

G4S Plc
Alternative Report and Accounts 2012

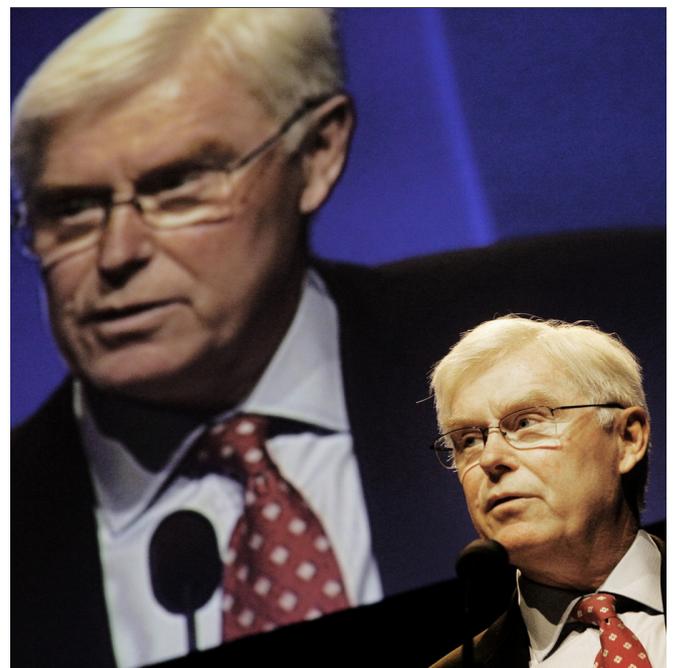


Securing Injustice

Alternative Report 2012

“Our outsourced bespoke security solutions are helping regimes across the globe keep restive populations in check. Our global human rights footprint is unmatched in breadth and scale of ambition” Alf Duch-Pedersen, Chairman

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Profiting from displacement

Immigration

Specialising in “asylum markets”

G4S is one of a few multinational security companies that dominate what it describes as “asylum markets”. As of April 2012, G4S managed two immigration detention centres in the UK: Tinsley House and Brook House, both located within the grounds of Gatwick airport. In addition to these, G4S also runs a new detention centre for families near Crawley, Sussex, called Cedars. The latter has attracted a lot of controversy and protest, particularly against the involvement of the UK’s biggest children charity, Barnardo’s, which campaigners argue is used to legitimise the continued use of detention for children. In February 2012, G4S was one three multinational security companies, alongside Serco and Reliance, that took over all provision of asylum accommodation in the UK for the next five years.

A history of violence

G4S has been repeatedly accused of providing poor services in its prisons and immigration detention centres. The lack of investment in staff and efficient procedures has often led to detainees’ missing important medical and court appointments. In June 2011, it was revealed that a record 773 complaints were lodged in 2010 against G4S by detainees, including 48 claims of assault. More than half related to Brook House detention centre, near Gatwick airport. Three complaints of assault and two of racism were upheld.

In 2010, the charity Medical Justice’s Outsourcing Abuse report documented 300 cases of alleged abuse, with the highest rate of abuse belonging to G4S. All incidents involved excessive force, with the most frequent being injuries as a result of restraints used and injuries to face. Another frequent outcome was PTSD. Some of these attacks involved families and children.

Other frequent reports concerned the use of racist language by detention security guards, such as “black bitch”

Case study

The death of Jimmy Mubenga



In October 2010, Jimmy Mubenga, a 46-year-old Angolan refugee, collapsed and died after three G4S guards used force to ‘restrain’ him during his forcible deportation, leading to his suffocation and subsequent death. Two eye witnesses contacted the Guardian after reading about Mubenga’s death and testified that the Home Office and G4S’ accounts of what happened on board the British Airway flight were false and that excessive force was used. Three G4S guards were arrested and later released on bail in connection with the death. The Crown Prosecution Service is expected to deliver a decision in early June 2012, though the family is still demanding a public enquiry.

and “black monkey, go back to your own country”. There was evidence that complaints procedures for reporting assaults were complex and not independent, evidence of abuse often covered up, with police not seeming to take reports seriously.

Only a few days before the death of Jimmy Mubenga (see boxout), the UK Border Agency was investigating allegations of mistreatment by G4S guards of a man being forcibly deported to Colombia. José Gutiérrez, 37, needed hospital attention and was removed from the plane before take-off. In April 2010, a Kenyan man also died in G4S detention centre. He was reported to have been refused medical help and had been crawling on the floor in pain crying out for help before he died.

Supporting Israeli Apartheid

Palestine

Equipping Israeli prisons

Israel systematically denies Palestinian political prisoners their basic rights, including the right to a fair trial and to protection from arbitrary detention. As of April 2012 Israel was holding over 300 Palestinians in arbitrary detention.

