

G4S G4S
Serial Human Rights Abuser

A Briefing for Trade Unionists

(reference version)

Stop G4S
www.stopg4s.net



G4S – an issue for all trade unionists

(reference version)

Trade unionists have every reason to challenge G4S as it tramples over public services and union policies. We oppose privatisation, confront racism, and support effective international solidarity, similar to the Boycott Divestment and Sanctions which helped to end the apartheid regime in South Africa.

Union sponsored Councillors and MPs need to know the facts and understand procurement law, and exercise their powers to oppose corporate abuse of power. We hope and expect they will read this Briefing (<http://stopg4s.net/Apr14briefing>) carefully, and consider how they can choose not to contract with G4S.

Public services and their workforce have experienced severe cuts and are facing more. Central and local government has outsourced, deregulated and privatised - cutting standards and losing jobs while reducing terms and conditions.

Since the Coalition was elected in 2010, austerity and cuts have swept the country and over half a million public sector workers have lost their jobs. At the same time, the Coalition has spent billions of pounds in public money for companies like G4S and Serco to take over public services.

G4S and Atos, a law unto themselves, had over £2 billion worth of publicly funded contracts without paying any corporation tax in this country last year. Even now when G4S and Serco are under review from the Government, Ministers expect them to emerge stronger in future. Normal citizens involved in fraud are treated very differently.

Among the main privateers – now known as “primes” – G4S is the worst, at home and worldwide. Our “prime” target should be G4S, not just for their incompetence and fraud but because of their inhumanity.

Hardly a week passes without another public scandal swirling around G4S. The Olympics debacle, the Electronic Tagging fraud, the Jimmy Mubenga Inquest, grillings at the Public Accounts Committee, the Oakwood prison riot... This is not a string of unfortunate coincidences or mere incompetence. In fact, G4S is a serial abuser of human rights.

When the Independent Monitoring Board’s damning report on Oakwood prison’s first year was published last summer, the Howard League for Penal Reform commented: “Chris Grayling thinks Oakwood is a perfect example of what the private sector achieves in justice. We agree.”

When the beatings, electroshocks and forced injections at a G4S private prison in South Africa became international news, the Government Minister for Correctional Services Sbu Ndebele declared “Privatisation has failed”. We agree.

Palestinian prisoners on hunger strike against conditions in Israeli prisons, including torture and long-term renewable Administrative Detention on secret evidence, have called for an international boycott of G4S for its contract to supply these same prisons with electronic security systems. We support their call.

Jimmy Mubenga was unlawfully killed on a deportation flight to Angola while in the custody of G4S officers who held him down, impeding his breathing, and failed to offer resuscitation when he collapsed. Four years later, the guards finally face prosecution for manslaughter. But G4S will not be charged. That is simply outrageous.

But what can anyone really do about this? The same thing trade unionists have to do with all other rogue employers: use our organised collective power to end their free ride.

Working together, we can make G4S a live issue in our dealings with Local Authorities, NHS employers and Commissioners, or anyone else involved in procurement. We cannot tolerate a regime in which “Best Value” means cheapest, anti-union, poor terms and conditions – and conflicts with union policies.

The Unite Manchester Local Government Branch voted unanimously to call on the City Council to suspend G4S from any consideration of tendering for services, on the basis of their appalling record of human rights abuse around the world. The Branch called on the Council to conduct a review, before even considering asking G4S to take on any more services. Instead, the Branch would like to see the services kept in-house. Manchester TUC has also taken up the campaign.

Surprisingly, even the Foreign Office knows that human rights abuse can be grounds for blocking a company bidding for public contracts. Their own “Good Business” guide, issued last September, stated:

“Under the public procurement rules public bodies may exclude tenderers from bidding for a contract opportunity in certain circumstances, including where there is information showing grave misconduct by a company in the course of its business or profession. Such misconduct might arise in cases where there are breaches of human rights.”

And with a new EU Directive agreed in January 2014, environmental and social issues can be considered during procurement.

We recognise that many G4S employees are former public sector workers TUPE’d out of their jobs. Some are trade union members. No-one deserves to work on a zero hours contract, minimum wage, without adequate health & safety, with poor training, or unsafe staffing levels.

We also expect all trade unionists, with whatever employer, to be horrified by the human rights abuses detailed in this Briefing. Working for a company whose actions are provoking an international boycott, cannot be secure employment.

A Stop-G4S model resolution is included with this Briefing, and more details of the campaign are included on our website.

Stop G4S
www.stopg4s.net
26th March 2014

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An shorter version of this Briefing without references is available online here
<http://stopg4s.net/Apr14briefing>

Justice: Tagging Dead People and “Jokewood”

G4S defrauded the Ministry of Justice with charges for tagging dead people. The government regards G4S prisons as a model, and the company may play a “supportive” role in privatising the Probation Service.



Tagging

The Serious Fraud Office is conducting a criminal investigation of fraudulent billing for electronic tagging by G4S and Serco. The fraud was only discovered when the Ministry of Justice asked PriceWaterhouseCooper to audit after irregularities were spotted in May 2013. G4S and Serco were billing the MoJ £700m for 18,000 people, of whom only 15,000 were actually tagged. The 3,000 phantoms had their tags removed, returned to prison, left the country, or even died.[1] G4S would begin billing before the tag was applied, and continue until formally notified to stop. This arrangement dated from 2009 or earlier and the contract goes back to 2005. When G4S refused to agree to a forensic audit, the issue was referred to the SFO.

G4S Chief Exec Ashley Almanza, appointed when Nick Buckles resigned after the Olympic fiasco, appeared before the Public Accounts Committee on 20 Nov 2013.[2] Almanza now said “It was just a flawed judgment. I don’t think we did correctly tell the difference between right and wrong.”

PAC Chair Margaret Hodge MP asked: “given that you overcharged the taxpayer millions and millions of pounds, what does that say about your systems of governance and control?”. Almanza apologised. He then admitted that the people who decided to plough on brought in higher bonuses on the back of the phantom billing.

The previous day, the Ministry of Justice declined a last minute offer by G4S to repay £24.1m.[3] However, Cabinet Minister Francis Maude MP expects G4S and Serco to emerge stronger from the

investigation. Their bids for the Probation Service were allowed to continue, despite Labour opposition.[4] In December, Justice Secretary Chris Grayling MP announced that the two companies had withdrawn their bids to be lead providers of Probation, but may still play a supporting role, working with smaller businesses or voluntary sector providers.[5] Conceivably, work could be subcontracted to G4S or Serco.

Like Atos, G4S paid no corporation tax last year, while the two companies had over £2billion worth of publicly funded work.[6]

Fraud and criminality

“Immigration fraud” conjures up images of “bogus asylum seekers”. But three G4S officials at Brook House, the company’s Immigration Removal Centre in Gatwick, were involved in “corruptly redacting” an official certificate, which bolstered a case for deportation.[7]

An asylum seeker claimed he had been tortured and beaten with a heated metal rod on arrival at his country of origin after UK officials refused to remove paperwork from his luggage which identified him with anti-government organisations there. When his room at Brook House was cleared, the original clearance certificate mentioned the paperwork, but a doctored version then omitted it.

The fraud emerged in a High Court hearing. Mr Justice Mostyn said “The conduct of the secretary of state’s agents in falsifying the room clearance certificate is corrupt and truly shocking”. He referred the G4S employees for prosecution for forging a document and contempt of court, sending the case to the Attorney General and the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Brook House is due to expand by 30% despite the freeze on G4S government contracts.[8]



Oakwood

The story of UK prisons run by G4S was recounted by Corporate Watch in Sept 2012.[9] Soon after, the first site HMP Wolds reverted from G4S to government control after a report by HM Inspectorate of Prisons said it had “clear weaknesses”.[10]

Oakwood, near Wolverhampton, is one of five UK prisons currently run by G4S.[11] Formerly known as Featherstone 2, it was intended as the first of three “Titan prisons”, a scheme initiated by Labour’s Justice Secretary Jack Straw but later ditched after public protest. At the time, Tory shadow Justice Minister Dominic Grieve declared “Warehousing offenders in hulks twice the size of Wembley Stadium was never going to address increased levels of reoffending and so we welcome plans to scrap Titan prisons.”[12] But by Sept 2013, the Coalition had announced their own plans for a new “super-size” prison in North Wales.[13]

Meanwhile, Oakwood was scaled back to hold 1600 Category C inmates (“those who cannot be trusted in open conditions but who are unlikely to try to escape”) and opened in April 2012. In August 2013, the Independent Monitoring Boards published their savage review of Oakwood’s first year.[14] Here are some excerpts:

Initially the majority of staff had had no previous experience of prison life or prisoners, most of whom knew the rules and regulations better than the new staff.

There is no “legal services officer” in the prison to deliver advice to prisoners as laid out in Prison Instructions. The Board believes there are no training courses currently.

Lack of work placement for prisoners is causing unrest with prisoners who are locked back in their cell at 09.00 as a result of not having purposeful activity.

Delays in providing basic toiletries, underwear and socks proved frustrating to prisoners, all of whom had come from established prisons where these issues did not exist.

There were no sanitary accessories and no locks on the toilet doors when the building was handed over in both staff and prisoner areas. Cells were designed with a wet area adjacent to the viewing door. Fixings for shower curtains or for window curtains were not fitted. In August there were still no shower curtains.

Firstly the hot water failed followed by spasmodic tripping where certain cells had no hot water. At one time the First Night Centre had no hot water. The Board were told that it was because the water system was only in part use and that when the prison was full the system would work much better. This has generally been

the case but still some cells have reported they have no heating.

Health

Concerns include:

- prescriptions not being renewed
- if issues arise during dispensing of medicine the healthcare team cease issuing of medications resulting in some prisoners not receiving medicines.
- delays in appointments – target of 48hrs to see doctor has been removed.
- severe delays with follow-up appointments

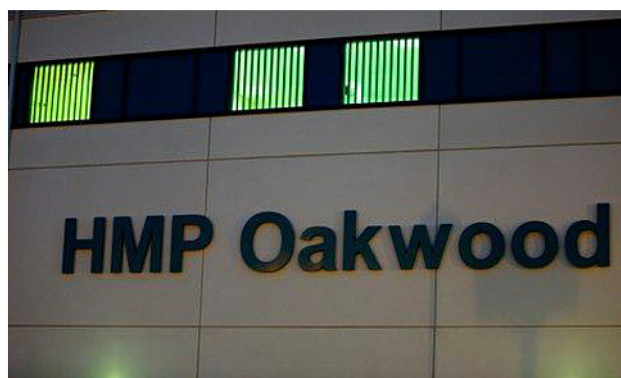
Food

On one occasion there was no bread, a staple part of the prisoner’s diet. This was due to the kitchen running out.

[In] Cedar house block, food servers were found not to be wearing appropriate protective clothing. The manager stated that protective clothing was on order. This was noted in September; however in February 2013 staff on Cedar reported that there was no protective clothing available on Cedar or the other house blocks. In September servers complained that they had been promised safety boots ‘for weeks’ and were ruining their clothes because they ‘have not been given proper trousers and the coats are too small to fasten up’.

The cleanliness of serveries varied from block to block. Board Members have noted:

- No dishwasher salt, dishwashers filters needed cleaning.
- No soap to wash hands.
- No scourers or materials to clean pans.
- No paper towels.
- Steel cabinets in the servery dirty inside.
- Kitchen tools left lying around.
- Wash hand basin dirty with what appeared to be brick dust.
- The gobbler choked with food leftovers.



Education

When there have been staff shortages in the prison, officers have been put onto other duties. Education staff then have to leave their staffroom to open the gates for prisoners to access the toilet.

The Education toilets on all the blocks have been visited on rota on numerous occasions and have been found to be occasionally locked, usually dirty with no soap, handtowels or toilet rolls.

Security

The Board have concerns due to the amount of drugs, alcohol, hooch and mobile phones. The contraband is thrown over the fence alongside a public highway, Police are aware but unfortunately budgetary restraints have limited security cameras and extra netting in the area. The prison was opened initially with a controlled flow of prisoners, which was overridden by demand. Prisoners, knowing that the majority of the officers were new recruits, tried to capitalise on the lack of experience of new staff, however the situation was effectively managed by senior staff members. The above resulted in high levels of staff sickness.

The design of the CSU [Care and Separation Unit – i.e. segregation] and initial furnishings have [made] CSU at times an unsafe and volatile area and working conditions for staff very problematical and difficult. The cells initially contained furniture made from compressed fibre board. Prisoners soon realised that it could be ripped apart and used to destroy electrical fixtures and fittings within the cells; this included the glass inspection and viewing windows within the cell door. Board members have witnessed the prisoners throwing destroyed furniture through the viewing holes followed by shredded bedding sheets, ignited or used to ‘fish’ between cells for passing messages, tobacco and contraband. The removal of the glass also saw officers being spat at and faecal matter and urine being thrown out through the missing glass panels. 2" x 2" wood battens with nails protruding out of the end have also been used as weapons against staff as they passed by the cell doors.

The Howard League for Penal Reform commented on 12 Aug[15]

“How can ministers expect G4S to manage healthcare, education and training at Oakwood, when they can’t even navigate the complexities of providing toilet roll or a slice of bread? This Ministry of Justice wishful thinking is bordering on irresponsibility.

“How much more evidence does the government need before it stops handing over justice services to private security corporations like G4S?...

“Chris Grayling thinks Oakwood is a perfect example of what the private sector achieves in justice. We agree.”

In October 2013 Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) released their 111 page report of an unannounced visit in June 2013.[16] In the Introduction, the Chief Inspector of Prisons Nick Hardwick declared:

“...This is unquestionably a concerning report. The prison had many advantages in terms of the quality of its design and facilities, but there was a palpable level of frustration among prisoners at their inability to get even basic issues addressed. The inexperience of the staff was everywhere evident, and systems to support routine services were creaky, if they existed at all... Against all four of our healthy prison tests, safety, respect, activity and resettlement, the outcomes we observed were either insufficient or poor...”

