



July 2019

Key Information

Sector Size (2017)ⁱ

- 400 registered PSCs (>1,900 unregistered PSCs)
- 450,000 PSC personnel

Can PSC personnel carry firearms?

Contradictory claims from available reportsⁱⁱ

Montreux Document

Participant: No

International Code of Conduct Association (ICoCA)

- ICoCA Member State: No
- ICoCA Company Members: 2
- ICoCA CSO Members: 0

Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights

- Voluntary Principles State Member: Yes

Members of the Private Security Governance Observatory:

- Centre for Social Impact Studies (CeSIS)
- Centre Panafricain-Initiatives pour le Sahel
- Ghana Navy and Centre for Maritime Law and Security, Africa (CEMLAWS)
- West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP)

Summary

Relative to its regional neighbors, Ghana has been considered an oasis of peace and stability, as well as a democratic and economic leader in West Africa. It has ratified the African Union Convention on Mercenaries and is one of the few non-western states to sign onto the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights, which requires that companies operate within a framework that respects human rights. Its abundance of rich natural resources such as gold and oil make it a hub for extractive industry and an attractive location for foreign investment. However, despite its stability and healthy economy, Ghana still faces security challenges such as illegal arms proliferation, illegal mining, and non-compliance with national regulations regarding private security company (PSC) personnel.

Legal Framework

The main legal instrument regulating private security companies (PSCs) in Ghana is the Police Service Regulations of 1992. The Regulations provide that it is the Interior Ministry that oversees the licensing of private security companies and that the Prime Minister may make regulations by legislation regarding PSCs. Although regulations do exist, reports have voice concern that they are inadequate and not nearly detailed enough for effective management of the sector.ⁱⁱⁱ

- [Police Service \(Private Security Organisations\) Regulations 1992 Legislative Instrument 1571 \(No online source available\)](#)
- [Police Service Act, 1970](#)

Challenges

The UN Working on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination conducted a mission to Ghana in late 2017. In their report, they identify several challenges, including, but not limited to:

Illegal Mining

“Galamsey” is the local term used to refer to small scale gold miners operating illegally in the country. Illegal mechanized mining also

occurs, polluting nearby waterways. Often these illegal miners are armed and come from both Ghana itself and from as far away as Asia. There have been reports of illegal armed miners attacking and shooting unarmed and legal PSCs guarding other mines.^{iv}

Illegal Arms

The proliferation of illegal arms in Ghana, estimated at 1.3 million illegal arms present, presents a serious security threat to the country.^v This large-scale proliferation is possible due to Ghana's porous borders with neighbouring countries and is a serious concern due to regional conflicts and the number of vigilante groups, armed illegal miners, and unregistered PSCs operating in the country. It is also reported that many PSCs are illegally carrying arms in contradiction to Ghanaian law.^{vi}

Porous Borders

As a member of ECOWAS, Ghana abides by the organization's free movement protocol, leading to the mass movement of persons and goods across Ghana's borders. The country is therefore vulnerable to armed foreign actors participating in conflicts in neighbouring countries, the smuggling of illegal arms, and high levels of cross-border crime.

Unregistered PSCs

According to the UN Working Group on Mercenaries, there are over 1,900 PSCs operating illegally in Ghana. This is a large number of PSCs that the government is unable to effectively monitor and regulate, creating an increased probability of human rights abuses and misconduct. This is a serious concern that needs to be remedied by more effective licensing and oversight mechanisms.

ⁱ United Nations, General Assembly, Human Rights Council, "Report of the Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination: Mission to Ghana (8 to 15 December 2017), A/HRC/39/49/Add.1" (2018), 8.

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid, 7.

^{iv} Ibid, 13.

^v Ibid, 14.

^{vi} Emmanuel Dogbevi, "UN Warns Ghana of Threat as Private Security Personnel Outnumbers Police Officers," Ghana Business News, December 18, 2017, , accessed August 02, 2019, <https://www.ghanabusinessnews.com/2017/12/18/un-warns-ghana-of-threat-as-private-security-personnel-outnumbers-police-officers/>.