**General Assembly 1 (disarmament commission)**

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**Topic: The question of the impact of private military security contractors on global security.**

*Introduction*

Private military security contractors (PMC’s) these are private companies that provide services related to military and security matters, these services are usually provided for governments, non-governmental organizations (NGO’s), private companies, and other entities. PMC’s act as an independent company free of government control and official military forces, hence, are often used for tasks like security, intelligence, logistics, guarding, training, and more. Although they deem helpful for parties that cannot demand help from official military forces and the government, they have raised concerns such as global security, accountability, transparency, financial driven actions, mercenary activities, and ethical concerns. This also threatens the control and power the State sovereignty has on the people. They have been present in many famous wars and conflicts around the world, and have been hired by government officials, and war criminals.

*Questions raised:*

Who is to be held accountable in the case of PMC’s being hired? Is this a humane way to commit crimes? Is it ethical to make a military with financial intentions rather than peace and security intentions? How does this hinder global security? How does international law acknowledge the dangers of PMC’s? is it enough? How does this effect normal state forces and military?

*PMC’s participation in famous conflicts/wars:*

* **Iraq War (2003-2011):** The Iraq War witnessed a significant presence of PMCs, providing a range of services from security and logistical support to intelligence gathering. Firms like Blackwater (now known as Academi) gained attention for their involvement in incidents such as the 2007 Nisour Square massacre, where Blackwater contractors were accused of killing Iraqi civilians.

“Iraqi government eventually found that the Blackwater employees had killed 17 civilians and injured 20 more. Blackwater, which has since rebranded itself twice and is now known as Academi, is a private military company that, at the time, had a $1 billion contract with the United States government to provide security services to US officials in Iraq. There were 1,000 Blackwater security guards in Iraq on the day of the massacre.” <https://www.tidingsmedia.org/blog/nisour-square-massacre>

* **Afghanistan War (2001-present):** PMCs played a role in supporting military operations in Afghanistan. Companies like Xe Services (formerly Blackwater) and DynCorp were involved in security, training, and logistical support. Their activities faced scrutiny, including allegations of misconduct and human rights abuses.
* **Niger Delta Conflict (Nigeria):** PMCs have been engaged in providing security services to oil companies operating in the Niger Delta. The volatile region has witnessed the deployment of private security contractors to protect oil infrastructure and personnel.
* **Libyan Civil War (2011):** During the conflict in Libya, various PMCs were reportedly involved on different sides, providing military support, training, and security services. The presence of these private entities raised concerns about their impact on the dynamics of the conflicts.
* **Syrian Civil War (2011-present):** PMCs have been reported to operate in Syria, offering services to different parties involved in the conflict. These activities have raised questions about the accountability and transparency of private military involvement in complex geopolitical situations.
* **Post-Soviet Conflicts (like Ukraine):** Private military actors, often linked to Russian interests, have been implicated in conflicts in the post-Soviet space. These entities have been accused of participating in military operations, especially in regions like Crimea and Eastern Ukraine.
* **South African Mercenaries in Africa:** South African PMCs, composed of ex-military personnel, have been involved in various African conflicts, including those in Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo. These activities have often been characterized by controversial engagements and allegations of human rights abuses.

*PMC’s catagories:*

1. Security and Defense Contractors: Provide armed personnel for security tasks.
2. Military Training and Consulting Firms: Offer training programs in various military skills.
3. Logistics and Support Companies: Assist in transportation, supply chain, and infrastructure.
4. Intelligence and Surveillance Contractors: Specialize in gathering information and analysis.
5. Risk Management and Consultancy Firms: Assess and manage security risks, offer consultancy.
6. Cybersecurity Contractors: Focus on securing networks and responding to cyber threats.
7. Maritime Security Companies: Safeguard ships and maritime assets, deter piracy.
8. Medical and Humanitarian Assistance Providers: Offer medical services and humanitarian aid.
9. Specialized Units and Tactical Teams: Provide specialized services for special operations and counter-terrorism.
10. Infrastructure and Construction Security Providers: Protect critical infrastructure projects, including construction sites.