As The Guardian reported[17]

“Prisoners claim it is easier to get hold of illicit drugs than a bar of soap inside Britain’s largest prison, G4S’s flagship Oakwood jail near Wolverhampton, according to official inspectors.

“The chief inspector of prisons has confirmed that drug use at the 1,600-place privately run “supersized” jail, which opened in April last year, is more than twice the rate of similar jails while inmates find it difficult to get hold of clean prison clothing, basic toiletries and cleaning materials.

“One in seven inmates report having developed a drug problem while they have been inside Oakwood...”

“The use of force to restrain inmates was twice as high as at similar jails, with 241 incidents in the first six months of this year.

“One prisoner had been noted in his secondary screening on arrival as having ‘no disabilities’. In reality, he was unable to walk without a Zimmer frame and was partially sighted and deaf.

Frances Crook, Chief Executive of the Howard League, commented[18]:

“It is well-known in prison circles that this institution is referred to as ‘Jokewood’ by prisoners and staff across the system, but this isn’t a joke – it is deeply serious.

“This private prison has been open for a year and a half and it is getting worse, not better. On a Payment by Results model it would be closed because G4S are being paid for it and it is not delivering results.

“This is the jail that the Justice Secretary held up as the model for the whole prison system to follow. Today’s report shows that he is completely out of touch with reality and is putting the public in danger. It also casts yet more doubt on the government’s plans to hand

over probation to G4S and other private providers.

“The time for excuses has passed. Oakwood should close, the contract for running it should be withdrawn, and G4S must never be allowed to take control of a prison again.”

Prisoners revolt

In November 2013, after six prisoners staged a rooftop protest, solicitor Iqbal Singh Kang accused Oakwood of failing inmates and warned of riots if staff training was not improved.[19]

On 5 January 2014, a “disturbance” by 20 inmates centred on the distance relatives had to travel for visits.[20] G4S initially claimed the incident was under control within 5 hours, but a joint statement with the Ministry of Justice then revealed it had lasted 9 hours[21]. An external prison officer sent in to quell it, told the BBC[22] “I would sum it up as a full-scale prison riot and we were very lucky that it only took place on one unit and didn’t spread.”

Another officer, employed at Oakwood, told the BBC that records were being falsified. “If there is a prisoner who has a potential for self-harming... because of staffing levels, sometimes they just don’t get covered as adequately as they should. Staff will write up, ‘Lying in bed, watching TV...’ but he hasn’t been checked for the last hour. So they will go and check him and he will still be alive, and then they will lie that he was being checked every 10 minutes for the last hour.”

Two days after Oakwood erupted, Wrexham Council gave outline planning permission for a £250 million, 2,100-inmate super-size prison, whose construction could begin this summer.[23] The Guardian reported that Justice Secretary Chris Grayling regards the £13,200 average cost of a prisoner place at Oakwood – less than half the national average – as a model for the rest of the prison service. It is expected that Wrexham will be run on the same model.[24]

In other words, no amount of evidence will change the Government’s determination to plough on with prison privatisation, and G4S is still key to their plans. ■

Jimmy Mubenga deported: “Unlawful Killing”

Jimmy Mubenga was an Angolan migrant, a family man with a wife and 5 children all living in the United Kingdom, who had been employed as a fork lift driver. On 12th October 2010 he was due to be deported from this country, because of a criminal conviction. During the deportation he was forcibly restrained by G4S guards and died. Four years later, the guards finally face prosecution for manslaughter.



In the immediate aftermath of Jimmy Mubenga’s death, both the Home Office and G4S put out false information that he became unwell and subsequently died. It was a Guardian investigation that established the facts.[25]

In July 2013, an Inquest jury brought a 9 to 1 majority verdict that Jimmy Mubenga had been “unlawfully killed”, by an unlawful act, as strong a verdict as is possible under the circumstances. The jury found that the G4S Detainee Custody Officers (DCOs) who were deporting Mr Mubenga, pushed or held him down so that his breathing was impeded and that this amounted to unreasonable force.[26] [27]

Racist ‘jokes’

Racist ‘jokes’ were found on the private mobiles of two of the guards. The guards insisted both on the witness stand and in their almost identical reports (written under the supervision of G4S managers, after the guards were bailed from Heathrow police station to a local hotel) that Jimmy Mubenga was responsible for his own death by forcing his head between his knees, thus causing positional asphyxia.

The jury heard evidence that Mubenga had called out “I can’t breathe”, “You’re killing me”. [28] The lead DCO Stuart Tribelnig declined to resuscitate Mubenga in case he recovered enough to resist. As revealed during the Inquest, Tribelnig had told police “But my concerns would be if we placed him into a position or a recovery position on the floor and he had recovered we could be all over the place again trying to control and restrain him.” [29]

In view of the company culture, supported by the Home Office, it is only surprising that Jimmy

Mubenga was the first fatality. The overwhelming pressure in deportation cases is to dispatch the deportees. Only an order from the courts or the captain of the aircraft prevents deportation. Guards are paid a monthly retainer but they only get their full entitlement once a deportation has been completed. One of the three guards was actually on a zero hours contract, only paid for completed work.[30] Thus it would seem reasonable to assume that they have no incentive to abort flights, regardless of the state of the deportee. Their main objective is to prevent the detainees from ‘upsetting’ other passengers, or the captain, even if it means trying to smother their screams. Some are known to call this ‘carpet karaoke’, when the detainee shouts into a buffer area like a pillow, which drowns their anguish. In the Mubenga case, evidence was led to show that the guards believed that the dying Jimmy Mubenga was ‘faking’.

The restraint and control training that the guards receive is geared to work in prisons and not to restraint in a confined environment like an aircraft, “surroundings where space is short, where someone may be panicking for long periods, where oxygen levels may be low and where the person being removed is seated; a position with a particularly high risk of asphyxia”. [31] The guards seemed to be far more *au fait* with control and restraint procedures than with care for someone in physical distress. They did not even put the dying Jimmy Mubenga into the recovery position, which conceivably could have saved his life.

When asked about the racist material found on two of the guards’ phones, G4S stated that they take disciplinary action when racism is discovered. However the coroner in her ‘rule 43’ report [32] found evidence of “pervasive racism” among G4S detention custody officers who were tasked with removing detainees and expressed her fears ‘that these racist attitudes – and “loutish, laddish behaviour ... Inappropriate language, and peer pressure” – are still common among escort guards today’.[33]

This is consistent with the findings of Medical Justice in a report published in 2009 with copious details of abuse that detainees suffer at the hands of companies like G4S.[34]

Home Office collusion

The link between the Home Office and G4S seems far too close for comfort. The Coroner was appalled to discover that the Home Office had sanctioned the use of unaccredited guards to remove detainees. In fact the Senior DCO in the Mubenga case was not accredited and therefore acting illegally.[35] The decision to dispense with accreditation in the interests of speed was taken in June 2006 [36] soon after John Reid MP was appointed Home Secretary. In 2008 Reid became a Group Consultant for G4S and in 2010 he was appointed G4S Director Regional Management (UK and Ireland Limited), resigning on 1 April 2013 just before the Mubenga Inquest.[37]

Guards face Manslaughter charges

After the Inquest verdict of “unlawful killing” there was silence from the Crown Prosecution Service and the family were left in limbo. After six months Roland Mubenga, Jimmy’s eldest son went public with a moving plea for action.[38] On 20 March 2014 the CPS decided, in view of the verdict and new evidence from the inquest, to reverse their previous ‘perverse’ decision not to bring charges in respect of Jimmy Mubenga’s death and instead to charge the three G4S guards with manslaughter.[39] This decision was a major source of relief to Adrienne Kambana, Jimmy’s widow, and to his five children.

In the matter of violence leading to death, G4S has form. In October 2013, a G4S guard was found guilty of bludgeoning to death a delegate to a conference in Glasgow.[40] In 2009, G4S was warned about the danger a guard posed to others. G4S went on to employ this man in Iraq. There he murdered two colleagues.[41] And a 100kg guard who fatally restrained a 40kg child was subsequently promoted to Safety, Health and Environmental Manager at G4S Children’s Services.[42]

At Australia’s immigration detention centre on Manus Island, run by G4S, an asylum seeker was killed during a violent confrontation on 17 Feb 2014. G4S initially claimed the conflict had occurred outside the perimeter fence, involving the Papua New Guinea local police. But Australian Immigration Minister Scott Morrison later conceded the events – including the death of one detainee – occurred largely within the perimeter compound.[43] G4S was immediately replaced by Transfield. [44]

This is a company entitled to be protected from the rigours of the Freedom of Information Act and which in spite of its chequered history is seen as a model for the new 2000 place prison in Wrexham.[45] It is now apparent that the drive to outsource the public service has finally put paid to considerations of transparency and accountability.[46]

Asylum Housing: “Hideous Conditions”



Bathroom: Cascade Housing



Cockroach traps: Cascade Housing



Electricity meter: Barnsley

In June 2012 G4S and two other security firms were handed the largest Home Office contract ever – potentially £1.8 billion over 7 years – the COMPASS contract to provide houses to people seeking asylum.

The three firms were international security giants G4S and Serco, and the smaller Reliance Security. None of the security companies had any experience of housing, although Reliance went into partnership with Clearsprings which was already providing asylum housing. In the summer of 2012 Reliance then sold on its part of the contract for London, the South of England and Wales, to Capita. The sole owner of Reliance Brian Kingham a Tory party donor received £20m just six months into the contract.

G4S won contracts in the Midlands, Yorkshire and the North East. The winning companies had undercut bids from many of the existing holders of asylum housing contracts – many of them local authorities. In the North West region where Serco won the contract, 30% of the existing asylum housing was provided by local authorities; in West and South Yorkshire around 50% were local authority contracts.

What is Asylum Housing?

Asylum housing was, and is, public ‘social’ housing – 100% funded by the taxpayer. It is means tested housing – asylum seekers and their families have to prove they ‘need’ the housing. Asylum seekers can spend years in this housing – by 2012 some of the families in council properties in Barnsley had spent over seven years awaiting decisions.

The COMPASS contracts meant the outsourcing and privatisation of what in 2012 Barnsley still called ‘humanitarian’ housing. For over fifty years refugees from Hungary in 1958; Kenya and Uganda in the early 1970s; Chile after 1973; Vietnamese ‘boat people’ in the early 1980s; refugees from Kosovo in the 1990s; all had managed to find some kind of new life in the U.K. – often starting out in camps, then dispersed into publicly funded housing. They were exercising an international right to asylum under the Refugee Convention of 1951 where signatories which included the U.K. agree to receive any refugee who

‘owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country...’

Conservatives then Labour restrict the right to asylum and ‘asylum support’

John Major’s Conservative government of the 1990s introduced legislation to restrict support for asylum seekers. Labour’s policy after the 1999 Asylum and Immigration Act was to construct a ‘deterrence’ regime rather than a support system – although they called it the National Asylum Support Service (NASS). Immigration barrister Frances Webber describes Labour policy thus

“Whereas the Tories had simply closed off parts of the welfare state to migrants and asylum seekers, Labour came up with a system of institutionalised inhumanity. It accepted responsibility for support, but its anxiety to appease the right wing press and to create opportunities for the private sector created a monstrous system which had a lot in common with the workhouse: bare subsistence and a deterrent system of coercion and control“ (Webber p.92)

The late Steve Cohen a Manchester based immigration lawyer summed up the immigration and asylum laws and regulations at the beginning of the twenty first century as ‘the Orwellian world of immigration controls’ (Cohen)

In February 2003, Tony Blair went on *Newsnight* and dramatically announced his abandonment of policies under the 1951 UN Convention on Refugees, and an immediate cut in asylum claimants by 50 per cent over the next eight months ‘by making it extremely difficult for people fleeing from persecution to reach the shores of the UK’. In 2005 at the Labour conference Blair announced that:

“We have cut radically the numbers of failed asylum seekers. By the end of 2005, and for the first time in Britain, we will remove more each month than apply and so restore faith in a system that we know has been abused.” (Dean p. 223)

Refugees had become ‘bogus asylum seekers’, and have now simply joined the ranks of allegedly ‘illegal immigrants’ in the tabloid press and politicians’ speeches.

G4S thrives under Labour

This context for the NASS system is very important for understanding how G4S became a key contractor in privatised ‘asylum markets’.

G4S prospered under Labour; from 2005 to 2010 annual G4S revenues doubled to £6 billion. Dr John Reid a Labour Home Secretary and Defence Minister joined G4S as a consultant whilst still an M.P. in 2008; by 2010 he was earning £50,000 a year. Then as Lord Reid he became G4S Director Regional Management (UK and Ireland Limited), resigning on 1st April 2013.

G4S has recruited major Establishment figures. Lord Condon former Metropolitan Police commissioner was on the G4S board until 2012 and is still a major shareholder. Adam Crozier via the Post Office, the FA and now head of ITV, joined the G4S board in 2013. British embassies, Kabul airport and many Foreign Office contracts feature G4S. G4S Gurkha services train British troops, employing Gurkha personnel redundant from regular army duties.[47] Remarkably even after the debacle of the London Olympics, G4S is in charge of security for Glasgow’s Commonwealth Games in 2015.

Profits by privatising asylum housing

Under Labour Home Secretaries, including David Blunkett and John Reid, asylum support was cut back and efforts were made to privatise asylum housing under Immigration Ministers Tony McNulty, Liam Byrne, and Phil Woolas.

This was despite the fact that in 2005 the National Audit Office and the media had exposed fraud and appalling housing conditions to show what could happen when slum landlords were used on the asylum housing contracts.[48]

Local authorities coordinated asylum housing and allocated some of their own property along with housing associations, but gradually with the Labour government’s encouragement more and more properties were sourced from ‘slum’ private housing companies with the inevitable scandals over conditions and corruption. At their peak in 2003 there were around 80,000 people in asylum housing; in 2014 there are around 25,000.

The Angel Group

This is *The Guardian* in August 2005 on a major

asylum housing contractor, Angel Group; it was perhaps this model that attracted G4S to the profitable asylum housing market:

“It has taken Julia Davey only five years to build up her multimillion-pound property empire. From small beginnings in 1999 – housing single asylum seekers for Kent county council – the assets of the Angel Group at the end of 2003 had, according to the last company report, expanded to nearly £40m. In that time Ms Davey, 48, has formed 57 other companies. On top of big dividend payments, she awards herself a salary of around £½m. She is the sole director. That is the sort of basic pay expected by the head of one of Britain’s top plc’s.

The accolades have followed, as well as the rewards, including a Range Rover Vogue, a red Ferrari, a new three-storey headquarters in London’s Docklands and business interests in the US, Israel, Poland and Cyprus.

... Housing for asylum seekers and the homeless is the Angel Group’s stock in trade. “Providing Homes & Hope for the Future” is Angel’s motto and it boasts that it is a provider of “high quality accommodation and support services to vulnerable people across the United Kingdom.” The Home Office contracts have been enormously lucrative for the private landlords.

However, internal company records and conversations with former employees reveal that the Angel Group may have indulged in sharp practices that could have deprived the British taxpayer of tens of thousands of pounds...

In April 2000, Ms Daley bought an old nurses’ home in Newcastle and called it Angel Heights. Its first occupants, under an interim scheme where local authorities agreed to transfers, were Iraqi and Iranian asylum seekers from Kent, who within weeks had rioted over poor conditions. In its first two years Angel Heights generated a profit before tax of £700,000 and Ms Davey picked up a dividend of £300,000.

With a five-year contract from NASS that amounted to £20m a year, the Angel Group started acquiring and renting properties across Yorkshire and the north-east. It was handling up to 800 properties at a time, all of which were paid for by NASS whether they were occupied or not. In the event, according to former employees, between 30% and 50% were not used.

At its busiest, the Angel Group was providing more than 3,600 bed spaces to NASS. The fee paid for each bed space was £102 a week.”[49]

G4S and its subcontractor Urban Housing Services bought Angel’s Angel Lodge in Wakefield in 2012 to use as a dispersal centre. Angel Lodge is overshadowed by the walls of Wakefield high security prison – a symbolic welcome to Yorkshire for asylum seekers and their children.

By 2012 the Angel group was worth £64.4 million.

Angel owner Julia Davey was, according to the 2011 Sunday Times Rich List, worth £131 million (£80 million in business assets and £51 million in property and personal wealth).

G4S and profitable subcontractors

When G4S started the COMPASS contract in June 2012 it did so with subcontractors who would actually deliver the housing 'service' – a model G4S has used in other privatisation contracts. Amongst its COMPASS subcontractors were:

Citrus Group – Asylum dispersal centres, Southern Cross care homes and Israel

Under the 2012 COMPASS contract G4S has subcontracted Urban Housing Services, part of the Citrus Group, to run Angel Lodge and the Midlands dispersal centre at Edgbaston in Birmingham. Citrus also remarkably runs much better quality and much more welcoming official "absorption centres" for the Israeli government. Citrus is no stranger to privatisation disasters and their effects on vulnerable people.

In 2010 the GMB union exposed the fact that the Citrus Group had bought the freehold [50] of a number of Southern Cross[51] care homes with a US private equity company. Citrus companies were receiving an annual 'rent' for each elderly person's bed of £6300 a year. When Southern Cross collapsed in 2011 it left an astonishing multi-billion pound debt and 752 care homes with 31,000 elderly people affected. Citrus moved on and has recently announced it has relet its care homes to another national provider. GMB also revealed that the extensive Citrus group has only one named shareholder one Anton David Curtis.

Jomast Developments – the mother and baby market

In the North East part of the G4S contract in Stockton the core ambitions and values of G4S seem to have meshed with those of a local property development empire, Jomast Developments, headed by Stuart Monk. He and his family have run Jomast as a private group of companies since 1971, currently with a property portfolio approaching £200 million. Stuart Monk is number eleven in the North East's Rich List with personal family assets of £138 million He just squeezed into the *Sunday Times 2011 500 Rich List* at number 465. Jomast continue (in 2014) to run a highly profitable asylum hostel under the G4S contract, with thirty six lone mothers and infants under eighteen months in conditions described by the inmates as living in "cells".[52]

Cascade the worst of the G4S slum landlords

Other slum landlords and housing companies have come and gone on the G4S contracts. Perhaps the most notorious is Cascade Housing who subcontracted from G4S in West Yorkshire and Humberside. They allocated damp filthy houses

infested with rats, cockroaches and slugs to mothers and tiny children.[53] Cascade ran up arrears on rented properties of thousands of pounds, also they simply did not pay gas and electricity bills. Asylum seeker families received demands and court orders to pay.[54]

Under the terms of the COMPASS contract, paying energy and water bills is the landlord's responsibility. After a means test, people awaiting the outcome of asylum claims are given furnished housing including heating and lighting. The landlord gets taxpayers' money from the Home Office, and the landlord pays the bills.

But G4S, ironically the UK's leading meter readers were not paying their bills:

In one West Yorkshire case by September 2013, G4S and their subcontractor Cascade Housing had incurred an energy company debt of £2800.48 on one flat occupied by a lone woman asylum seeker and her child. A visit to the woman asylum tenant late in 2012 revealed the appalling neglect of the new apartments by Cascade and G4S.

Communal areas were full of rubbish and fire exits were blocked. Light bulbs in high ceilings had not been replaced; rooms were in permanent darkness, smoke alarms continuously beeped.

In September 2013 the tenant faced fresh worries — a hand-delivered demand from debt collectors. Resolvecall of Manchester, acting for British Gas, threatened court action and asserted their right "to enter the premises if necessary by force" to collect the debt.

On 9 October a charity working with asylum seekers in West Yorkshire reported that the unpaid bills and threatening letters to asylum seeker tenants stretched back almost a year.

The final straw for the Home Office was that Cascade rarely paid council tax on its slum housing and still owes (in 2014) West Yorkshire authorities thousands of pounds in arrears.[55] G4S has had to take over Cascade's role and pay off the debts. In fact it only has one subcontractor left in Yorkshire, Target Housing.

Trades Unions and fighting the "monstrous" asylum system

The TUC and trades unions in terms of formal policies have taken a principled line on both immigration and asylum support over the years. In the main the general attitude in policy terms has been to oppose the exploitation of migrant workers, and to seek to organise them. The unions have also campaigned against abuses in the asylum system.

Fighting the stigma of vouchers

When asylum seekers were 'dispersed' to declining areas of the North, Midlands and Scotland where there was available poor quality council and private sector property, they were also stigmatised by having no cash support – simply vouchers.

At the Labour Party conference in 2001 TGWU General Secretary Bill Morris launched an attack on the voucher system as 'retail apartheid'. Trade Union opposition scrapped the scheme but it returned for so called 'failed asylum seekers' (those renewing appeals or who could not be returned). It survives as the hated 'Azure' smart cards restricting the meagre £75 a week a mother and child receive as 'failed asylum seekers', to certain shops and certain goods.

Refusing to take asylum seeker children into care

In 2005 UNISON social workers in the North West declared they would not cooperate in taking children of asylum seekers into care. Parents whose claims had been rejected were to be offered a stark choice: take a 'voluntary' flight to their native country, paid for by the state, or lose all benefits in the UK and have their children taken. Campaigns by law centres and trades unions meant that the law was defied and the government never implemented the measure.

Unpaid community work "tantamount to reintroducing slavery"

In 2005 the Labour Home Office put forward a proposal that 'failed' asylum seekers would be forced to do unpaid community work in return for accommodation. The YMCA began to open discussions in Liverpool to administer the scheme. There was angry hostility from the unions on Merseyside and nationally.

UNISON members unemployed or retire rather than work for G4S

In Yorkshire in 2012 when G4S was threatening to take over asylum housing, the asylum 'teams' employed by the local authorities for the previous ten years faced redundancy. Their union UNISON and branches, like the Sheffield branch, supported the actions and demonstrations of the Notog4s campaign, and only a tiny number of union members were willing to be TUPE'd. Most opted for unemployment or retirement in disgust at a brutal manager of detention centres, G4S, taking over asylum 'support'.

Opposition to G4S and its privatisation programme in prisons, police and probation has initiated joint union actions and campaigns. Trades Councils have begun to highlight campaigns against G4S.

G4S is unionised in its security guards companies – and despite protests, G4S is still used by the Labour Party at its conference – even the West Midlands TUC used them as stewards on anti-Coalition demonstration – because they were the 'only unionised security company'. The GMB organise within G4S, as do PCS and Unite.

Asylum housing as 'house arrest' extending the G4S detention estate

Asylum seekers and asylum rights campaigners see the extension of the role of for-profit security

companies in the prison and immigration 'estate' into asylum housing as creating a form of 'house arrest' for asylum seekers awaiting decisions on their claims. Perhaps this is an initial step towards the policy, called for in 2012 by former Home Office junior minister Anne Widdecombe, of 'detention centres on arrival' for all asylum seekers?[56] There was after all an earlier attempt in December 2004 to introduce such a regime with a Home Office contract for the security firm Reliance to pilot voice recognition and tagging of 200 asylum seekers in Glasgow and two other areas.[57]

G4S and its brutal record managing immigration detention and 'removal'

In fact G4S was perhaps chosen as a contractor not only because of its political and Establishment connections but because it was feared by asylum seekers for its record in running detention centres and escort services. It had a truly horrendous record. An inquest in 2013 on an Angolan man Jimmy Mubenga who was killed being restrained by G4S guards in 2010 found that he had been 'unlawfully killed'. [58]

In 2012 G4S managed two detention centres for asylum seekers Tinsley House and Brook House and they manage the 'family friendly' Cedars detention centre at Pease Pottage near Gatwick, which has already been criticised for its treatment of families. The new centre managed by G4S with the involvement of children's charity Barnardo's actually gives families fewer rights than they had in the old Yarl's Wood or Tinsley House detention centres.

G4S in 2012 held existing contracts to transport and disperse asylum seekers and until 2011 provided the escorts for the forcible deportation of asylum seekers. G4S lost this contract because of its appalling record.

- The charity Medical Justice in its 2008 report 'Outsourcing Abuse'[59] detailed nearly 300 cases of alleged physical assault and racial abuse by private security guards in the deportation process.
- In March 2010 Baroness O'Loan reviewing Medical Justice's evidence found that G4S and security contractors involved in deportations had 'failed to properly manage the use of violent restraint techniques by their staff'.
- In October 2010 Jose Gutierrez, a Colombian deportee, was badly injured [60] in being forced onto an aircraft by G4S and returned to detention.
- In July 2011 Amnesty International published a damning report "Out Of Control: The case for a complete overhaul of enforced removals by private contractors"[61] "complete and radical overhaul and reform of the current system is now required to enable the UK Government to meet its legal obligations to protect people against human rights abuses," said Amnesty. "Reforms

must drastically improve the training, monitoring, and accountability” of contractors like G4S.

G4S’s record of managing centres adds to this disturbing picture.

- In 2010 there were a record 773 complaints lodged against G4S by detainees including 48 claims of assault. Three complaints of assault and two of racism were upheld. G4S were allowed to investigate themselves under UKBA ‘scrutiny’.[62]

Many of the vulnerable asylum seeker families who encountered G4S as their landlord after 2012 have had direct experience of G4S escorts and detention centre staff.

The asylum housing campaigns against G4S in Yorkshire were launched in January 2012 when a Zimbabwean asylum housing tenant stood up at a meeting and said

“I do not want a prison guard as my landlord”

Although G4S’s slogan is “Securing Your World” its policy and practice is more accurately expressed by a recent description of the US private sector detention and deportation industry:

‘Every prisoner a profit centre, every immigrant a business opportunity’ [63]

G4S and Serco undercut the bids from local authorities for the COMPASS contracts in 2011 so that they could move beyond their ‘detention estates’ into wider ‘asylum markets’ (their descriptions). Jeffery Stafford of Serco was open about this at the Home Affairs committee hearings in June 2013. Serco were

“Very focused on building an accommodation business....we felt that we could establish a very good platform that we felt was scalable.....some of the services that we develop in the United Kingdom we then go and take to other geographies....For us, we felt accommodation management was an important development area.”[64]

The Asylum housing campaign

Campaigners, university researchers and asylum tenants in Yorkshire from early 2012, organised networks gathering information on the impacts of the privatisation by G4S. Campaigners collected evidence and sent it to M.P.s and three Parliamentary Inquiries – a Children’s Society Parliamentary panel early in 2013, a Home Affairs Select Committee in May 2013, and a National Audit Office inquiry and Public Accounts Committee (PAC) hearing in February 2014. All the Inquiries condemned G4S for its handling of the COMPASS contract.

