

## Private Security Companies in the Caribbean

### Modernizing Regulatory Regimes to Enhance Human Security and Economic Prosperity

#### Executive Summary

The private security industry in the Caribbean has dramatically grown over the past two decades. Despite the fact that in many Caribbean nations the number of private security employees surpasses the number of police, this key industry is inadequately regulated by virtually all Caribbean governments. This raises basic issues related to social equity—do all enjoy security or only those who can afford it?—and strikes at the heart of one of the primary functions of the modern nation state: maintaining a monopoly on the legitimate use of force.

A report ([ploughshares.ca/pl\\_publications/private-security-companies-in-the-caribbean/](http://ploughshares.ca/pl_publications/private-security-companies-in-the-caribbean/)) published in September by Project Ploughshares (PP), in collaboration with the Institute of International Relations of The University of the West Indies, provides new information on Caribbean private security companies (PSCs).

Based on field research for case studies on St. Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, and Jamaica, *Private Security Companies in the Caribbean* provides unique data on PSCs in these countries. It then offers recommendations for a concerted effort by government regulators, in partnership with the private security industry, to create modern, transparent, and democratically accountable regulatory regimes for PSCs that will enhance security for all citizens and support the socioeconomic development of the Caribbean.

#### Legality, Legitimacy, and Accountability of PSCs

The problems posed by inadequate PSC regulation are well known. *CARICOM Crime and Security Strategy 2013: Securing the Region* (IMPACS 2013) summarizes both the importance of PSCs in the overall security architecture of the Caribbean and the sorry state of their regulation in most Caribbean Community (CARICOM) member states:

1.38. The private security industry has grown rapidly over the last decade in CARICOM, and private secu-

ity employees may now outnumber their counterparts in law enforcement in many Member States. Individuals working within the private security industry make a significant contribution to the everyday safety and security of the Region. However, in the absence of effective legal or regulatory structures to ensure proper vetting, the activities of private security companies raise issues of legality, legitimacy and accountability in the sphere of security policy. The integration of the private security industry into any security plan is therefore critical in achieving a safe and secure environment for CARICOM, and has an important role to play in reducing crime in the Community. (p. 19)



Project Ploughshares  
57 Erb Street West  
Waterloo, Ontario N2L 6C2 Canada  
[plough@ploughshares.ca](mailto:plough@ploughshares.ca) • [ploughshares.ca](http://ploughshares.ca)



Institute of International Relations  
The University of West Indies  
St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago  
[iirt@sta.uwi.edu](mailto:iirt@sta.uwi.edu) • [sta.uwi.edu/iir](http://sta.uwi.edu/iir)

Because PSCs are a key feature of the security landscape, their inadequate regulation raises important legal and accountability issues:

- Poorly regulated possession and use of firearms by PSC personnel could result in misuse of firearms and leakage of guns and ammunition to the illicit market.
- PSCs and their employees, some of them armed but under-trained, present a potential challenge to the state security apparatus and the state's monopoly on the legitimate use of force.
- Privatization of security services raises a question of social equity if those who can afford to pay receive greater protection of their persons and property than those who cannot.
- The role of the private security industry has not been included in most national and subregional security strategies, despite the prominence of PSCs and their contribution to safety and key economic activity across the Caribbean.

## Key Research Findings of the Report

The dramatic increase in violent crime rates over the past decade in some Caribbean countries has been linked to a corresponding growth in the number of PSCs. But the private security industry has also grown significantly in more stable and less crime-affected countries. Other reasons were cited for the increased number and size of PSCs:

- Government choices about investing in formal security mechanisms of the state—police, military, intelligence—have played a role, as more public services are privatized. In the Caribbean, national governments can be the largest clients for PSC services. For example, port and airport security is often provided by PSCs.
- Commercial entities and individuals don't trust policing services or the broader judicial or political systems.
- PSCs can be more flexible and innovative than public security services and engaged for shorter, defined periods for events or at particular locations.

- The subregion has experienced overall economic growth, or growth in sectors such as tourism and resource extraction, which have defined specific security needs.

PSCs are fully integrated into the economies of the Caribbean (as in all modern societies), providing vital services such as protection of cash transfers, securing financial and government institutions, and protecting tourist and resource extraction sites. They play an important role in the socioeconomic development of the subregion. PSCs provide a significant number of jobs, particularly for entry-level workers, including many women; but internal advancement of women may be limited.

The regulatory regime—legislation, regulations, and state-directed bodies that implement policy and oversee PSCs—in virtually all CARICOM member states has not evolved to keep pace with the growth in the private security industry. Jamaica has the most comprehensive regulatory regime in the Caribbean, but even it has a number of shortcomings.

A tension exists between active industry participation in developing regulatory regimes and appropriate state control. Owners are afraid of too much government control, while states cannot settle for a self-regulating private security industry.

The Caribbean PSC industry is segmented into entry-level firms with basic guarding or watchman services and those that are more technically and professionally sophisticated. Some PSCs must adhere to international standards, for example, in the petroleum industry and at ports and airports. These standards often far exceed current or planned national PSC regulatory standards.

There is no evidence that PSCs have a direct impact on violent crime rates. There may be radiating security benefits to neighbourhoods close to sites where PSCs provide security. The presence of PSCs may increase perceptions of safety, which can be as important as perceptions of crime rates in making public policy.

The limited research findings on PSC gun possession and use did not provide substantial evidence that guns are being misused by PSC personnel, but anecdotal evidence suggests guns are sometimes rented out, used in crimes, or sold to criminal gangs.