In 2007, The Israeli subsidiary of G4S signed a contract with the Israeli Prison Authority to provide security systems for major Israeli prisons. G4S provides systems for the Ketziot and Megiddo prisons, which hold Palestinian political prisoners from occupied Palestinian territory inside Israel. The company also provides equipment for Ofer prison, located in the occupied West Bank, and for Kishon and Moskobiyyeh detention facilities, at which human rights organisations have documented systematic torture and ill-treatment of Palestinian prisoners, including child prisoners.

G4S provides security services to several “security” prisons at which Palestinian prisoners are regularly subjected to torture and ill-treatment. At Al Jalame prison, Palestinian children are locked in solitary confinement for days or even weeks.

Israel is forbidden to transfer Palestinian prisoners from occupied territories to prisons inside Israel by Article 76 of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Despite this, thousands of Palestinian prisoners are unlawfully held in prisons inside Israel. By providing equipment to these prisons, G4S is actively participating in these violations of international law.

Apartheid Wall, checkpoints and settlements

G4S is involved in other aspects of the Israeli apartheid and occupation regime: it has provided equipment and services to Israeli checkpoints in the West Bank that form part of the route of Israel’s illegal Wall and to the terminals isolating the occupied territory of Gaza. G4S has also signed contracts for equipment and services for the West Bank Israeli Police headquarters and to private businesses

Historic prisoner hunger strike



From April 17, more than 1,600 Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli jails held a historic 28-day mass hunger strike. Other political prisoners held hunger strikes lasting as long as 80 days, and several remain on hunger strike. A historic victory was achieved, as Israeli authorities were forced to comply with the prisoners’ main demands. Israel has consistently failed to respect the agreements it executes with Palestinians regarding prisoners’ issues. For this reason, it will be essential for all supporters of Palestinian political prisoners to actively monitor the events of the next few months to ensure that this agreement is fully implemented.

based in illegal Israeli settlements. A panel of legal experts concluded that G4S may be criminally liable for its activities in support of Israel’s illegal Wall and other violations of international law.

Resistance

G4S has faced significant resistance from Palestinians and Palestine solidarity activists in Europe, who have been urging the company to divest from Hashmira/G4S Israel and end its Israeli contracts for several years.

Palestinian civil society organisations signed a call urging the global solidarity movement to take action “to hold to account G4S, the world’s largest international security corporation, which helps to maintain and profit from Israel’s prison system, for its complicity with Israeli violations of international law.”

Corporate justice

Policing

Private custody suites

G4S has been providing a range of 'police support services' in the UK for a number of years through its subsidiary G4S Care & Justice, while another subsidiary, G4S Policing Solutions, supplies ex-coppers to public sector bodies for investigations into council tax fraud and NHS fraud, among others. The financial crisis that began in 2008 and governments' commitments to privatise public services have provided G4S with more opportunities to expand its share of the 'policing market'.

G4S' policing portfolio already includes 30 'custody suites', with over 500 cells, which it rents to small- to mid-sized police forces around the country through G4S Police Support Services, part of G4S Care and Justice.

Private police

In December 2011, G4S' police work went to a whole new level when the Lincolnshire Police Authority became the first force in the UK to outsource core policing functions to the private sector, claiming the deal could save £28 million. G4S won the 10-year contract, worth £200 million, and is now responsible for the operation of the force's control centre, human resources, training, finance and custody, among other things. Under the terms of the contract, two-thirds of the force's staff are to join G4S, which has an option in the contract for G4S to buy at least one of the force's police stations at market value.

Ever-aware of the need for good branding, G4S was quick to knock up a new uniform for the 550 staff transferred over to it, adding a G4S logo to the 'Lincolnshire Police' epaulettes. Both G4S and the government have been keen to stress this does not mean the police force is being privatised and that G4S will just be doing "back office" work. However, an investigation by Clare Sambrook for OpenDemocracy in April 2012 showed G4S is already recruiting for "major crime investigator jobs". These include "Outstanding Investigative Officer", which involves

Thin Blue Line



While taking over police forces may be unprecedented, recruiting former cops is nothing new at G4S. Standing to attention at G4S board meetings is non-executive director Lord Paul Condon, former Chief Constable of Kent and Metropolitan Police Commissioner. The Lincolnshire contract appears to have more than justified his £124,600-a-year salary. John Reid, former Labour Home Secretary and now a G4S Regional Management Director, will no doubt have also been on hand to give advice.

"contributing, as part of a team, to the review of historic murder investigations" and is "ideal for former detectives with excellent report writing skills who have recent murder investigation experience".

G4S is also bidding for seven-year contracts worth £1.5 billion for Surrey and the West Midlands Police to provide a wide range of services, including investigating crimes, patrolling neighbourhoods and detaining suspects. Both Unison and Unite, the two largest public sector trade unions, warned that the radical plan to privatise policing would "damage public safety".

