

PARKMUN 2023

The Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC)

The Question of Private Military Groups Operating in International Emergencies Briefing Papers

PMC – Private Military Company

PMSC – Private Military and Security Company

PMC (may also refer to) - Private Military Contractor, a professional soldier, working for a Private Military Company, hired to serve in a foreign conflict

Mercenary – The historical term for a Private Military Contractor, now often used to colloquially refer to a Private Military Contractor

[United Nations Mercenary Convention](#)

A PMC is a private company which provides armed combat or security services for its own financial gain. Those who work for PMCs are known as ‘Private Military Contractors.’ While some PMCs operate in a more traditional ‘mercenary’ style, other PMCs may be fully integrated into a state’s military.

History and International Agreements

Though being a mercenary is one of the oldest recorded professions, the origin of modern PMCs can be traced back to 1965 when ‘WatchGuard International’ was founded by a group of former British Special Air Service troops. Dramatic growth in PMCs would come about at the end of the Cold War.

In 1989 ‘United Nations Mercenary Convention’ banning the use of mercenaries was initiated and it entered into force on 20 October 2001. As of August 2021, the convention had been ratified by 37 states, and signed but not ratified by 9 states.

Roughly 20 years after the creation of the aforementioned ‘Mercenary Convention’ in 2008, the Swiss government, The Red Cross and a number of contributors from private security companies and NGOs would come together to create the ‘Montreux Document on Private Military and Security Companies.’ As of 2018, 54 states have signed this document, which outlines legal obligations and specific recommendations related to PMCs’ procurement practices and operational oversight.

The Wagner Group

One of the most prominent PMCs in recent times is the Russian, ‘Wagner Group.’ The state-funded Russian company, which is officially titled as ‘PMC Wagner,’ first emerged in 2014 during the Donbas War, in which it supported Russian forces. The Wagner Group has been involved in several civil wars, such as in Syria and Libya, and contractors working for the company have been accused of war crimes, including the murder, rape and torture of civilians.

The Wagner Group is heavily involved in Russia’s ongoing invasion of Ukraine which began in early 2022. Convicts in Russia were recruited to the PMC with the promise of pay and freedom for half a year of

service. The towns of Soledar and Klishchiivka were captured by the Wagner Group. The PMC would also launch a rebellion on the Russian government in June of 2023 which failed.

Conclusion

Work has been done to outlaw PMCs globally. However, there are still many PMCs throughout the world, with countries often using them as proxy armies which can fight their battles but not be traced back to them. The Mercenary Convention and the Montreux Document truly show that there is much support already to ban PMCs.

Further reading and citation of sources

PMC Wagner <https://w.wiki/6Gcv>

Private Military Companies <https://w.wiki/6Gcv>