

Mercenaries and Murder: 9938th Assembly of
the United Nations Security Council



Letter from the Secretariat and Board of Trustees:

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the WinMUN foundation's second Worldwide Interscholastic Network of Model United Nations Conference! It is truly an honor to continue WINMUN's commitment to running free, online, ultra high-quality Model UN conferences each month. As delegates, all of you will assume the role of countries, to solve worldwide security issues, foster international collaboration, and develop extensive and effective solutions based on the topics provided! The topics of this chamber are not only interesting, but also highly controversial, giving you all the opportunity to take one of numerous stances and engage in high-level debates.

We are so excited to let you all develop your own planning, speaking, communication, quick thinking, critical thinking, and contextual analysis skills. From the secretariat, this conference is the culmination of countless long nights planning, discussing, and building the perfect chamber and topic for you all to debate in. We all hope that we provide the perfect space to find your voice and Model UN skills. From all of us here, we sincerely hope you enjoy, learn from, and ignite your voice at WINMUN

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Acknowledged by the Secretariat and Board of Trustees,

Gia Viradia, President of WinMUN

Jack Riegler, Head of Competition and High Constable of WinMUN

Jacob Shmidt, Chairman and High Commissioner of WinMUN

Kushagra Juneja, Chief of Staff and SG Competition and Advertisements

Leila Cortes, Chairwoman of WinMUN and Executive Trustee

Riley Flamm, Chief of Summit Operations

Introduction:

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations, the key organ tasked with ensuring international peace and

security. The UNSC contains 5 permanent members, the United States, the Russian Federation, the People's Republic of China, France, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland along with 10 members elected by the General Assembly with a two-thirds majority for a two-year term. In order to fulfill its responsibilities the UNSC has the power to investigate disputes, impose sanctions, authorize military action, and establish peacekeeping missions in the effort of preserving stability and security around the world. However, the UNSC is widely condemned for its anti-diplomatic system of the P5 countries, where a negation vote from any vetoes any resolution immediately. Even so, the UNSC can boast great achievements in worldwide peacekeeping operations, being the body that helped preserve peace in Cambodia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mozambique, Namibia, and Tajikistan. Currently, the UNSC's main goals have been regulating the future of warfare, and ensuring stability in evolving conflicts all across, Africa, Eurasia, Southeast Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, and South America. The unique opportunity the P5 veto presents is ensuring a resolution can be agreed upon by ideologically opposing superpowers.

Topic:

Regulating the usage of private military contractors in peace and wartime operations.

Discussion suggestions and resolution solution goals:

- Creating policy for usage of peacekeepers against military contractors during conflict
- Establishing/rejecting a ban against the usage of military contractors
- Enacting and enforcing sanctions on countries who use private military contractors

Structure of the committee:

This committee will run using UNA-USA procedure, where motions from the delegates will dictate the direction of the committee, the main of which being moderated caucuses and unmoderated caucuses. The overall goal is to form blocs and write a resolution detailing the solutions proposed by members of the bloc. Delegates will be tasked with engaging in thought-provoking discussions and debate during moderated caucuses while using unmoderated caucuses to write resolutions.

Background:

Private military contractors (PMCs) are individuals or firms hired to provide supplemental services to armed forces. These services can range from direct combat involvement—placing contractors “boots on the ground”—to logistical support, technical expertise, intelligence gathering, training, and non-combat roles such as food delivery, transportation, and equipment maintenance. While commonly associated with modern military conflicts, PMCs as a concept are not a novel development. The use of private actors to supplement or entirely replace state military functions can be traced back hundreds, if not thousands, of years. What distinguishes the modern PMC industry is its legal ambiguity, scale, and integration into national and international security operations. Over the past several decades, PMCs have grown into a multibillion-dollar industry, shaping the way wars are fought and states project power globally.