G4S also provides other policing-related services, including prisoner and detainee transport services on behalf of police and court services, as well as police recruitment facilities. G4S Policing Solutions was established in 2002 to provide "police recruitment consultancy and staffing solutions" to police forces, as well as other local and central government bodies. According to its website, its database currently has more than 25,000 'skilled individuals'.

Profiting from poverty

Welfare

Punishing welfare claimants

In April 2011, G4S won three contracts to run the coalition government's Work Programme in Kent, Surrey and Sussex; Greater Manchester, Cheshire and Warrington; and North East Yorkshire and the Humber. Over the lifetime of the programme, G4S is contracted to find long-term jobs for 125,000 of the 250,000 "jobseekers" it will see. The DWP has allocated £5 billion to the work programme over seven years, of which G4S could take a £250 million share.

G4S has also won a £15 million contract in Greater Manchester, Cheshire and Warrington to "help England's most troubled families", in an initiative supported by the European Social Fund (ESF) and coordinated by local authorities.

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 these contracts. But it won't be worried too much as the structure of the Work Programme allows prime contractors like G4S to sub-contract many of their responsibilities to charities and other "delivery partners". In the regions G4S is operating in, 120,000 people will be sent from the Jobcentre to a G4S office, where they will then be sent to another organization that G4S has contracted to do the work it is being paid for.

Experience of discipline

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. It is more likely, however, that the Work Programme's emphasis on discipline may explain G4S' success.

Work Programme contract

G4S was awarded its Work Programme contract on the basis of a bid promising to send a field operative to a claimant's door within two hours if that person was non co-operative.

Money saved?

Sean Williams, managing director of G4S Welfare to Work, has said the money saved by taking people off benefits makes G4S' involvement good value, arguing that if 125,000 benefits claimants are 'helped' into employment, G4S will be helping the government save £1bn a year in benefits payments (if the average cost of benefits is £8,000 to £10,000 a year). 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.

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.

There have already been accusations of 'cherry-picking' by charities peeved at being superseded by G4S. They claim companies like G4S are choosing to work with unemployed people who are most likely to gain employment, while passing on people with less chances of finding a job quickly to charities. Charities have also complained they are not being paid quickly enough.

Profiting from incarceration

Prisons

The first private prisons

G4S prides itself as “the first private company to open and run a prison in the UK”. The company’s involvement in the modern ‘prison industrial complex’ in Britain dates back to the ideologically driven privatisation of prisons by the Thatcher government. Following a tendering process in which the public sector was barred from participating, the Prison Service invited private companies in 1990 to bid for contracts to manage prisons.

In October 2011, Birmingham prison became the first-ever prison in the UK to be transferred from public management to the private sector. G4S won the 15-year contract, worth £468.3 million.

In 2011, G4S got even closer to the dispensing of justice by the UK state with a contract with the Ministry of Justice to provide more than 150 maintenance, catering, cleaning, security and energy management services to over 340 court, tribunal and administration buildings across the Midlands, Wales and the North of England.

Through its subsidiary G4S Care & Justice, G4S also provides a range of prison-related ‘services’. The company is the world’s largest provider of electronic monitoring (tagging). According to its website, it monitors over 14,000 ‘subjects’ in England alone.

Controversies

When the news that G4S was taking over Birmingham prison transpired, the Prison Officers Association (POA), the union representing 550 prison officers at the prison, threatened to take industrial action over the deal.

In response, the government threatened to use the military to “keep order” if prison officers went on strike over the G4S deal. Analysts at JP Morgan said the government’s “determined stance” was “good news for outsourcers”. “[Justice secretary] Clarke’s determination to use the mili-

Case study

Exploitation of prisoners



Another controversial aspect of G4S’s involvement in the prison industrial complex is its exploitation of the cheap, captive labour of prisoners. G4S has 400 prisoners working 40 hours a week in its six prisons, being paid next to nothing. At Altcourse prison in Liverpool, G4S works with Norpro, an engineering firm that has converted three former metal workshops into a factory floor using 25 prisoners to produce high-quality office furniture “at an economic price”. The enterprise has apparently been “so successful”, or so cheap, that work previously done in India has been brought back to the UK and done in the prison.

tary to push through privatisation is perhaps evidence of the government’s determination to take on public sector unions, which may be a positive sign for the outsourcing trend,” the analysts wrote in a note.

The POA had also gone to the High Court to try and block the deal, citing ‘unfair advantage’ in the bidding process as a reason, because the former chief executive of the National Offender Management Service (Noms) is now employed by G4S as a consultant (see the staff section). Since then, G4S’s “incompetent management” of the prison has been shrouded with controversy

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