G4S and the Children’s Society Parliamentary inquiry into asylum support [65] (See Note 1)

In February 2013 Chris Bryant MP, then shadow

Minister for Immigration speaking in the debate on the Children’s Society inquiry spoke of ‘The hideous conditions in which many people live. We need to do far more in this country to crack down on unscrupulous and poor landlords, who put people into housing that, frankly, is not fit for living. It has been a disgrace that successive Governments have not concentrated enough on that.’[66]

Sarah Teather M.P. a former Lib Dem Minister, who had organised the Parliamentary panel, speaking in Parliament on 27 February 2013 pointed to examples from G4S housing and the “abject disregard for basic human dignity demonstrated by housing providers” and their disregard for privacy:

“Almost every family told us that housing contractors routinely enter properties without knocking. We heard not just from one family, but from all of them independently that people just turn up and use keys to let themselves in..... It causes terror for children, and is an epithet for the lack of respect with which they are treated. They are treated as luggage rather than people who deserve some dignity and respect. The Government must get to grips with that with housing contractors.”[67]

The Children’s Society Parliamentary panel heard directly from a lone parent of a hostel run by G4S and its North East contractor Jomast in Stockton with 36 women and their toddlers under one year six months living in what the women described as ‘cells’ with little privacy from a mainly male staff.[68]

G4S at the Parliamentary Home Affairs (June 2013) and Public Accounts (February 2014) Committees

On 5 February 2014, Stephen Small, Managing Director, Immigration and Borders, G4S Care and Justice Services UK Ltd, appeared before the Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee[69] as they considered a National Audit Office report [70] on asylum housing and the contracts held by G4S and Serco.

Campaigners and asylum seeker tenants in Yorkshire and the North East of England had provided the NAO with a mountain of evidence of incompetence, corruption and delusion since 2012 when the Home Office privatised asylum public housing.[71] An attractive market: publicly funded social housing, compliant tenants with no legal tenancy rights, offered ‘no choice’ housing. It promised £1.8 billion of taxpayers’ money to outsourcing companies G4S, Serco and Reliance, their partners and subcontractors.

Security Companies with no experience of housing

All three lead companies in COMPASS: G4S, Serco and Reliance, had a record of abuses in brutal immigration detention and deportation ‘asylum markets’ and no

experience of social housing management. Public Accounts Committee chair, Labour's Margaret Hodge, was scathing about G4S and its lack of experience in social housing for vulnerable people.[72] Stephen Small contradicted her, claiming G4S had relevant experience in the "welfare and care of people in all sorts of situations-from prisons to childrens' homes to immigration removal centres". Did that mean managing Oakwood prison... or the company's Children's Services Manager for Safety Health & Environment in 2013, formerly involved in the lethal restraint of 15 year old Gareth Myatt in 2004 [73] or the guards in whose care deportee Jimmy Mubenga was unlawfully killed...?

Back in June 2013 Small was grilled by members of the Parliamentary Home Affairs Committee [74] about his company's role in the privatisation of housing for asylum seekers in Yorkshire.

About the same time Esther (not her real name) and her four year old daughter were waking up in their G4S Yorkshire asylum house to the scampering of rats in their ceilings, roof space, basement, living rooms, and bedrooms.

Small told MPs he simply "did not recognise" reports of 'hideous conditions' in asylum housing that Chris Bryant, shadow Minister for Immigration, and a Parliamentary inquiry had exposed.

You'd think a former Rentokil executive would recognise a rat. Small and his G4S workers in Yorkshire certainly should have been able to deal with the rats in Esther's house – and the four foot high grass in the garden and the rubbish where the rats were thriving.

Instead, Esther's house, riddled by rats, stayed that way for months. All the way from June to October complaints to G4S and their subcontractors Cascade — from Esther, from volunteers who tried to help, went ignored or prompted only token action.[75]

In Yorkshire, G4S provides what Keith Vaz, chair of the Parliamentary Home Affairs committee, called "squalid" and "appalling" housing conditions for asylum seeker families. Vaz was speaking at hearings of the committee in June 2013 when G4S and Serco were interviewed. When the Report of the Committee emerged in October 2013 Vaz was equally direct:

"We were alarmed to discover that thousands appear to be living in squalid run-down housing as part of the COMPASS contract supplied by the private contractors G4S, Serco and Clearel. These companies must be held accountable and deliver a satisfactory level of service." [76]

The *Guardian* description of the committee's report perhaps says it all. "Asylum claimants wait for years in unacceptable conditions" [77]

Public Affairs Committee (PAC) slams privatisation of Asylum Housing

In January 2014 the NAO Report on Asylum Housing repeated the blanket criticisms of G4S and Serco performance. It also disclosed that the Home Office was negotiating to claw back up to £4m because of failures in performance.

At the PAC, under questioning from Austin Mitchell MP, Permanent Secretary Mark Sedwill admitted that the housing contracts were "driven" by Home Office cuts in 2012.

"That is the primary motive of any commercial arrangement. The aim was to save money while also maintaining a service that was adequate for the asylum seeker," Sedwill said.

He claimed that the previous contracts, mainly run by local authorities, would have been much more expensive — £826 million compared with the outsourcers' £687 million. He claimed (contrary to the evidence in the NAO Report) that £27 million had already been "saved" in the first eighteen months.

Margaret Hodge said that relying on the private sector inevitably meant higher rents and lower standards for "this vulnerable group". Sedwill insisted that the outsourced asylum contract would in the end deliver better standards than the previous arrangements. Hodge disagreed,

"I don't believe it is right to say the previous service was poor. I think they...were delivering a far better service than we've had so far."

G4S and Small were confronted by questions from members quoting asylum tenants themselves. Ian Swales, the Liberal Democrat MP for Redcar, challenged G4S and its definition of 'acceptable accommodation'. He spoke of one asylum seeker who stayed in the G4S/Jomast Stockton hostel with her child and then, after getting her right to remain in the UK, went to a homeless hostel.

She "could hardly believe how wonderful it was, it was like arriving in heaven," Swales said. The MPs were clearly shocked by G4S and Serco's failure to inspect properties before allocation to asylum seekers. The result was what Labour's Austin Mitchell described as "unacceptable conditions, some of which were frankly appalling".

Parliamentary committees fail to look at the full G4S human rights record

Not one MP on the PAC asked Home Office witnesses to explain why they were happy to hand asylum housing contracts to G4S, known to asylum seekers as the company that killed Jimmy Mubenga.

James Thorburn, Serco's Managing Director, Home Affairs went unchallenged when he told the MPs that Serco qualified for the asylum housing contract because "we care for a lot of vulnerable people and we run two immigration centres, so we understand the immigration market."

Serco's "immigration market" includes the notorious Yar's Wood women's detention and removal centre where in October 2013 two Serco staff were sacked for sexual abuse of women inmates.[78]

G4S and Serco are making profits from the UK's asylum 'support' regime, which immigration barrister Frances Webber has described as a "system of institutionalised inhumanity" designed not to support those seeking asylum in the UK, but to deter others from coming to the UK. In the UK, where the state has outsourced its monopoly of violence to private corporations like G4S and Serco, the media, pollsters and politicians create an illusion that common sense values and principles have shifted to a view that asylum seekers are almost always "bogus" "failed" or "illegals".

The Home Office wants a service "adequate" for asylum seekers in the slum private rented sector, and it wants to deter 'bogus' applicants. Labour, who consistently pressed for privatisation of the housing contracts, and Coalition ministers in 2012, knew exactly what they were doing in turning over 20,000 asylum seekers to the mercies of G4S and Serco and the UK private sector housing market. They had a previous National Audit Office report (from 2005) to show what could happen – fraud, corruption, and disgusting accommodation for thousands of vulnerable asylum seekers simply waiting for the outcomes of claims for their rights to asylum.

Housing companies abusing asylum seekers and making a mockery of the asylum housing contracts were also exposed by a *Daily Mail* investigation in 2010 into what it then described as "a little-known industry".[79]

Coalition ministers continued Labour's policy of cutting back harder on asylum support than for other welfare claimants. The COMPASS privatisation contracts should also be seen in the context of austerity cuts and deficit reduction; tantamount to a declaration of war on the poorest and most vulnerable.

The voices from asylum seeker tenants surfaced occasionally in the Public Accounts Committee. The committee even persuaded Home Office officials to agree that it was a mistake to give the contracts to huge companies with no experience of housing. They conceded that in future it would probably be a good idea to "disaggregate" future provision to small companies and housing associations. That's of little comfort to people now living in G4S asylum housing. The contracts run till 2019. The disrespect and humiliations go on and on.

Despite the exposes and the grillings... it's (asylum market) business as usual

In July 2013 Capita's chief executive Paul Pindar said

"The UK's fiscal deficit would ensure increasing involvement of the private sector in delivering public services, despite growing concerns that outsourcers are failing to give taxpayers value for money. G4S and Serco – that (tagging scandal) row is a complete distraction... If you look at the deficit the UK is grappling with, I genuinely don't believe there will be a knock-on effect. When you talk to the guys in central government, [chief procurement officer] Bill Crothers, [Cabinet Office minister] Francis Maude, they are very keen to involve the private sector and they are going to push as far ahead with that as they can get." [80]

In August 2012 Capita bought Reliance Security and its asylum housing contract interests for £20m. From 1 April 2014 Capita will take over the discredited tagging contracts from G4S and Serco. Of the £4.2bn of government contracts out to tender, in 2013/14 about 60 per cent are funded by taxpayers. The struggle goes on...

For extensive details of the Notog4s asylum housing campaign please see the SYMAAG website

www.symaag.org.uk

Notes

(1) The cross party Parliamentary Inquiry into Asylum Support for Children and Young People, published its report in January 2013. The panel, chaired by former children's minister Sarah Teather MP, comprised Neil Carmichael MP, Caroline Dinéage MP, Nic Dakin MP, Virendra Sharma MP, Lord Avebury, Baroness Lister, the Rt. Reverend John Packer, Bishop of Ripon and Leeds, Nadine Finch, Children's Rights Barrister, Garden Court Chambers and Matthew Reed, Chief Executive of The Children's Society.

<http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/policy-and-lobbying/parliamentary-work/parliamentary-inquiry-asylum-support-children-an-1>

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Welfare-to-Work on Zero Hour Contracts

In April 2011, G4S won three contracts to run the Work Programme in Kent, Surrey and Sussex; Greater Manchester, Cheshire and Warrington; and North East Yorkshire and the Humber. The Department of Work and Pensions has allocated £5 billion to the Work Programme over seven years, of which G4S could take a £250 million share.[81] G4S is contracted to find long-term jobs for 125,000 of the 250,000 “jobseekers” it will see.

“Compulsory volunteering”

The Work Programme is a central part of the Government’s “Welfare to Work” strategy which aims to reduce benefit payments (and unemployment statistics) by coercing unemployed people into unpaid jobs (“workfare”), poorly paid jobs or low quality “training” by threatening to stop benefits. These benefit cuts (“sanctions”) create destitution and can last from 4 weeks to 3 years. Work Programme providers can recommend that Job Centres sanction claimants for the most trivial of reasons and in the year up to Sept 2013 there were a record number of sanctions: 897,690.[82] Many have attributed the rise of foodbanks to the level of destitution caused by sanctions.

All Work Programme contractors including G4S, have been invited to tender for contracts for the “Help to Work” programme which, from April 2014, will force long term unemployed people to work for their benefits. This is despite their manifest failure to help unemployed people find work via the Work Programme. After one year Work Programme performance was described as “worse than doing nothing”, “extremely poor” and subsequently failed to meet minimum performance targets.

Zero Experience

G4S employment practices have given it rather more experience of work-to-welfare than welfare-to-work, of which it could boast zero years of experience before winning the WP contracts. But it won’t be worried too much as the structure of the Work Programme and “Help to Work” allows prime contractors like G4S to sub-contract many of their responsibilities to charities and other “delivery partners”. Uniquely amongst other prime contractors, G4S subcontracts 100% of its Work Programme contract.

So why bother getting G4S involved at all? The government’s reasoning is that, while the services needed to get jobless people back into work “already exist”, what is missing is “an effective structure for managing and coordinating this provision.” Outsourcing giants like G4S are seen as having “the experience, capability and vision” to do this.[83] At their ‘Capital Market Day’ presentation for investors in May 2011, G4S’s former Chief Operating Officer David Taylor-Smith (who was forced to resign over the London Olympics security debacle) boasted:

“Welfare to Work, very, very interesting win this for us. We were seen as the biggest net winner of these recent awards. I’m just reminding those tax payers, if there are British taxpayers in this room [sic], £159 billion spent in this area of government.” [84]

A “Field Operative” at Your Door

Apart from G4S’ close knowledge of, and connections with, the corridors of power, the Work Programme’s emphasis on discipline helps explain G4S’ success. G4S’ Work Programme bid included a promise to “send a field operative to a claimant’s door within two hours if that person was non-cooperative”. [85] They also took over the national security contract for the Department for Work and Pensions in January 2011, including security at Job Centres where “jobseekers” often first discover that their benefits have been sanctioned.

Payment for Welfare-to-Work providers is stepped up by benefit claims ending. But getting a job is not the only way to come off benefits; you could also have your benefits cut if you are deemed to be not looking hard enough.

Evidence obtained by Corporate Watch [86] in July 2013 showed that, in the first six months of the Work Programme, G4S referred almost 8,000 claimants to the government to have their benefits ‘sanctioned’. However the majority of these referrals have been turned down, with the reasons given for sanctioning deemed inappropriate, suggesting G4S is even more eager than the coalition to cut benefits.

There were twice as many benefit sanctions as job outcomes on the payment-by-results Work Programme for long term unemployed people.[87] But with three or four times as many claimants as advertised vacancies how is G4S going to make its money? Advisers told the *Guardian* a lot of the jobs they do find are part time, 20 hours or fewer, even when the individuals wanted full-time work. G4S is unconcerned: it gets paid as long as they stop claiming benefits.

In September 2013 G4S argued that “The criteria for entering the Work Programme should be expanded to apply to jobseekers meeting a cumulative threshold as well as a continuous one”. [88] In other words G4S could coerce claimants into a series of temporary jobs, between which G4S could claim

payment each time they're referred to the Work Programme.

