

PMSC Bulletin

Issue number 1 – 16 Sep 2011

Private Military & Security Companies and their impacts on human rights – recent developments

The items included here are from August 2010 to August 2011.

1. Key alleged abuses by PMSCs

- Afghanistan: A US Senate Committee criticised private security firms for [contracting groups with ties to the Taliban and to criminal networks](#) linked to killings.
- Afghanistan & Iraq: Foreign workers employed as support staff at US military bases reportedly were [deceptively recruited, mistreated by military contractors](#), denied redress by the US Government; includes statements by a company & US Govt. spokesmen.
- China: Authorities are investigating Anyuanding Security firm over allegations that it [detained citizens in "black jails" to prevent them from complaining](#) to government about local officials; authorities detained & charged two Anyuanding executives.
- Ghana: A [man allegedly shot by private security guards](#) at an AngloGold Ashanti mine died in hospital; the company stated that it is supporting a police investigation and conducted its own internal investigation of the incident.
- Honduras: Human rights NGOs say that [five peasants were killed by private security guards](#) in a land dispute with a palm plantation owner.
- Israel & Occupied Territories: Activists accused G4S of providing equipment and services to Israeli checkpoints & settlements in the West Bank and to Israeli prisons holding political detainees, thus ["contributing to Israel's violations of international law"](#). We sought and received [a public response from G4S](#) and forwarded it to the publication that raised the concerns; that publication then issued a [rejoinder](#) criticising aspects of the company response. Two months later, in March 2011 [G4S announced that it would end a number of activities in the West Bank](#).
- Russia: Employees of security companies Vityaz and Altair, contracted by road-building companies Avtodor and Teplotekhnik, reportedly [used force against people protesting](#) the felling of Khimiki Forest for the building of a highway. The concessionaire of the project was Vinci. In press articles the director of Teplotekhnik confessed that he had hired people to provoke the activists. We invited Vityaz, Altair, Teplotekhnik and Vinci to respond (Avtodor had already issued a public statement). [Vinci responded](#); Vityaz, Altair and Teplotekhnik declined to respond.
- South Africa: Guards at Mabotwane Security Services alleged [frequent assault by supervisors](#), over-24-hour shifts and inadequate equipment. The company denies the allegations.
- Trinidad & Tobago: Private security companies allegedly [employed trafficked workers](#), who are "paid below the minimum wage and are virtually slaves".
- UK: openDemocracy and others raised concerns over G4S' alleged ["patchy record" of deaths and abuses](#) when supplying immigration & prison services to the government. [G4S responded](#) when we invited them to do so. A later [Amnesty International report](#) documented cases of alleged abuse and called for "complete and radical overhaul and reform" of government processes when private security contractors are used. The report referred to G4S and included a statement by the company.

2. Lawsuits against PMSCs

- A [Muslim man filed a lawsuit in USA](#) claiming he was fired from his job as a security guard with American Patriot Security after refusing to shave his beard.
- An Armour Group security guard [was sentenced to 20 years in prison](#) in Iraq for murdering two colleagues and injuring another. This was the first trial of a Western contractor in Iraqi court since a 2009 US-Iraq agreement lifted immunity for foreign contractors.
- In April 2011 a [US Appeals Court reinstated criminal charges against Blackwater guards](#) accused in a 2007 shooting in Nisoor Square, Baghdad, where 17 Iraqi civilians were killed and others injured. Blackwater (now called Xe) previously settled several civil lawsuits regarding the same incident.
- Blackwater [reached a \\$42 million civil settlement](#) with the US State Department over "illegal" weapons exports and "unauthorized" military training in Colombia.
- Lawsuits filed in 2004 in US court against CACI and Titan (now L-3) alleged complicity in the torture and mistreatment of prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. The court ruled that the firms have [immunity as government contractors](#). The US Supreme Court announced in June 2011 that it will not hear the plaintiffs' appeal.
- [Three men sued Fusion Security](#) in Canada, claiming they were "brutally" beaten by company employees at a Vancouver shopping mall.
- In July 2011 [a jury found for KBR in a lawsuit in US court](#) by Jamie Leigh Jones against her former employer KBR and several KBR employees, alleging she was drugged, raped and seriously injured by co-workers while working for KBR in Iraq.
- Case in a UK court alleged Monterrico Metals, its private security contractor Forza, and the police arbitrarily detained, tortured and sexually assaulted peasants protesting the development of the Rio Blanco copper mine in Peru. In July 2011 [Monterrico Metals agreed to settle the case and to pay the plaintiffs compensation](#), without admitting liability.

3. International initiatives & positive steps

- [International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers](#), a voluntary business initiative, had 166 company signatories as of August 2011. A Steering Committee has been set up to develop governance and oversight.
- [International Stability Operations Association](#), the US-based security industry association, invited public comments and conducted meetings to revise and update its code of conduct. The update will be completed in 2011, the stated aim being to ensure the standards to which ISOA members subscribe "evolve alongside an ever-changing international environment".
- ["Montreux Document" on Private Military and Security Companies](#):
 - [Regional workshop](#) in Chile on the Montreux Document in May 2011 sought to encourage countries in Latin America to support the initiative and improve regulation of the industry.
 - [Denmark and Hungary](#) joined the Montreux Document on PMSCs; 36 governments now support the document.
- [Pakistan floods](#): Security firm Wackenhut Pakistan contributed to humanitarian relief.
- [Private security companies](#) need to consider increased risk of abuses of children's rights where they operate, says UNICEF. Save the Children, UNICEF and UN Global Compact are developing principles on business and children's rights.
- Securitas in Spain [offered employment opportunities to women](#) who have been victims of domestic violence (in Spanish).
- [UN Working Group on the use of mercenaries](#) has continued to push for a new international convention to regulate PMSCs. It has also recently [commented on developments](#) in Afghanistan, Equatorial Guinea, Libya, Iraq, South Africa and UK.

4. Regulatory and other developments

- [Afghanistan](#): Government banned 8 PMSCs, including Xe (formerly Blackwater), following decree disbanding all security firms over "irregularities which have caused tragic incidents".
- [Iraq](#): Human Rights Ministry created a mechanism for citizens harmed by private security companies to seek compensation; Ministry committed to taking action against companies.
- [USA](#): Congress is considering expanding the application of US criminal law to government contractors working abroad.

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