Historically, the reliance on private soldiers predates the formation of the modern nation-state. In ancient times, city-states and empires routinely hired mercenaries to wage war on their behalf. The Greek city-state of Athens employed Scythian archers as an early form of hired protection, and during the Peloponnesian War, both Sparta and Athens made use of mercenary forces. The Roman Republic, and later the Roman Empire, employed large numbers of auxiliaries—foreigners and mercenaries—to

supplement its legions, often giving them land or citizenship as payment. In the medieval period, European powers made extensive use of "free companies," groups of mercenary soldiers who sold their services to the highest bidder. These units operated with considerable independence and were often more loyal to their paymasters than to any broader political cause. Perhaps the most infamous example of such groups was the Swiss Guard, initially mercenaries hired by the Vatican in the 16th century, who still serve today as ceremonial protectors of the Pope.

Even in the era of state-centered military power, the role of private actors never entirely disappeared. During the American Revolutionary War, for example, the Continental Army—facing logistical and manpower shortages—relied on a network of private contractors to supply food, uniforms, weapons, and medical supplies. These early contractors often acted more as commercial suppliers than combatants, but their role in sustaining the war effort was nonetheless vital. Furthermore, the British employed German Hessian troops—professional soldiers hired from German principalities—as mercenary auxiliaries. The reliance on foreign or private forces thus became a defining feature of early American and European warfare.

Fast-forward to the late 20th century, and the character of PMCs began to shift dramatically. The rise of neoliberal economic policies and the push toward privatization during the 1980s and 1990s created fertile ground for private military firms to emerge. Two of the most prominent examples during this era were Executive Outcomes (EO), a South African company, and Sandline International, based in the United Kingdom. EO made headlines in the 1990s for its involvement in conflicts in Angola and Sierra Leone, where it provided military training, air support, and combat troops to stabilize regimes facing insurgencies. Similarly, Sandline International operated in the Balkans and Papua New Guinea, providing arms, intelligence, and advisory services. These companies were often hired by fragile or failing states unable to rely on their own military infrastructure. Despite their controversial reputations, both EO and Sandline were credited—at least by some observers—with restoring order and ending prolonged conflicts.

The United States, which had long relied on internal military-industrial contractors for equipment production and logistics, significantly expanded its use of PMCs during the Gulf War and, more substantially, after the invasion of Iraq in 2003. One of the most infamous companies in this context is Blackwater, a North Carolina-based firm founded by former Navy SEAL Erik Prince. Blackwater was initially contracted to provide

security for U.S. diplomatic personnel, including State Department officials operating in Baghdad. Over time, however, Blackwater's operations expanded to include convoy protection, base security, and direct engagement with hostile forces. At its height, Blackwater and its subsidiaries employed thousands of personnel, many of whom were armed and operated in war zones alongside regular U.S. military forces.

Blackwater's operations came under intense scrutiny after the 2007 Nisour Square massacre, in which Blackwater contractors killed 17 Iraqi civilians, including women and children, while escorting a diplomatic convoy through Baghdad. The incident sparked international outrage, congressional hearings, and legal proceedings that would drag on for over a decade. Although some contractors were eventually prosecuted in U.S. courts, the affair highlighted a profound problem: the lack of clear legal accountability for private military actors operating in foreign war zones. Blackwater rebranded multiple times following the scandal—first as Xe Services, then as Academi—and merged with other firms to form Constellis Holdings. Despite these changes, the company's legacy continues to influence debates about the use and regulation of PMCs.

In terms of operational capacity, PMCs today maintain sophisticated weapons systems, run global supply lines, conduct cyber operations, and deploy highly trained personnel who often have prior experience in elite military units such as U.S. Navy SEALs, British SAS, or French Foreign Legion. Many PMCs also offer specialized training for national armies, police forces, and private clients. They operate in conflict zones ranging from the Middle East and Africa to Latin America and Eastern Europe. For the states and private entities that employ them, PMCs offer a number of practical benefits. These include rapid deployment capabilities, logistical flexibility, niche expertise (e.g., in bomb disposal or counterinsurgency), and access to additional manpower without the political or budgetary costs associated with expanding national military forces.