*Pros and Cons:*

PMC’s are an effective way for goverments to resolve urgent issues rapidly and less legally binding than when different parties are involved like a countries offical miliatry forces. They are also employed with specialized individuals in matters of military and secuirty activties this ensures a higher level of skill and knowlegde when dealing with complex matters. Moreover, it is cost effective for governments and other entities to avoid the long-term financial commitments associated with maintaining a standing military and legal interventions. Furthermore, they can rapidly deploy personnel and resources, making them valuable in emergency situations or when immediate action is required without the use of states miltary. Lastly, PMCs can assist in mitigating risks for clients by providing security assessments, risk analyses, and developing strategies to address potential threats which deems effectives compared to state military, and ensures secrecy for operations that require a high level of miltary support without the direct intervention of the goverment itself.

Although PMC’s prove to be helpful in matters of secrecy and effectiveness for goverments and entities, It may operate in a regulatory grey area where the operation is not clear and it will be challenging to determine who is to be held **accountable** especially for any human right violations like stated above. Because it is a private company it will be less **transparent** to the public and out of the govemrent control hence their motivations, actions, and overall impact can be difficult to monitor.

**Mercenary activities** which are “ soldiers for hire. Instead of fighting for their own country, they offer their services to Governments and groups in other countries for a substantial monetary reward. Many “soldiers of fortune” claim to be motivated not by profit but by altruistic, ideological or religious aims, but the fact remains that they are hired—for a fee—to fight or launch attacks in a country or conflict other than their own.” (OHCHR). This is concerning and unethical as inhumane acts are done for a fee and ignores broader secuiry or humantrain goals.

This also changes the trational notion of the use of force by states and the world as a whole, which hinders states **sovereignty** and control. Thus, resulting in regulation challenging, contributing to difficulties in preventing abuses and ensuring accountability.

*PMCs under International Humanitarian Law*

PSCs/PMCs are not mentioned in the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, they are however to respect the norms of IHL. Their responsibilities, status and protection will depend to a large extent on whether, under IHL, they are deemed to be combatants or civilians.

<https://issafrica.org/chapter-6-private-security-companies-and-private-military-companies-under-international-humanitarian-law-jamie-williamson#:~:text=Whilst%20PSCs%2FPMCs%20are%20not,to%20be%20combatants%20or%20civilians>.

*Key countries*

* United States: The U.S. has been a major player in the use of PMCs, both in terms of employing private contractors in conflict zones where U.S. forces are deployed and being home to many prominent PMCs. The involvement of PMCs in Iraq and Afghanistan, among other places, has been particularly significant.
* Russia: Russian PMCs have been linked to various conflicts, including activities in Ukraine and Syria. Entities like the Wagner Group, reportedly with ties to the Russian government, have been involved in conflict zones.
* United Kingdom: The UK has a history of utilizing PMCs in different capacities. British private military and security companies have been engaged in various regions, including the Middle East and Africa.
* South Africa: South Africa has been a notable source of mercenaries and private military personnel. Ex-military professionals from South Africa have been involved in conflicts in different parts of Africa.
* Nigeria: Nigerian PMCs have played a role in providing security services, particularly in the oil-rich Niger Delta region, where the protection of oil infrastructure is a significant concern.
* Middle Eastern Countries: Various Middle Eastern countries, such as the United Arab Emirates (UAE), have employed PMCs for security and military purposes. This involvement has been observed in conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa.
* European Countries: Several European countries, including France and Germany, have had connections to PMCs operating in different regions. European nationals may be involved in private military activities

*Goals of debate:*

* Ensure global security and transpaency of PMC’s
* Possibly restricting such companies with clarity on accountability and consequences faced by them
* Focus on ethical concerns regarding Mercenaries
* Or ensuring the effectiveness of such companies while ensuring globaly security
* Representing ones proper stance