## Recommendations

In June 2013 a policy roundtable that included representatives from PSCs and the relevant government ministries and regulatory bodies from the three case-study countries reviewed the draft report and its recommendations. (A list of participants is provided at the end of this Policy Brief.) Practical suggestions were offered to make the recommendations more relevant and to increase the possibility of implementation by policymakers.

Four sets of recommendations are found in the research report; three are specific to the case-study countries and the fourth relates to the whole CARICOM subregion. The recommendations can be summarized as follows:

### Legislation and regulation

All CARICOM member states should establish national legislation, regulations, standards, and oversight and monitoring bodies to regulate the private security industry. These national regulatory regimes should reflect common principles among CARICOM members and emerging international standards for PSCs.

At the same time, the particular circumstances of each state must be considered. Developing national standards will be challenging; if standards are set too high, PSCs offering basic services may skirt regulation to remain profitable. Regulatory authorities should have sufficient staff, funding, and resources to function effectively.

Because PSCs pose latent or potential threats to public order if they align with or are controlled by gangs or organized crime, vetting PSC owners and directors is particularly important. Regulations must ensure that only “fit” persons own and direct PSCs, in addition to vetting individual PSC employees to ensure that they have no links to criminals.

### Sharing Jamaica's regulatory experience

The Jamaican experience with the Private Security Regulatory Agency should be shared with appropriate regulatory agencies and other relevant parties in all CARICOM member states.

### Industry code of conduct

National PSC industry associations and member companies should adopt and modify for local circumstances the principles of the voluntary International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers (Switzerland 2010).

### Firearms

In addition to national firearms acts, there should be specific guidelines for the monitoring, management, and stockpiling of firearms in PSC industry regulations. Regulations should be strictly enforced.

### Training and employment standards

Initial and ongoing training of PSC personnel is key to improved service and the effective adoption of new technologies by the industry. National training standards should be established, and credentialed PSC educational facilities set up to provide PSC personnel with induction and ongoing, in-service training. Industry standards and best practices should be established in relation to employee benefits and working conditions.

### Integration of PSCs into national and subregional security strategies

The important role of PSCs in providing public safety and securing vital economic interests should be reflected in national security strategies of CARICOM member states and in CARICOM subregional security strategies.

## Conclusion

Growth of the PSC industry in the Caribbean may be levelling off as the effects of the 2008 recession linger. Cheaper electronic surveillance can replace onsite personnel in some instances. And some countries could be experiencing market saturation. But the need for updated regulation remains.

Reports from several CARICOM member states indicate plans to present legislation for parliamentary debate or to modify or add to existing PSC regulatory regimes. These developments point to the timeliness and relevance of this research report and its recommendations.

## Policy Roundtable Participants (June 2013)

Prof. Andy Knight	Director, IIR, UWI-St. Augustine
Dr. Annita Montoute	Lecturer, IIR, UWI-St. Augustine
Dr. Matthew Bishop	Lecturer, IIR, UWI-St. Augustine
Mr. Sheridan Hill	IIR, UWI-St. Augustine
Mr. Ausbert Regis	National Security Head, Office of the Prime Minister, St. Lucia
Mr. John Lorde	Training and Customer Relations, Guardsman, St. Lucia
Ms. Carlyn Phillips	General Manager, Caribbean Guardian Security, St Lucia
Ms. Rosalyn Campbell	Executive Director, Private Security Regulation Authority, Jamaica
Mr. Maurice Goodgame	Director Audit & Compliance, Firearm Licensing Authority, Jamaica
Com (ret'd) George Overton	President, Jamaica Society for Industrial Security
Mr. Callixtus Joseph	CARICOM-IMPACS, Trinidad
Mr. Keith Renaud	Office of Law Enforcement Policy, Trinidad
Mr. Kenneth Green	G4S, Trinidad
Mr. Jason Charles	Innovative Security, Trinidad
Major Gen. Edmund Dillon	Head of Security, Atlantic LNG, Trinidad
Ms. Serena Joseph-Harris	Chief Executive Officer, Sirius International (Caribbean) Defence Contractors Ltd
Mr. Mervyn Richardson	Deputy Police Commissioner, Commission of Police, Trinidad
Mr. Geoff Burt	Vice President, Security Governance Group, Canada
Brig.-Gen. Anthony Phillips-Spencer	Vice-Chief of Defence Staff, Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force
Mr. Anthony Serieaux Halls	CEO Personnel Safety and Security Training Ltd., Trinidad and Tobago
Ms. Alicia George	Legal Officer, Ministry of National Security, Trinidad and Tobago
Ambassador Edwin Carrington	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trinidad and Tobago
Mr. Luc Mougeot	International Development Research Centre, Canada
Mr. Kenneth Epps	Senior Program Officer, Project Ploughshares, Canada
Mr. John Siebert	Executive Director, Project Ploughshares, Canada
Mr. Brockenshire Lemiski	Intern, Project Ploughshares, Canada

## References

Implementation Agency for Crime and Security. 2013. *CARICOM Crime and Security Strategy 2103: Securing the Region*. Adopted at the twenty-fourth inter-sessional meeting of the conference of heads of government of CARICOM, 18-19 February 2013, Port-au-Prince, Republic of Haiti.

Institute of International Relations, The University of the West Indies & Project Ploughshares. 2013. *Private Security Companies in the Caribbean: Case studies of St. Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, and Jamaica*. (Waterloo: Project Ploughshares).

Switzerland. 2010. International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers.