



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

G4S to be investigated following LPHR complaint relating to alleged Israeli human rights violations

London, 2 June 2014 –

Security firm G4S are to be investigated after a UK Government trade body found that human rights complaints made in relation to the activities of the firm and their subsidiaries in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory need further examination.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) provide guidelines for multinational enterprises for responsible business conduct which governments encourage companies to observe wherever they operate.

Following a complaint by the legal charity Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights (LPHR), represented by lawyers Leigh Day, that, contrary to the OECD Guidelines, G4S PLC has breached the obligation to respect human rights of those affected by their activities, the **OECD UK National Contact Point (UK NCP)** (within the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills) has today accepted in an Initial Assessment that issues raised in the complaint are substantiated and require further examination.

The UK NCP will now offer mediation/conciliation to LPHR and G4S PLC to resolve the complaint.

If no agreement is reached, the UK NCP will further examine the following issues in relation to the activities of UK registered G4S PLC in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory through its Israeli subsidiaries under the OECD Guidelines:

1. Respect internationally recognised human rights of persons affected by their activities (Chapter II paragraph 2 of the Guidelines);
2. Avoid infringing on the human rights of others and addresses adverse human rights impacts in which it is involved (Chapter IV paragraph 1 of the Guidelines); and
3. Prevent or mitigate adverse human rights impacts directly linked to its business operations (Chapter IV paragraph 3 of the Guidelines).

G4S and their Israeli subsidiary companies provide, install and maintain equipment used in military checkpoints in the Separation Barrier (also known as the 'Wall') constructed by Israel predominantly within the West Bank including East Jerusalem, the Erez crossing between Israel and the Gaza Strip and within Israeli prison facilities in Israel and in the West Bank.



The complaint provides evidence of serious human rights concerns relating to these three areas. The detention and imprisonment of children in Israeli prison facilities, during which many allege being subject to torture and/or cruel and degrading treatment, is a particular concern.

The complaint asks that the company provides information about where and how its equipment is used and what due diligence checks have been conducted in providing it. The complaint also asks that the company stops servicing the equipment, to remove it, to agree to an independent audit of these actions, and to agree to identify ways to compensate people who have suffered adverse impacts.

LPHR Director, Tareq Shrourou says:

'We welcome this Initial Assessment and the NCP's acknowledgement that there are serious issues raised by our complaint which warrant further examination. We look forward to further engaging with G4S PLC as the matter proceeds and hope that the process will contribute to a positive transformation of the human rights situation for Palestinians adversely impacted by the company's activities.

Considered utilisation of the OECD evidence-based mediation, investigation and accountability process falls squarely within our heightened social responsibility as lawyers to protect and promote fundamental rights and the rule of law.'

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More Information

The *OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises* provide non-binding principles and standards for responsible business conduct of multinational enterprises so that they are consistent with internationally recognised standards.

In 2011 the *Guidelines* were updated to incorporate distinct recommendations in relation to internationally recognised human rights standards.

They operate as recommendations from adhering governments to multinational companies operating in their jurisdictions. The aim of the *Guidelines* is 'to promote positive contributions by enterprises to economic, environmental and social progress worldwide'¹.

The *Guidelines* provide for an implementation mechanism of National Contact Points (NCPs). NCPs are domestic agencies established by adhering governments which are



charged with promoting and implementing the *Guidelines*. They also administer a mediation and conciliation platform for resolving practical issues and complaints.

Process to date and going forward:

On 18 November 2013, LPHR, represented by Leigh Day, submitted the complaint to the UK NCP. The complaint was then forwarded by the UK NCP to G4S PLC who was invited to make representations. These representations were received by the UK NCP on 17 February 2014 and shared with LPHR. Further representations to the UK NCP were made by both parties and separate submissions were made by the Israeli NCP.

Today the UK NCP has accepted in their Initial Assessment that issues raised in the complaint regarding the activities of G4S PLC are substantiated and require further examination

Following this Initial Assessment, the parties will be invited to engage in mediation. If one or both parties refuse, the NCP will produce and publish a Final Assessment based on their assessment of the issues raised in the complaint. If the parties agree to undertake the mediation a settlement will either be agreed between them, or, if a settlement cannot be reached, the NCP will produce and publish a Final Assessment.

LPHR is keen to engage in the mediation process and develop a constructive dialogue with G4S PLC to resolve the adverse human rights impacts raised in the complaint.

The goal of LPHR's Business and Human Rights work is to be at the forefront of meaningful and expert engagement with corporate legal accountability processes so to ensure multinational enterprises effectively meet their responsibilities to respect the human rights of Palestinians.

LPHR was provided with information for the complaint by the following NGOs: Who Profits, Defence for Children International Palestine, Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Organisation, Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling, Al-Haq, Military Court Watch and Al Mezan.

Further information on the complaint may be found at our blog [here](#).

About Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights:

Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights (LPHR) is a lawyer-based human rights organisation with charitable status in the UK which runs legal projects focused on protecting and promoting Palestinian human rights. www.lphr.org.uk