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UK watchdog finds G4S is violating human rights obligations towards Palestinians

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Today, the [UK National Contact Point \(NCP\)](#) has published a landmark finding that the leading British security firm, **G4S**, is currently violating three human rights obligations under the **OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises (OECD Guidelines)**, arising from its involvement with Israel's human rights violations against Palestinians.

The NCP's decision followed a detailed investigation into a human rights complaint submitted by the UK legal charity, [Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights \(LPHR\)](#). It has found significant failures by G4S in its overarching obligations to 'respect human rights'; as well as the obligation to 'prevent or mitigate adverse human rights impacts that are directly linked to its business operations' in the region. This is a serious indictment of the human rights record of G4S.

The NCP findings arise from G4S' supply, installation and maintenance of equipment at facilities and operations in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) that are associated with violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. These include contracts to service and maintain baggage scanning equipment and metal detectors used at military checkpoints, including some located along the unlawful Separation Barrier/Wall; and contracts to install and maintain security systems within Israeli Prison Service facilities.

In making its important findings, the NCP accepted LPHR's comprehensive evidence of material Israeli human rights violations at checkpoints and Israeli Prison Service facilities, including:

- substantial restrictions on Palestinians freedom of movement, with associated adverse impacts on the right to health, education, work and standard of living, caused by Israeli military checkpoints in the occupied West Bank. These include checkpoints located along the unlawful Separation Barrier/Wall; and
- human rights violations against Palestinian detainees and prisoners in Israeli Prison Service facilities in Israel and the OPT. They include reports of torture and/or cruel and degrading treatment, solitary confinement and excessive use of administrative detention.

Palestinian children are among those documented to have experienced human rights violations. The detention of children in Israeli Prison Service facilities, during which many allege being subject to torture and/or cruel and degrading treatment, is a particular concern.

The NCP has **recommended** G4S take the following actions to bring the British company into compliance with its human rights obligations under the OECD Guidelines:

1. **Consider how to work with business partners in Israel to address the human rights violations** referred to in LPHR's complaint;
2. **Communicate to shareholders and business partners** in Israel the actions it is taking;



3. **Implement a contract approvals process that includes assessment of human rights risks** and application of mitigations (as G4S indicated an intention to do when commenting on the NCP's Final Statement).

LPHR welcomes these recommendations as a starting point for addressing G4S' involvement in Israel's serious human rights violations against Palestinians. Preventing or mitigating rights violations at Israeli military checkpoint locations and Israeli Prison Service facilities is a central step in any follow-up actions taken by G4S. Publicly communicating on the actions it is taking to address this issue is also essential. However, according to G4S itself, previous apparent attempts to use its leverage (see details in the attached commentary) to prevent or mitigate Israeli violations have been unsuccessful. If that persists, G4S will continue to unacceptably violate its obligations to respect the human rights of Palestinians under the OECD Guidelines.

“By reason of its business relationship with the Israeli state agencies who violate international law, **G4S has been found in breach of its human rights obligations under the OECD Guidelines**” said LPHR Director, Tareq Shourou. “The reality is that the track record indicates the only effective action G4S can take to prevent all involvement in Israel's serious, systemic and sustained human rights mistreatment of Palestinians is for G4S to end those business relationships with immediate effect.”

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More Information:

1. *Please see the accompanying **LPHR Commentary** for more information in relation to the key findings of the NCP Final Statement; the complaint process to date and going forward; the OECD Guidelines and the UK National Contact Point; key excerpts of the NCP Final Statement; and G4S' public statements regarding human rights and their activities in Israel and the OPT.*
2. *Please also see the accompanying **LPHR's blogs** which include an introduction Q&A to LPHR's complaint against G4S; a guide to G4S' involvement with Israeli military checkpoints and Israeli Prison Service facilities; and a Q&A guide to the OECD Guidelines complaints mechanism and how it can be used.*
3. ***LPHR's human rights complaint against G4S regarding their activities in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory*** is published for the first time today.
4. *Leigh Day solicitors and Tim Cooke-Hurle of Doughty Street Chambers represented LPHR in connection with the complaint. LPHR was provided with information for the complaint by the following NGOs: Military Court Watch, Defence for Children International Palestine, Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Organisation, Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling, Al-Haq and Al Mezan Center for Human Rights.*