In any case, when George Selmer of G4S appeared at the Manchester City Council Economic Scrutiny Committee on 17 July 2013, he was asked whether the prime contractors made use of zero hour contracts. Mr Selmer confirmed that, despite misgivings, the prime contractors had to, as this is what is available in many cases. He reassured members that it only counted if the person was in work for more than 16 hours a week. He said that it was often taking up to eight separate sequential jobs to achieve the successful outcome of three months in employment.[89]

“Huge Positive Synergy”

G4S, like other Welfare to Work profiteers also see workfare working for them. Literally. According to Sean Williams, Managing Director of G4S Welfare to Work, “I would be delighted if we managed to get a lot of job seekers into our own vacancies” and that “I wouldn't see it as a conflict of interest but as a huge positive synergy”. [90] Huge profit too: paid to coerce unemployed people to work for G4S for no pay.

The start of Community Work Placements in April 2014 is a challenge not just to unemployed people but to the wider trade union movement. The scheme is described as an “intensive option” where the providers will “deliver mandatory work placements for claimants for 30 hours a week for up to 26 weeks, alongside supported jobsearch”. Or put another way, it's a six month sentence to force claimants work for free or lose their benefits.

There's been resistance from unemployed people and campaigns like Boycott Workfare. The DWP have refused to publicly list the companies and charities involved with workfare (the ultimate aim of the Work Programme and Help to Work scheme) because “The activities of campaign groups and the results of negative publicity meant that... ‘a great many placement organisations’ had ceased to offer placements.” [91]

But, as Pilgrim Tucker from UNITE Community says:

“It's time to take opposition to these schemes into the workplace, not just for the sake of the people who are being exploited and degraded by them, but also to protect the paid jobs that they replace”. [92] ■

South Africa: “Privatisation has failed”

The crisis in South Africa’s top-security Mangaung prison erupted in the Autumn of 2013. G4S dismissed hundreds of staff after unofficial strikes by the Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union POPCRU. After a revolt and hostage taking by inmates, the union demanded the government take back the prison and sack the top G4S managers. The Dept of Correctional Services declared that G4S had lost control after it employed unqualified staff to replace the dismissed workers, and imposed direct government control over the prison. The Wits Justice Project, an investigative journalism organisation, then released the results of a 12-month investigation, including evidence of G4S security teams using electric shocks and medical staff administering forcible injections of anti-psychotic drugs. Ruth Hopkins’ story appeared in the BBC and Guardian. Several inmates are seeking to bring legal action against G4S in the UK. The South African Minister of Correctional Services declared “privatisation has failed” and his Department launched an investigation, which has yet to report.

Mangaung is a maximum security prison near Bloemfontein in the Free State province (formerly the Orange Free State). As G4S puts it,

“The unique socio-political development of South Africa” [!] “has resulted in the nation’s offender population as a ratio of actual population being amongst the world’s highest. Innovation has been ‘built-in’ to Mangaung. The project was the first Private Finance Initiative (PFI)/Public Private Partnership (PPP) to be developed in South Africa, leveraging the know-how of both public and private sectors. G4S was part of the consortium responsible for the design, construction and financing of the project and now has a 25-year contract to operate the facility on behalf of the Department of Correctional Services.”[93].

Mangaung opened in 2001. By 2009, a secret Government report obtained by the Wits Justice Project (WJP) stated that 62 prisoners had been held in isolation for up to three years, without any evidence that this was required or had been authorised as required in law, and some of the prisoners were deprived of life-saving medication for HIV and TB. When questioned by government inspectors, G4S failed to explain the practice, a direct echo of the apartheid era.[94] A Dept of Correctional Services (DCS) controller within the prison had reported only 3 of the 62 cases.

POPCRU

The union has demanded increased manpower at the maximum security prison for years, without success. One unarmed warder has to oversee about 60 violent, gang affiliated inmates. In September 2013, Popcru sent G4S a petition that listed 30 violent incidents towards warders dating back to 2004.

In August, employees took collective sick leave. The Labour Court ruled that this amounted to an

unprotected strike in terms of the Labour Relations Act, and ordered all employees back to work. When the warders struck again in September after the Commission for Conciliation Mediation and Arbitration ruled against their wage claim, they were all dismissed by G4S.[95]

Popcru said unqualified staff, trainees, administrative staff and workers from other branches of G4S replaced the dismissed warders. According to company policy, warders who have not worked in contact with inmates for more than three months are not qualified and need a refresher course.

By October, inmates had rioted and taken as hostage a female warder whose attempted rape in 2009 was one of the cases detailed in the Popcru petition.[96]

Popcru called on “the National Commissioner of Correctional Services to take drastic steps by invoking the clause of dismal failure to manage this institution and move it directly into state operation. The Managing Director – Mr Theron and his team must be fired immediately. We also call upon the immediate unconditional re-instatement of all the dismissed members.”[97]

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) echoed its affiliate in demanding immediate reinstatement and went further[98]:

COSATU statement on the privatization of prisons

5 October 2013

...What is even more astounding is that government has opted to privatize an institution that ought to rehabilitate social delinquents. It ought to be a national scandal that private companies are being handed huge amounts of taxpayers’ money to profit from this

rehabilitation process. It is even worse when these companies sack workers for raising issues regarding the conditions that they work under.

It is worrying that G4S, a British-Danish private security company that provides services and equipment to Israeli prisons, checkpoints, the Apartheid Wall and the Israeli police has now been courted by our government to milk tax payer's money in order to finance its controversial operations in the apartheid state of Israel.

G4S's modus operandi is indicative of two of the most worrying aspects of neoliberal capitalism and Israeli apartheid; the ideology of "security" and the increasing privatisation of what have been traditionally state run sectors. Security, in this context, does not imply security for everyone, but rather, when one looks at the major clients of G4S Security (banks, governments, corporations etc) it becomes evident that when G4S says it is "Securing your World", as the company slogan goes, it is referring to a world of exploitation, repression, occupation and racism.

Those without money and power are evidently seen either as not worthy of security, or as the threats which G4S's clients require to be secured against. Which is why G4S is careless about the prison conditions in South Africa, the security of the defenceless peace-loving people of Palestine.

We call on our government to cut ties with this company whose record for gross human rights violations speaks volumes.

We further call on the Department of Correctional Services to reinstate the dismissed workers with immediate effect!

Government Intervenes

The Dept. of Correctional Services (DCS) took direct control of Mangaung. On 9 October, the DCS Acting National Commissioner Ms Nontsikelelo Jolingana pointed to "a worrying deterioration of safety, and security, at the centre... the contractor has lost effective control of the facility... the contractor continues to use uncertified security staff to perform custodial duties. In terms of the Act, no employee of the contractor may perform custodial duties unless certified by the National Commissioner." [99] Jolingana appointed the Regional Commissioner of Gauteng Province (including Johannesburg and Pretoria) as Temporary Manager of Mangaung, supported by a team of senior DCS officials with experience in offender management, health care, and security. Some 200 DCS staff were sent in to take over all security roles. G4S was left in charge of food and education programmes.

Jolingana also told a Cabinet Committee [100] that "Mangaung Correctional Centre was a PPP

nightmare. Government had gone back to the drawing board about PPP centres. They were a mistake. Cabinet had decided that PPP projects in their current format were unacceptable, as security could not be outsourced."

Torture

The crisis deepened in late October as the South African Mail & Guardian published excerpts from a 12-month investigation by the WJP, detailing human rights abuses at Mangaung including G4S security administering electric shocks from their shields and medical staff forcibly injecting inmates with anti-psychotic drugs known to have dangerous side-effects. [101] BBC and Guardian reports [102][103] were picked up around the world.

A video recording by the Emergency Security Team on 24 July 2013 [104], leaked to the WJP, includes footage of inmate Bheki Dlamini being dragged off for an injection while protesting "No, no, no... I am not a donkey, I am not an animal". Five men with G4S logos on their uniforms twist his arms behind his back and drag him to a room where a nurse is called. His medical file reveals he is not psychotic. In another video electroshock zaps can be heard in the background. Dlamini and several other inmates are now seeking legal action against G4S in the British courts.



In a right of reply published by the Mail & Guardian, titled "G4S: Prison 'an excellent example' of private-public partnership", G4S Africa regional president Andy Baker denied the allegations, claimed the company had remained in effective control of the prison after staff were dismissed for an unlawful strike, and accused dismissed employees and unnamed "outside influences" of fomenting unrest within the prison. [105] WJP journalist Ruth Hopkins hit back with a point for point rebuttal [106] and later published an account of her year-long investigation which culminated in the smoking gun – the leaked video [107].

Starting in August 2012, she had spoken to inmates who alleged that the Emergency Security Team, known as the Ninjas, "would take prisoners to the single cell unit, strip them naked, pour water over



them and electroshock them with the electronically charged shields they carry with them". G4S had not realised Hopkins was a journalist.

Then a file compiled by one of the imprisoned gang leaders was smuggled out of prison for the WJP to collect in Johannesburg. It corroborated the interviews, but also alleged "the prison was injecting inmates against their will with drugs that made them walk, feel and act like zombies or robots, that caused intense sleepiness, involuntary and spastic movements of limbs and a dry mouth or excess saliva".

Hopkins made contact with a warder who eventually told her "staff at the prison were being overworked and underpaid. The employees had complained repeatedly about the dangerous working conditions; one unarmed warder had to oversee 65 violent, gang affiliated hardened criminals. Not surprisingly, the employees had suffered: stabbings, hostage takings, riots, attempted rape and actual rape were common in the prison. The management had not addressed the concerns of the warders and this had led to repeated unprotected strikes". Staff were preparing for another strike.

An official in the DCS who had written the hitherto secret report on conditions in 2009, revealed that it details a culture of impunity: excessive use of electroshocks are mentioned and the prison is compared to Guantanamo Bay. "The most interesting part of the report however was a list of 62 inmates who had been placed in isolation cells for up to three years and some had been denied life saving medication for HIV and TB."

When the Government took control after the riot and hostage-taking, "one of my sources leaked video footage to me, shot by the EST. One of the videos is of an inmate who is being forcibly injected. In another video, an inmate is being stitched up by a nurse. In the background you can hear an interrogation going on, a male voice asks an inmate what he was doing and then the dry clicking sound of the electro shock shields is followed by screaming."

When the torture story hit the headlines, the Correctional Services Minister spoke out.

Privatisation has failed

On 28 October 2013 Sbu Ndebele promised an investigation "would leave no stone unturned"[108], and on 7 November the Minister declared "privatisation has failed"[109]. When the Minister addressed the Correctional Services committee on 5 November[110], Acting National Commissioner Jolingana said there would be a two-pronged investigation. There had been a preliminary investigation into health care and security. The DCS was willing to admit that the contract had not been well thought through. Outsourcing of custodial duties was not good. "The matter had been taken back to Cabinet, and it had been decided that there would be no more Public Private Partnerships (PPPs)." Asked about the failure of the DCS controller within the prison to intervene over a long period of time, Jolingana confirmed that the controller had to inform the Department about what was going on at facilities, but "things had not been done. There were allegations against the controller."

Silence

Given the coverage in the British and international media, the intervention of the South African government in taking control of the prison, the detailed evidence of isolation and torture implicating G4S staff, the potential legal challenge in the British courts, and the ongoing South African government investigation, it may come as a surprise that Mangaung prison has been mentioned precisely twice in the House of Commons.

In a memorandum to the Joint Committee on Human Rights in Nov 2009, when businesses who have engaged directly with human rights issues were invited to comment on their impact on the private sector, G4S declared:

“...However, there are many examples of G4S businesses going well beyond these core requirements, for example, in South Africa, where legislation promotes diversity and inclusion through skills development and employment equity, we demonstrate and measure our commitment to Black Economic Empowerment Codes in a number of ways... The commitment of the management team to diversity and to developing an inclusive culture at Mangaung has paid off in a number of ways. 83% of all employees are black and 80% of all promotions are filled by internal candidates...”

Then, in a passing reference on 30 Oct 2013 during a debate on the impending privatisation of probation services, Andy MacDonald MP (Lab) stated:

...The Minister has called Oakwood “an excellent model for the future of the Prison Service.”— [Official Report, 5 February 2013; Vol. 558, c. 114.]

Well, we saw a snapshot of that future this week in the form of the sickening images from G4S-run Mangaung prison in South Africa—yet G4S will be able to bid to manage the rehabilitation, in our communities, of the very sex offender prisoners whom it did nothing to rehabilitate in Oakwood prison.[111]

Apart from which, silence. ■

Palestine / Israel: Securing the torture sites

G4S profits from direct involvement in the Occupation, checkpoints along the Apartheid Wall, Israeli police HQ in the occupied West Bank, Settlement industries, and the Israeli prison system in which Palestinians are detained in breach of international law, and where torture is documented. While these abuses continue, they are extremely strong reasons for trade unionists to demand that G4S be excluded from public contracts, and to focus public attention on complicity with the military occupation and prison regime. The company may wish to present its role as neutral technical assistance, but it is providing technology to a regime trampling on human rights in sites supplied by G4S.



G4S security in Prisons and Detention Centres

Through its 91% owned subsidiary G4S Israel (Hashmira), the company holds a \$NIS 7m contract originally signed in 2007 with the Israel Prison Service to provide electronic security systems. These include computerized control and monitoring systems, entrance and visitation control systems, control rooms with touch screens, internal and external CCTV monitoring and recording systems and optic fibre communication lines. G4S is also responsible for their maintenance. Conceivably, this may involve personnel permanently stationed within the prisons or available on emergency call-out in the event of system failure.

