article also in French*).
 - See [here](#) for commentaries & other material on the oversight mechanism.
 - As of 1 April 2013, [602 companies](#) have signed the ICoC.
- In November 2012, Business & Human Rights Resource Centre started an on-going project tracking relevant conduct, policies & statements of firms that are ICoC signatories. The project's activities include:
 - A special page on [ICoC signatory companies](#) providing links to information in English, French & Spanish on positive & negative human rights impacts of some of the companies – currently includes information on 48 companies' impacts & the number increases every week. The special page also provides links to private security companies' websites that refer to the ICoC.
 - Since the start of the project, we have posted over 120 links to relevant articles, news, reports & materials; we also sought eight company responses to allegations of human rights abuses. All those links, company responses, and additional human rights materials related to private security companies are available on our [website here](#).
- UN Working Group on the use of mercenaries has undertaken two country visits to [Somalia](#) & [Honduras](#). The working group calls for tighter regulation of private military & security companies in Somalia and urges the Honduran Govt. to investigate crimes by private security guards including killings, "disappearances" & sexual violence.
 - The working group will undertake a [study on the use of private military & security companies by UN bodies](#).
- Former UN Special Representative on business & human rights, John Ruggie, gives [keynote remarks at annual plenary of Voluntary Principles on Security & Human Rights](#) (The Hague, 14 Mar).
 - US Govt. releases 2012 [report](#) on Voluntary Principles on Security & Human Rights.
 - "[Voluntary Principles Association](#)" set up to provide administrative & other support to Voluntary Principles Initiative.
- [Academi to release new code of conduct](#) with strong commitment to respect human rights, says analyst.
- AlliedBarton Security Services provides [free workplace violence prevention seminar](#).
- G4S issues new [human rights policy & guidance](#) referring to the UN Guiding Principles on Business & Human Rights and ICoC.
- General Dynamics, BAE Systems & Lockheed Martin [appoint female chief executives](#) in industry with "male-dominated culture".
- UK Govt. adopts [ASIS standard](#) for private security service providers overseas.

4. Regulatory and other developments

- Afghanistan & Iraq: Univ. of Bristol's research into the perception of private military & security companies finds that some [contractors' aggressive approach may increase insecurity of local communities](#).
- Egypt: [Draft law](#) aims to regulate private security companies amidst concerns of inadequate employee training.
- So. Africa: Govt. plans [tighter regulation of growing private security industry](#) due to concerns about public safety (includes video).

- Switzerland: [Draft law](#) aims to restrict private military & security companies' activities in conflict situations abroad. [Critics argue](#) that the draft law is weak (*articles also in French & Spanish*).
- International Catalan Institute for Peace held a research conference: "[Building a research network on companies, conflict & human rights](#)" (17-18 Jan, Barcelona, Spain).

[Business & Human Rights Resource Centre](#)

Follow us on Twitter [@bhrrc](#), [Facebook](#)

[Sign up for free Weekly Updates](#)