



31 July, 2019

**Submission in response to the discussion document: Elements for an international regulatory framework on the regulation, monitoring and oversight of the activities of private military and security companies.**

The Omega Research Foundation (Omega) is an independent UK-based research organisation. We are dedicated to providing rigorous, objective, evidence-based research on the manufacture, trade in, and use of, military, security, and police technologies.

Omega welcomes the work being done to develop an international regulatory framework on the regulation, monitoring, and oversight to the activities of private military and security companies. Omega recognises that this will be challenging, due to the multifaceted nature of the companies' employment. It is essential that the process includes avenues to ensure PMSCs' activities comply with human rights standards in two key areas of concern: training and equipment.

The discussion document does not yet address PMSCs' provision of training for other actors (both state and private). Some PMSCs provide training courses instructing others on the use of various types of weapons and equipment, as well as security provision and techniques (including restraint techniques, interrogation, etc.). Clients include not only PMSCs themselves, but also different kinds of companies, state law enforcement officials, and other state personnel, including the military. Some PMSCs have their own training facilities, while others provide the training 'on-site' in a requested location.

There needs to be appropriate oversight of any training provided by PMSCs to ensure that it is compliant with international human rights standards, including the principles of proportionality, legality, accountability, and necessity. This should also refer to relevant documents such as the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms, and the UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials. This oversight could include independent accreditation of the training providers and/or the syllabus offered. Training should be subject to international transfer controls, including PMSCs applying for permission from the relevant national licensing body to provide training overseas or to foreign nationals.

Oversight of the training should extend to limiting the types of weapons and equipment available to be trained in. The final regulation should prohibit PMSCs training others in equipment that is inherently abusive or degrading. Such equipment includes, inter alia, thumb cuffs, direct contact electric shock weapons (stun batons/stun guns), and body-worn electric

Omega Research Foundation  
+44 (0) 161 2738875

[info@omegaresearchfoundation.org](mailto:info@omegaresearchfoundation.org)

[www.omegaresearchfoundation.org](http://www.omegaresearchfoundation.org)

Registered Charity: 1105918



# Omega Research Foundation

shock equipment.<sup>1</sup> Training should only be provided in the use of other weapons and equipment that have a legitimate law enforcement use but can be misused to commit torture and ill-treatment. These goods include certain restraints (leg cuffs and handcuffs, for instance), some less lethal weapons (kinetic impact weapons, projectile electric shock weapons and chemical irritants), and firearms. Training should be compliant with international human rights standards and must include information on a rigorous selection and testing process prior to use.

The discussion document should also reference the weapons and equipment held by PMSCs. PMSCs should not carry any equipment that is considered inherently abusive, and staff should receive human rights-compliant training in other equipment. All weapons and equipment used by PMSCs should be subject to a transparent selection and testing process prior to deployment to ensure that they can fulfil the required tasks.

We look forward to further participation in the discussion and drafting process, and are encouraged by the OEIGWG's engagement with civil society to ensure an effective final regulation.

Omega Research Foundation.

---

<sup>1</sup> For more information on weapons and equipment that should be prohibited, as well as weapons and equipment that do have a legitimate law enforcement use, but that should be carefully regulated, please contact the Omega Research Foundation on [info@omegaresearchfoundation.org](mailto:info@omegaresearchfoundation.org).

Omega Research Foundation

+44 (0) 161 2738875

[info@omegaresearchfoundation.org](mailto:info@omegaresearchfoundation.org)

[www.omegaresearchfoundation.org](http://www.omegaresearchfoundation.org)

Registered Charity: 1105918