Prisons with G4S systems include Ofer in the occupied West Bank, Ketziot, Megiddo, the HaSharon complex (including Rimoni) and Damon prisons within Israel, as well as Kishon and Jerusalem detention centres. These are the primary sites where Palestinian prisoners, including children, are held under military orders, interrogated without access to lawyers, imprisoned indefinitely on secret evidence under renewable Administrative Detention without trial, and in some cases tortured. There are over 5,000 Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli custody (as of Dec 2013)[112] including 173 children (16 under 16 years old), 16 women, and 145 people held in Administrative Detention, 10 of whom are elected

members of the Palestinian Legislature. As of Feb 2014 Israel holds 5168 “security” inmates, consisting of 3286 sentenced prisoners, 1708 remand detainees, 174 administrative detainees held without trial.[113] The transfer of Palestinians from the Occupied Territories to facilities within Israel breaches the 4th Geneva Convention.

How do we know this? G4S presentations (in Hebrew) and the trade press in Israel show the company’s involvement. Information on prisoners is published by Palestinian organisations providing legal representation, including Addameer[114] and Adalah[115]. Investigations by the Israeli human rights organisation The Public Committee Against Torture in Israel[116] confirm that torture has taken place in Kishon and Jerusalem detention centres. Last year a delegation of prominent UK lawyers sponsored by the Foreign-Office investigated the conditions of Palestinian children in Israeli military custody[117], highlighted by the human rights organisation Defence for Children International.[118]

The Coalition of Women for Peace, formed from ten feminist peace organizations and non-affiliated activist women in Israel, investigated corporate involvement in the Occupation through their project “Who Profits”[119] (now an independent organisation) and has obtained detailed evidence on the continuing role of G4S. Their pamphlet “The case of G4S: Private Security Companies and the Israeli Occupation”[120], published in 2011, gives an overview and links to primary sources, some of which later disappeared from the internet. “Who Profits” retained and continues to obtain G4S documents and has filed Freedom of Information requests to the Ministry of Defence.

On facing pages below is an excerpt from a 34 page G4S presentation in Nov 2011, and an English translation.

Prison Contract

A \$NIS 4m G4S contract with the IPS was reported in 2007 by the trade press[121] and another G4S document[122] gives similar information in Hebrew, with the deal now said to be worth \$NIS 7m:

G4S Technologies will guard the prisons and detention centres of the Prison Service

Over recent years, the detention structure has been undergoing significant changes, following the decision to transfer to the Prison Service responsibility for the other detention centres in order to establish one national detention service.

On the background of the new reorganisation, G4S Technologies has been awarded the contract for guarding the detention centres which have been transferred to the responsibility of the Prison Service, including the Tel Aviv detention centre and the Jerusalem detention centre. The

company will also guard the new wing which is being built at the Rimonim Prison.

As part of these projects, the company will set up control rooms with a computerised integrated supervision and control structure, with all of the standard resources in these sites, in order to establish national technological uniformity in all of the Prison Service establishments.

Shmulik Shiprut, head of the sales department in the technology division, noted that “The satisfaction of the Prison Service as a result of our high level of achievement and compliance with timetables has led to a recognition of the company’s ability to carry out complex projects and complex technologies”.

The value of the project is about 7 million shekels.

Kishon and Jerusalem detention centres: Torture

The Kishon prison (“Al-Jalame”, near Haifa) and Jerusalem (“Russian compound”) detention centres are mentioned on the G4S Technology Nov 2011 presentation, without detail of the security systems provided. A *Guardian* report describes the conditions for children held in Kishon, sometimes in solitary confinement for days or weeks.[123]

The Public Committee Against Torture in Israel has compiled extensive evidence on both centres. Torture is carried out during interrogation by the Israel Security Agency (GSS, also known as the Shin Bet or Shabak). One PCATI publication documents the abuse of family members as part of a strategy to break detainees.[124]

The case of the Diab family is one of six reported in detail. After torturing Sa’id Diab in Kishon, the GSS threatened to arrest his mother if he did not cooperate. The next day, they brought him to peer through a peephole to see his mother being interrogated aggressively and crying. The encounter is corroborated by an affidavit from his mother and the notes of his interrogator, “Effi”.

“The above [Sa’id Diab] was told that his mother was in detention in light of information in our possession that she assisted the above in his activity with the Hamas — the above denies...

The above was taken to the interrogation room after seeing his mother for a moment sitting in the interrogation room.”

The following day, Sa’id was again taken to the peephole, this time to see his brother ‘Amr, who had been detained together with him, tied to a chair. As to Sa’id Diab’s own interrogation at Kishon:

Major Effi is 1.9 m. tall, with a solid build. After they tied me to the chair, Effi began beating me hard on my face, punching and slapping and cursing and threatening me. Effi hit me for close



כלא עופר

כלא עופר ממוקם בסמוך לירושלים ליד אמת גבעת זאב הכלא עבר לרשות השב"ס מיד צה"ל בשנת 2005 והוא משכן כ-1,500 אסירים. במסגרת הפרויקט התקנה מערכת הגנה היקפית על בני חומת הכלא והוקם חדר בקרה מרכזי השולט על כלל המתחם.

מתחם השרון - כלא רימונים

כלא רימונים הינו חלק מסדרך הכליאה במתחם השרון והוא מיועד ל-480 אסירים. בית הכלא נבנה לטובה בשיתוף רשות בטיחות של קיסות כל אחת סביב גרעין סדרות ומעלות מרכזי. במסגרת הפרויקט הותקנו כלל מערכות הביטחון בכלא והוקם בו חדר בקרה מרכזי.

כלא קציעות

כלא קציעות הינו מתקן הכליאה הגדול ביותר של השב"ס. הוא משתרע על 500-40,000 מ"ר ובו נמצאים כ-2,200 אסירים ביטחוניים. לאחר הוסת סק בשנת 2002 שופץ הכלא ונפתח מחדש. כלא קציעות עבר מרשות צה"ל לרשות שירות בתי הסוהר במסגרת הפיכתו לרשות כלילית לאסירים. במסגרת הפרויקט הותקנו כלל מערכות הביטחון בכלא.

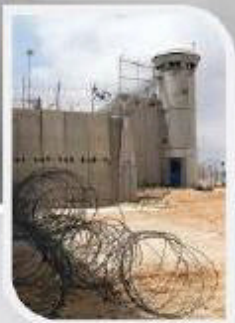
כלא מגידו

כלא מגידו נמצא בסמוך לאמת מגידו ובו מוחזקים כ-1,200 אסירים ביטחוניים עם העברת האחריות על הכלא לשב"ס בשנת 2005 החלה בבילוי בניית אגפים קבועים בתחליף לאוהלים. במסגרת הפרויקט הוקם חדר בקרה מרכזי השולט על כלל מערכות הביטחון בכלא.

פרויקטים נוספים בתחום:

- בית מעצר אבו כביר
- בית מעצר ירושלים
- כלא קיעון
- בית סוהר דמון
- כלא כרמל





Ofer Prison

Ofer Prison is located close to Jerusalem next to Givat Ze'ev Junction. It was transferred by the IDF to the Prison Service in 2006 and holds about 1500 prisoners. A comprehensive security system was installed on the prison walls and a central control room set up to oversee the whole site.

HaSharon complex – Rimonim Prison

Rimonim Prison is part of the group of prisons in HaSharon complex, and is intended to hold 480 prisoners. It is built six stories high in two wings enclosing a central core of stairs and lifts. The project comprised installing all of the security systems in the prison, and setting up a central control room.

Ketziot Prison

Ketziot is the Prison Service's largest detention centre. It covers some 40,000 m² (sic: actually 400,000 m²) and holds about 2200 security prisoners. After (construction) of a defence wall in 2002, the prison was renovated and reopened. Ketziot was transferred from the IDF to the Prison Service when it became a national detention authority. The project comprised installing all of the security systems in the prison.

Megiddo Prison

Megiddo Prison is located close to Megiddo Junction and holds some 1200 security prisoners. When the prison was transferred to the Prison Service in 2005, a programme began of building permanent structures to replace tents.

Further Projects

- Abu Kabir Detention Centre
- Jerusalem Detention Centre
- Kishon Prison
- Damun Prison
- Carmel Prison

to fifteen minutes, and as a result, I was injured on my lower lip and bleeding. Afterwards, the interrogators removed my blindfold and I saw Effi jotting down something on a chart. Afterwards, the interrogators tied my hands behind my back with long metal shackles, sat me down on a chair attached to the floor with the back of the chair to my right side. Effi sat on the chair opposite me and put my legs behind the front legs of the chair so that I couldn't move them, and laid the bottoms of his feet on the bottoms of my feet, and Adi stood behind me. Afterwards, Major Effi began pushing me down backwards from the chest, until my back was at an angle of 180 degrees, and then Adi began pushing me downwards from the chest until my head hit the floor, and they were both screaming at me and threatening to cripple me and to bust my balls. As a result of being held in this position [henceforth: 'the "banana" position,' *qesa'a* in Arabic], I had searing pains in my back, my entire body began to shake, and I couldn't breathe. I figure that I was held in this position for about four minutes, and afterwards they lifted me up, brought me water to drink since I was sweating and my throat was dry. After about half a minute, they again held me in the "banana" position for four minutes, and so forth. The interrogators held me in the "banana" position for 20 minutes in a series of four minutes each time, with half a minute's rest.

...At the end of 20 minutes, they removed my shackles, and Effi and Adi caught my arms, stood me up on my feet, took the shackles, and fastened them to my forearms and began to tighten them hard until they couldn't press any more, and afterwards, they grabbed the shackles, each from his side, and began pulling them up and down, which caused terrible pains and bleeding from my forearms. They did this as described for about 10 minutes.

Afterwards, Maimon entered the room and the three interrogators (Maimon, Adi and Effi) forced me to squat in a 'frog position.' My hands were shackled behind my back, and they forced me to squat on my tiptoes. Every time I lost my balance, Maimon would hold me and Adi, who stood behind me, would catch me. The interrogators forced me to squat in this position for half an hour. Afterwards, they released me and I fell onto the floor.

For the first 45 days of his detention, Sa'id Diab was prohibited from meeting with a lawyer.

Another PCATI publication concerns the abuse of Palestinian women detained in Israel.[125] It includes numerous accounts of the Jerusalem Detention Center ("Russian Compound"). Here are two:

Samira Hadar Mahmoud Algenazra aged 25, from Alarub in Hebron, divorced with two children, was arrested on 5 August 2002....At the Russian Compound, Ms Algenazra was questioned by 'Captain Amram,' 'Tony' and 'Mofaz.' Ms Algenazra's interrogation lasted a long time and was accompanied by curses. The interrogators threatened that if she did not confess to the charges against her, they would rape her and bring in a person who she is close to and torture him in front of her. At the end of the interrogation, Ms Algenazra was made to sign a confession written by her interrogators, which she had not admitted to and had not read before she signed it...

Kahara Sa'adi, a resident of A-Ram, was arrested on 1 May 2002 at her home. The arresting soldiers beat her in front of her four children. She was brought to the Russian Compound Detention Center in Jerusalem and interrogated from 14:00 until 3:30AM the following morning. Ms. Sa'adi reported that her interrogators threatened to rape her, beat her and to arrest her sister and brother-in-law. She was under interrogation for nine days, during which she was held in a small solitary cell. A hole infested with insects served as a toilet. She was interrogated each day from 9:00 AM until the 3:30 AM the next day while her hands and feet were tied to a chair. After her interrogation ended she was kept in a solitary cell for 115 days. Ms. Sa'adi reports that during this time, an officer called Shlomo would come into her cell and beat her leaving marks on her body.

In September 2010, PCATI joined with Physicians for Human Rights-Israel, and Rabbis for Human Rights, to protest at the Russian Compound, aiming "to initiate a new year free from the police violence and torture carried out by the Israeli security forces".[126]

HaSharon – women and children

Most Palestinian women prisoners are held in HaSharon or Damon prisons. G4S provides the entire security system and the central control room in the HaSharon complex, and unspecified security in Damon. According to Addameer

"both Hasharon and Damon prisons lack a gender-sensitive approach and, as such, women prisoners often suffer from harsh imprisonment conditions including medical negligence, denial of education, denial of family visits, including for mothers with young children, solitary confinement, overcrowded cells which are often filled with insects and dirt, and lack natural light. Personal health and hygiene needs are rarely addressed by prisons authorities, even in cases involving the detention of pregnant women. Moreover, the majority of Palestinian women prisoners are subjected to some form of

psychological torture and ill-treatment throughout the process of their arrest and detention, including various forms of sexual violence that occur such as beatings, insults, threats, body searches, and sexually explicit harassment.”[127]

Last summer, 16 Palestinian women were being held in HaSharon.[128] The longest-serving prisoner Lina Jarbouni, sentenced to 17 years, underwent gall bladder surgery after more than a year of medical neglect.

Tahrir Mansour and Sireen Sawafteh were arrested for “Internet activism” and in the case of Sawafteh, creating a Facebook page that threatens the security of the region. The two women were denied the right to see a lawyer during their interrogations. Sawafteh was sentenced to four months in prison with a fine of 4,000 shekels. She is active in the non-violent campaign for human rights in Palestine. She studied computer science at the Open University in Tubas, was actively involved in a twinning project between Tubas and the University of Sussex, and took part in a student delegation visiting the UK.[129] Sireen was eventually released in January.

Children are held in Rimonim prison, within the HaSharon complex. In 2012, twenty children staged a hunger strike to protest at their isolation, and the conditions affecting all Palestinian prisoners: insufficient food, search raids on their rooms by intelligence officers, provocations, medical neglect and denial of education.[130]

Ketziot

G4S provided the entire security system for the Ketziot Prison, located in the Naqab (Negev) desert near the border with Egypt. This is the largest Israeli prison holding Palestinian “security” prisoners, some 2200 according to the G4S presentation in 2011 quoted above.

