

Dear IGWG members,

UNI Global Union is amongst other sectors the global federation of trade unions in the private security sector. We represent about 160 trade unions in 61 countries, with a total membership of 1 million security guards.

For a regulatory framework for Private Military and Security Companies (PMSCs), we would like to recommend the following:

Globally private security guards are amongst the lowest paid workers in the formal economy. The lack of sufficient regulation leads to new PMSCs emerging every day with a competition in the race to the bottom in standards. There are an estimated 20 million security guards in the world, of whom less than 10% are employed by multinational companies and the remaining 90% by local or regional small and medium-sized enterprises. In this context, in most markets it is difficult for a company to stay in business without cutting corners on ethical principles. Security guards become just a body to fill the uniform.

While the attention for human rights violations caused by PMSCs towards citizens in complex areas is extremely important and welcome, we would like to stress the human rights of PMSCs' staff themselves. We have seen around the world many cases of exploitation, harassment, bullying, insufficient PPE, human trafficking, debt bondage, and union-busting, even including death threats and actual killings of trade union leaders.

In many geographies, private security far outnumbers police and make simple security guards "police for hire". That often puts them in very dangerous situations with insufficient protection, training, and authority. They face armed robberies during cash transits, traffic accidents due to shifts that are too long and the risks as the first responders to incidents from terrorist attacks to burglaries. This causes an above average injury and fatality rate in this sector compared to other sectors.

In order to ensure that the staff of PMSCs understand and respect human rights, their own human rights should be secured in the first place. We therefore call for the international regulatory framework to provide for industry wide global and enforceable standards on licensing of companies, vetting of security officers, training standards, working hours, personal protection equipment and so on. It is also critical that this reinforces and makes mandatory the human rights due diligence obligations of PMSCs, and the states and companies that employ them. Only if the threshold to start a security company and become a security officer is lifted can better behavior towards citizens in complex situations be expected.

With the utmost respect for your important work,

Yours sincerely

Eddy Stam

Head of UNI Property Services