Israel calls all Palestinian political prisoners “security” prisoners. The wide-ranging crimes that merit this label include entering the 1948 territories (present-day Israel) without proper permission, throwing Molotov cocktails (including ones that do not explode), entering the al-Aqsa compound with a knife, belonging to a group that Israel considers a “hostile organization”, membership in a political cell that is responsible for the death of an Israeli soldier, and so on.[131]

In April 2011, Israel’s Channel 2 screened a video shot by the Prison Service during their raid on Ketziot in 2007.[132] The raid, during which a Palestinian prisoner died, was originally reported in Ha’aretz in 2007 by Israeli journalist Gideon Levy[133]:

“The prisoners went to sleep after the evening roll call. At 2 A.M. they woke in a panic when hundreds of armed warders from the Masada and Nahshon units of the Israel Prisons Service (IPS) raided their tents. Quickly the scene turned into a battlefield. The warders fired at the inmates with a variety of weapons; the inmates fought back by throwing vegetables and other random objects.

“According to affidavits submitted by a number of prisoners to the Public Committee Against Torture in Israel, the warders were extremely brutal. They shot inmates and beat them with truncheons even when they lay bound on the floor, and forced more than 400 prisoners into a small visitors’ room. The result: one prisoner killed by ammunition of unknown type - though the testimonies indicate that he was shot in the head at close range - and a large number of prisoners wounded...”

Ketziot has also been used to detain African refugees crossing the border into Israel. A Dec 2007 US State Dept cable published by Wikileaks reported that over 1000 refugees were housed within Ketziot.[134] A separate Israeli Prison Service facility, Saharonim, was later set up next to Ketziot, to detain refugees.

Megiddo

G4S provided the central command room for all security systems in Megiddo, another Israeli prison holding Palestinian “security” detainees, some 1200 as of 2011 according to G4S. In February 2013, the death of a prisoner provoked demonstrations throughout the West Bank. The Palestinian Authority physician who attended the autopsy found the prisoner had been tortured.[135]

Transfer to Israel and the Fourth Geneva Convention

Using December 2012 figures from the Israeli Prison Service obtained by DCI, half of Israel’s Palestinian child prisoners were held illegally outside the West Bank in G4S-equipped prisons.[136] Transferring Palestinians from the West Bank or Gaza to prisons or detention centres within Israel breaches the Fourth Geneva Convention.[137] Under Article 49 “deportations of protected persons” [in this case Palestinians under Israeli occupation] “from occupied territory to the territory of the Occupying Power or to that of any other country, occupied or not, are prohibited, regardless of their motive”. Under Article 76 “Protected persons accused of offences shall be detained in the occupied country, and if convicted they shall serve their sentences therein.” Article 147 designates “grave breaches” of the Convention including “unlawful deportation or transfer or unlawful confinement of a protected person”. Torture is also a “grave breach”.

Detaining Palestinians illegally inside Israel makes it difficult, and in cases impossible, for family members to visit due to restrictions on their own freedom of movement, and also for lawyers to visit their clients and provide legal assistance.

West Bank: Ofer Prison

Ofer is an Israeli “security” prison within the occupied West Bank, where Palestinians are initially



held after arrest and brought before the Military Court. Security offences include stone-throwing, for which the penalty can be 10 years imprisonment. Ofer has the capacity for 1,500 Palestinian political prisoners, and is always full.

G4S Technologies provides a perimeter defence system and a central command room to monitor the entire facility. Ofer includes a prison, an army camp and a military court.

As the UK lawyers delegation reported[138]:

“DCI reports that groups of children are brought into court in shackles, dressed in the brown prison uniforms worn by adults, and that handcuffs are removed on entering the court room and replaced on leaving. This corresponds with our own observations of the military juvenile court in Ofer which we attended: the accused children were brought into court in iron shackles which remained on throughout the hearing. We found this a matter of serious concern... We observed no probation officer or social worker during our visit to the military courts at Ofer. B’Tselem[139] noted from Israeli Defence Force (IDF) files that in the period to August 2010 there had been only four requests for probation reports on children... When observing 71 cases at Ofer military juvenile court, the NGO No Legal Frontiers reported that 94% of the children interviewed were denied bail. Defence for Children International reports a slightly lower but still very substantial proportion

of cases where bail was denied: 87.5% of 164 cases... within the West Bank 98% of cases observed by No Legal Frontiers ended in plea bargains, and the conviction rate was 100%.”

In an interview published by DCI in their report “Bound, Blindfolded and Convicted”[140], a Palestinian youth described his detention in Ofer:

“On the eighth day of my detention, one of the jailers told me that I had a six-month administrative detention order. He handed me the order that was written in Hebrew and ordered me to sign it [...]. Four days after the issuance of the administrative detention order, I was taken to Ofer military court and the order was confirmed. Then I was taken to the appeals court and the order was reduced to two months. In May the order was extended for four months and in November it was extended for another four months. I still don’t know why they arrested and detained me. I didn’t do anything.”

Imad A. (17) – Arrested: 21 February 2010

From another DCI case study:

“...Shortly after midnight, Malek and the other man were placed in a vehicle and transferred to Ofer prison. On arrival outside the prison they were both placed in a small cage and left for around three hours. After three hours, Malek was taken inside the prison and strip searched before being taken to a cell where other children were being detained.

“On 12 July 2011, Malek appeared for the first time before Ofer military court and on 25 July, he was transferred to Rimonim prison, inside Israel. The transfer of children out of the West Bank to prisons inside Israel contravenes Article 76 of the Fourth Geneva Convention.”

Police

G4S provides security systems for the Israeli police headquarters in the West Bank (Judea and Samaria Police Department - “Machoz Shai”).

This police station is located in the E-1 area, near the settlement of Ma’ale Adumim. Construction in E-1 areas was aimed at ensuring the contiguity of Israeli settlements between the settlement neighborhoods of East Jerusalem and Ma’ale Adumim, cutting off the south of the West Bank (Bethlehem and Hebron) from the central and northern areas (Ramallah, Nablus and Jenin). The plan was suspended due to US objections and the only building in this area is the headquarters of the West Bank division of the Israeli police.

In a presentation of the company from November 2011, G4S Israel clearly indicated it still provides security services to the Israeli police department in the West Bank.[141]

Checkpoints, Apartheid Wall, Settlements, Industries

G4S supplied and maintains security equipment for all the Israeli checkpoints along the route of the



Separation Wall (a.k.a Apartheid Wall), including the Qalandia, Bethlehem and Irtah (Sha'ar Efraim) checkpoints in the West Bank and the Erez checkpoint in Gaza. The Wall was declared illegal by the International Court of Justice, in its Advisory Opinion of 9 July 2004.

In statements published by the company, G4S claims it has no control or even knowledge of the location of its equipment in Israel. But the company's own publications specifically advertise that its X-ray machines and body scanners are installed in military checkpoints in the West Bank. This information was published only in Hebrew and has been removed from the company's website. Screen shots can be found in pages 27-28 of the "Who Profits" report.[142]

Using the Israeli Freedom of Information Act, "Who Profits" received a response from the Ministry of Defence on July 9, 2012, which states clearly that G4S provides inspection and scanning equipment to all the checkpoints along the route of the separation wall.

Contrary to the company's statements of withdrawing from its activities in the West Bank, recent company publications and findings affirm that it still provides security equipment and personnel to shops and supermarkets in illegal West Bank settlements, such as Modi'in Illit, Ma'ale Adumim and Har Adar and in settlement neighborhoods in East Jerusalem.

Palestinians from the West Bank cannot enter the settlements or patronize the private companies that operate there. Thus the security services provided by G4S in settlements serve only the Jewish residents of the occupied Palestinian territory.

G4S Israel also maintains cooperation with Ariel College in the settlement of Ariel, which has included G4S participation in an open career day in the college.

In July 2010, G4S took-over Aminut Moked Artzi, an established Israeli security company, which provides security services to businesses in the Barkan industrial zone.

What does G4S say and what do we say?

Last year, G4S set out their response to Corporate Watch, which had published a company profile[143] and written directly to the company regarding its involvement in Israel and Palestine. Samples of G4S spin:

≈ The situation in the West Bank is highly complex and very emotional for those involved on both sides of the debate. G4S takes its human rights obligations very seriously and has undertaken an extensive review of its business in the region - our decisions have been made on the basis of ethics and not on politics and therefore we have remained neutral on the political issues.

➤ **We're not neutral about the Occupation, torture or breaches of the 4th Geneva Convention.**

≈ Where we believe that our work does not comply with G4S's global ethical and human rights standards, we have taken action to resolve it - although the implementation of that action is taking longer than we had first hoped - we are still committed to seeing it through.

➤ **Where we know that G4S facilitates the Occupation and breaches of international law, we condemn these whatever the company says it intends to do at some point in the future.**

≈ Current services provided in the West Bank area are:

≈ provision of a small number of security officers within retail and banking outlets

➤ **Plus security for settlement industries in the Barkan Industrial Zone**

≈ monitoring of home security systems

➤ **i.e. homes in illegal Settlements**

≈ security systems maintenance at a prison, a police station and at a small number of checkpoints along the barrier - G4S provides security systems installation and maintenance services only and have no interaction with prisoners at all.

➤ **Without the security system the prison could not function.**

≈ In March 2011 we took a number of steps to understand the impact of our business in the West Bank and the ethical implications of doing business there. This review resulted in a decision to exit the contracts for servicing check point equipment and the systems within the prison and police station - this exit is underway (contracts end between now and 2015).

➤ **G4S is still operating in the West Bank.**

≈ In Israel G4S only provide maintenance services to the electronic security systems at a number of Israeli Prison Services facilities in Israel. G4S does not have any involvement in the regime or management of prisoners.

➤ **Without the security system the prisons could not function. Torture is documented in facilities with G4S security systems. All transfers of Palestinians from the West Bank to Israel are illegal under international law.**

≈ It is important to note that G4S has no contracts in Gaza.

➤ **G4S provide the security system at the Erez checkpoint between Israel and Gaza.**

And now?

The evidence of G4S complicity in the suppression of Palestinian rights is overwhelming. G4S is happy to carry on with this, until someone stops them. As discussed later, most trade unions in Britain, the TUC and Scottish TUC all have strong policies of solidarity. What are we waiting for? ■

Notes

Thanks to "Who Profits" for documents and an unpublished draft "The direct involvement of G4S in the Israeli occupation" written in Nov 2012, and to Roland Rance for translations.

Procurement Law: 'grave misconduct'

G4S can be excluded from bidding or being awarded contracts without falling foul of the law, and evidence on the company's international activities is relevant when awarding contracts. No-one can compel a Local Authority, University, Clinical Commissioning Group or other NHS body to award a contract to G4S. We ask union-sponsored Councillors and others involved in public procurement to act in line with union policies when exercising their discretion.

The key legislation is the Public Contracts Regulations 2006.[144] Section 23 deals with "Criteria for the rejection of economic operators". Within 23, subsection (4) begins "A contracting authority may treat an economic operator as ineligible or decide not to select an economic operator in accordance with these Regulations on one or more of the following grounds, namely that the economic operator –"

It then lists the grounds, any one of which may be used to exclude or not select a particular bidder. (4) (e) states "has committed an act of grave misconduct in the course of his business or profession".

PCR 2006 implements the EU Public Sector Procurement Directive 2004/18/EC,[145] in which Article 45 (2) states "Any economic operator may be excluded from participation in a contract where that economic operator:" and lists a number of grounds, any one of which is sufficient for exclusion. (2) (d) states "has been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authorities can demonstrate".

PCR 2006 is required to be consistent with the EU Directive which it implements, and this means that it is up to the contracting authority to demonstrate grave professional misconduct if they wish to exclude a bidder on those grounds. It is up to the authority to consider the evidence and act accordingly.

In fact, the contracting authority is obliged to acknowledge its discretionary powers, as human rights lawyer Daniel Machover has stated:[146]

Under EU competition law and the 2006 Public Contract Regulations, a public body will act unlawfully if it directs itself wrongly on its discretionary power to exclude an economic operator from bidding for a contract where that operator has committed an act of grave misconduct in the course of its business or profession.

Foreign Office guidance

Guidance published by the Foreign Office on 4 Sept 2013, "Good Business: Implementing the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights", [147] makes it clear that a company's human rights record should be taken into account during decisions on awarding contracts. In particular, on page 9 the Government states:

"To give effect to the UN Guiding Principles, we have: . (ii) sought and are committed to ensuring that in UK Government procurement human

rights related matters are reflected appropriately when purchasing goods, works and services.

Under the public procurement rules public bodies may exclude tenderers from bidding for a contract opportunity in certain circumstances, including where there is information showing grave misconduct by a company in the course of its business or profession. Such misconduct might arise in cases where there are breaches of human rights. In addition, UK public bodies are required to have due regard for equality-related issues in their procurement activity."

UK and EU procurement law, expert opinion, and government guidance to implement UN principles all mean that the public body can, and should, review the human rights record of companies bidding for contracts and may exclude tenderers from bidding on grounds of grave misconduct, which may arise from breaches of human rights.

Councillors may encounter another objection, the distinction between so-called Part A and Part B services, set out in Schedule 3 of the Public Contract Regulations. For Part B services, the full PCR does not apply and in particular the exclusions under Section 23 do not apply. However, the full Regulations do apply to Part A services, which include land transportation, courier and armoured car, banking, management consultancy, cleaning services and many others. It would be relevant to question whether a contract which is said to be Part B in fact concerns Part A services.

However, Government guidance gives public bodies discretion to exclude bidders on human rights grounds so as to comply with UN Guiding Principles, without reference to the Part A/B distinction which is also due to be abolished. On 15 January, the European Parliament approved a new Directive.[148] When published in final form, the UK will be obliged to implement it in domestic legislation. The Explanatory Memorandum to a draft of the new Directive [149] [150] includes:

"The traditional distinction between so-called priority and non-priority services ('A' and 'B' services) will be abolished. The results of the evaluation have shown that is no longer justified to restrict the full application of procurement law to a limited group of services."

Furthermore, the new Directive will include consideration during procurement of environmental and social issues, along with grave misconduct, a development welcomed by unions.[151] ■

Actions against G4S contracts

Some of the key actions against G4S, including by trade unionists in Norway, South Africa, Netherlands, and the UK.

April 2012: the **European Union** refused to renew its contract with G4S following concerns raised by MEPs and human rights organizations.

<http://www.bdsmovement.net/2012/g4s-loses-its-contract-with-the-european-parliament-8901#sthash.MWMTAS0u.dpuf>

August 2012: Denmark's **Merkur Bank** terminated its contract with G4S. Spokesperson Karl Johnsen, said that the bank had canceled its contract "because of G4S's involvement in the Israeli occupation of Palestine."

<http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/adri-nieuwhof/danish-clients-dump-g4s-because-security-companys-ties-israeli-occupation>

September 2012: the UK energy firm, **Good Energy**, ditched G4S saying that "feedback from customers" was one of the reasons behind its decision.

<http://www.corporatewatch.org/?lid=4459>

November 2012: **over 20 Norwegian organizations, trade unions and NGOs** including Amnesty International, Norwegian People's Aid and the Young Mens Christian Association wrote an open letter to G4S calling on the company to withdraw from Israel. <http://boikottisrael.no/nyhet/petition-21-organizations-31-october-2012-g4s-contributes-occupation-palestine>

December 2012: the **University of Oslo** voted to end its G4S contract over G4S' support for "Israeli apartheid".

<http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/michael-deas/university-oslo-end-g4s-contract-over-support-israeli-apartheid>

27 September 2013, the **Norwegian trade union, Industri Energi**, ended its G4S contract as "act of solidarity" with Palestinians.

<http://www5.industrienergi.no/modules/m02/article.aspx?CatId=32&ArtId=1419>

November 2013, the **University of Bergen** became the second Norwegian university to not to award its security contract to G4S.

<http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/michael-deas/second-norwegian-university-drops-g4s-over-support-israeli-apartheid>

November 2013, **G4S decides to sell G4S Norway**.

<http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702303936904579179313228207256>

September 2013: the **East London Teachers Association (ELTA)** condemned G4S's complicity in Israel's prison system and called on the Local Authority to end contracts with G4S. ELTA is the Tower Hamlets association of the National Union of Teachers representing 70% of classroom teachers in Tower Hamlets.

<http://www.waronwant.org/news/latest-news/17996-east-london-teachers-association-condemns-g4s-contract-with-israels-prison-system>

5 October 2013, when G4S sacked over 300 members of the Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union **POPCRU**, the Congress of South African Trade Unions **COSATU**, called on the South African government to end all its contracts with G4S.

<http://www.cosatu.org.za/show.php?ID=7904>

11 October 2013, **UNISON** General Secretary Dave Prentis wrote to G4S calling on the company to pull out of Israel.

<http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/asa-winstanley/uk-union-head-calls-g4s-end-israel-contracts>

November 2013, **University of Southampton** and **Kings College London** opted not to award G4S control of campus security services following student union campaigns criticizing the company.

<http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/michael-deas/boycott-campaigns-cost-g4s-two-university-contracts>

December 2013, **Abvakabo**, a trade union with 350,000 members in the Netherlands, ended its relationship with G4S.

<http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/adri-nieuwhof/dutch-union-dumps-g4s-aiding-israels-human-rights-abuses>



Union policies on Palestine

The TUC, Scottish TUC, and TUC affiliates including UNITE, Unison, GMB, and PCS have policies on Palestine relevant to G4S. Many unions actively support the Palestine Solidarity Campaign.

TUC (2011)

Peace in the Middle East / South Asia - 2011

...Congress reaffirms policy adopted in 2010, particularly the instruction to the General Council 'to work closely with the Palestine Solidarity Campaign to actively encourage affiliates, employers and pension funds to disinvest from, and boycott the goods of, companies who profit from illegal settlements, the Occupation and the construction of the Wall...

full text: <http://www.palestinecampaign.org/tuc-policy/>

STUC (2013)

...Congress believes G4S's activities in the Israeli Prison Service constitute a breach of international law, including Articles 49 and 76 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, and that they are complicit in violations of the human rights of Palestinian prisoners, including children.

...Congress therefore:

- demands that G4S withdraws forthwith from all activities that contribute to Israel's occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem and to its denial of human rights to Palestinians;
- calls on the General Council and the trade union movement in Scotland to raise these points, through every possible channel, with G4S;
- resolves that until G4S concedes to these demands, it will be a target of the STUC's policy of Boycott, Disinvestment and Sanctions;
- calls on the Scottish Government to cancel G4S's new contract for tagging of offenders; and
- endorses the UK StopG4S Campaign.

full text: <http://www.palestinecampaign.org/scottish-tuc-votes-to-support-bds-against-g4s/>

Unite (Executive Committee 2013)

In October 2013 the Executive Committee resolved

... In Occupied Palestine, G4S is involved in gross human rights abuses and violations of international law through the services it provides to the Israeli Occupation Forces, including:

- equipment for Israeli Checkpoints in the West Bank and Gaza, including in the 'seam zone' around the illegal 'separation wall'.
- The security systems for Israeli prisons in the West Bank and Israel, which are facilities for Palestinian political prisoners.
- Security services to businesses, including banks in illegal West Bank settlements and in East Jerusalem.

In addition, we believe that G4S's operations for the Israeli Prison Service constitute a breach of international law, including Articles 49 and 76 of the Fourth Geneva Convention (which forbid the transfer of prisoners from occupied territories to the territory of the occupier), and that they are complicit in violations of the human rights of Palestinian prisoners, including children (as documented by independent human rights organisations such as Amnesty International and Defence for Children International).

[Therefore, the Executive Committee will]

1. Endorse and support the Stop G4S UK campaign, which seeks to raise awareness of / take action in relation to G4S' abuses and failures as detailed above and to do so by
 - encouraging regions and branches to support & work with the Stop G4S campaign locally
 - support the campaign to boycott G4S as part of a boycott of the Israeli apartheid state and to do so until such time that G4S withdraws from all activities that contribute to Israel's occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem, its blockade of Gaza and its denial of human rights to Palestinian prisoners
2. Prepare a G4S briefing for all UNITE sponsored MPs and also for councillors so that they can raise questions about G4S' activities and work practices, which can then be used as part of the campaigning by UNITE and other trade unions to oppose G4S expanding in to the delivery of public services
3. Reaffirm the Union's commitment to promote Palestinian freedom, equality and justice by continuing to work closely with the Palestine Solidarity Campaign which, at its 2013 AGM held in January, decided to prioritise the Stop G4S Campaign as part of its Boycott Divestment and Sanctions campaign.

Unison (2013)

...

C) develop guidance for branches on campaigns to stop public service contracts being awarded to companies which are complicit in Israeli violations of international law, including the 4th Geneva Convention, for instance by contracts which service the illegal settlements, construct the Apartheid Wall or provide security in prisons holding Palestinians illegally transferred from the Occupied Territories.

full text: Motion 79

<https://secure.unison.org.uk/unisonf0d2bfd2bf1d3bbfa7ac24c0e625b2ff6c26750879/unison1/documents/1905>

PCS (2011)

... Conference instructs the NEC to continue to support the TUC/PSC boycott campaign of those firms complicit in making profits from the occupation, the wall and the illegal settlements - including the campaign against BT due to its business links with Israeli telecommunications which supply services to the illegal Israeli settlements.

full text:

<http://www.pcs.org.uk/download.cfm?docid=10921E24-2571-42F3-9EAA8DFD5491C869>

GMB (2013)

This Congress unashamedly notes that this Union is affiliated to the Palestine Solidarity Campaign.

Congress also notes that this Union is not affiliated to the Trade Union Friends of Israel.

Congress notes our 2011 decision that “this Union should take a lead in driving forward the disinvestment and boycott initiatives” of “companies who profit from illegal settlements, the Occupation and the construction of the wall”.

Congress notes that a major priority of Trade Union Friends of Israel is to “fight the boycott” and thus to campaign against the policy of this Union.

Congress determines that GMB members should not receive funding or otherwise be facilitated to either participate in TUFU sponsored visits to Israel or speak to TUFU platforms.

Congress believes that our Union should recognise and honour its affiliation to the Palestine Solidarity Campaign by sending a representative on the next available PSC organised delegation to the Palestinian territories.

Motion 314

<http://www.gmb.org.uk/assets/media/documents/congress/congress2013/GMB%20Final%20Agenda%20Guide%20web.pdf>

Model Resolution

Support for “Stop G4S” Campaign

This trades council/branch/conference [etc.] notes that:

1. In the UK, G4S profits from the privatisation of welfare services, the criminal justice system, the health service and the housing, incarceration and deportation of refugees;
2. G4S is complicit in violations of international law and gross human rights abuses, including torture. G4S supplies security systems to the Israeli occupation forces in sites where Palestinian political prisoners, including children, are detained and abused in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) and, following illegal transfer into Israel, in sites where torture is documented.
3. In 2013 the inquest into the death of asylum seeker Jimmy Mubenga, who died following the use of ‘unauthorised and potentially dangerous restraint techniques’ by three G4S security guards, returned a verdict of unlawful killing;
4. In Europe, trades unions have taken a leading role in the campaign to Stop G4S. For example, G4S has now exited from Norway after lobbying by trade union organisations and having been excluded from contracts as a result of the reputational damage incurred by its investment in Israel and the OPT;
5. The “Stop G4S” campaign coalition was founded in October 2012, including organisations such as Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC), War on Want and the South Yorkshire Migration and Asylum Action Group (SYMAAG).

This trades council/branch/conference [etc.] resolves to:

1. Endorse and support the “Stop G4S” UK campaign, including paying the appropriate affiliation fee;
2. Encourage regions and branches to support and work with the Stop G4S campaign locally;
3. Publicise the Stop G4S website, <http://www.stopg4s.net>, to members and branches;
4. Support the campaign to boycott G4S as part of the campaign of boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against Israel, until such time as G4S withdraws from all activities that contribute to Israel’s occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem, its blockade of Gaza and its denial of human rights to Palestinian prisoners;
5. Circulate briefing materials to local MPs and Councillors so that they can raise questions about G4S’ activities and work practices, which can then

be used as part of the campaign against G4S expanding its takeover of public services;

6. Reaffirm commitment to promote Palestinian freedom, equality and justice by continuing to work closely with / affiliate to the Palestine Solidarity Campaign which, at its 2013 AGM, decided to prioritise the Stop G4S Campaign as part of its BDS campaign.

Supplementary material

The following additional points can be incorporated into the motion if word limits permit; or they can be used as speaker’s notes in proposing the motion.

Under “In the UK, ... privatisation of public services” the following sub-points can be added:

- G4S runs prisons, police custody suites, electronic tagging & court management services. It seeks further expansion into policing and probation services.
- G4S has been awarded a three-year contract to take over two sexual assault referral centres (Sarcs) in Birmingham and Walsall.
- G4S was awarded the COMPASS asylum seeker housing contract for Yorkshire & North East England. A recent parliamentary hearing was told of systematic failures including missed deadlines, sub-standard accommodation and forced evictions.
- G4S is contracted to run part of the Government’s ‘Work Programme’ despite having no experience in this area. It has been accused of cherry-picking claimants, coercing claimants into inappropriate jobs or training in order to receive contractual payments and referring people unnecessarily for benefit sanction in order to meet targets.
- G4S is contracted to run Children’s Services including secure training centres, eight residential children’s homes and training courses for child care professionals.

Under “In occupied Palestine ... where torture is documented”, the following sub-points can be added:

- equipment for Israeli Checkpoints in the West Bank and Gaza, including in the ‘seam zone’ around the illegal ‘separation wall’.
- Security services to businesses, including banks in illegal West Bank settlements and in East Jerusalem.

And finally:

- In the 2013 Public Eye “Worst Company of the Year” awards, G4S was voted the 3rd worst company because of its involvement in human rights violations in the UK and abroad;

Further details:

G4S's operations for the Israeli Prison Service constitute a breach of international law, including Articles 49 and 76 of the Fourth Geneva Convention (which forbid the transfer of prisoners from occupied territories to the territory of the occupier), and they are complicit in violations of the human rights of Palestinian prisoners, including children (as documented by independent human rights organisations such as Amnesty International and Defence for Children International).

In February 2013 Palestinian political prisoner Arafat Jaradat died in Israeli custody after being interrogated at Israel's G4S secured Megiddo Prison. The results of an autopsy conducted in Tel Aviv revealed he had been tortured before he died.

G4S is complicit in Israel's illegal practice of punitive administrative detention where prisoners are held indefinitely without charge or trial on endless rolling administrative detention orders. Figures from 2013 show 86% of administrative detainees are imprisoned in G4S secured Israeli facilities.

G4S have stated for a few years now that they are planning to cease operations in the OPT. However, they have not yet done so and they now say it will be in 2015. Hence the motion mentions detention centres/prisons within the OPT.

Papua New Guinean G4S staff contracted by Australia are alleged to be responsible for much of the violence during the attack on Manus Island detention centre on 17th February 2014 when one of the asylum seekers, Reza Berati, was killed and many others were seriously injured.

Latest updates and campaign info at

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Stop-G4S/208029375963632>

Follow @StopG4S on Twitter

Notes

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- ³⁰ http://inquest.gn.apc.org/pdf/reports/Mubenga_R43.pdf (see para 37 and note 24 therein)
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