For example, in a situation like Haiti—where state institutions are often crippled by corruption, underfunding, and internal strife—PMCs are viewed as a necessary alternative. The Haitian government, in recent years, has hired PMCs to help suppress violent gang activity that threatens to paralyze the capital and destabilize the country. In this context, PMCs are often seen as the only viable security solution. They can deploy quickly, are not subject to local political infighting, and are often better equipped and trained than local forces. Similar dynamics have played out in African countries such as

Nigeria, Mali, and Somalia, where national militaries struggle to contain insurgent groups like Boko Haram or al-Shabaab. PMCs, acting under the auspices of governments or multinational corporations with vested interests in local stability, have increasingly filled the vacuum left by weak or dysfunctional state militaries.

However, the use of PMCs is not without controversy. Critics argue that their deployment introduces more risks than it solves. One of the most pressing concerns is the legal gray area in which many PMCs operate. Since they are not officially part of a national military, they are often not subject to the same legal codes, rules of engagement, or disciplinary procedures. In the United States, for instance, military personnel are governed by the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). Contractors, on the other hand, fall under the Military Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Act (MEJA), which is rarely enforced and difficult to apply in active conflict zones. This ambiguity makes it difficult to hold PMC employees accountable for crimes, including excessive use of force, torture, or involvement in civilian massacres.

Furthermore, the relationship between PMCs and the governments that hire them can foster a culture of secrecy and mutual protection. Since PMCs are often involved in sensitive or covert operations, governments may be reluctant to expose misconduct that

could reflect poorly on their own decision-making. In such cases, cover-ups become a convenient means of damage control. For example, following the Nisour Square killings, internal investigations by both Blackwater and the U.S. State Department were criticized for being opaque and biased. Whistleblowers and journalists faced significant obstacles in accessing accurate information, and many victims' families were denied justice for years.

Human rights organizations have also raised concerns about the difficulty of tracking PMC activities. Unlike formal military units, which are generally subject to national and international reporting requirements, PMCs often operate without transparent oversight. They are not required to report casualty figures, mission outcomes, or operational protocols. This lack of data makes it almost impossible for watchdog groups to assess whether PMCs are adhering to international humanitarian law. Furthermore, since many PMCs operate across multiple jurisdictions and frequently change their corporate identities, tracing their activities over time becomes a near-impossible task.

Another significant issue is the question of reliability. Contractors are not soldiers bound by national allegiance; they are employees motivated by financial compensation.

This distinction can become crucial when the operational environment deteriorates. If a

state cannot continue paying its contractors—or if a conflict becomes too dangerous—the PMC may simply withdraw, regardless of the strategic consequences. In the case of Haiti, some analysts warn that the PMCs currently fighting gang violence could abandon their missions if funding dries up or if armed groups gain the upper hand. Such outcomes could leave governments even more vulnerable than before, creating security vacuums that worsen instability.

Moreover, PMCs are profit-driven entities. Their bottom line is not national defense or public welfare, but revenue. This incentive structure raises concerns about fraud, waste, and corruption. Contractors have been caught overbilling for services, falsifying records, or engaging in price gouging. In some cases, entire contracts were awarded under suspicious circumstances, often involving former government officials with close ties to the companies in question. A 2011 report by the U.S. Commission on Wartime Contracting estimated that up to \$60 billion had been lost to waste and fraud in Iraq and Afghanistan, much of it involving PMCs and logistics contractors. This figure underscores the systemic vulnerability of outsourcing military operations to profit-seeking firms.

Equally troubling is the potential for PMCs to commit war crimes without fear of reprisal. Since they are not held to the same disciplinary standards as national militaries, and often operate in regions with weak judicial systems, PMCs can act with near-impunity. Incidents of torture, sexual abuse, extrajudicial killings, and human trafficking have all been documented in association with private contractors. Yet, prosecutions remain rare. The lack of connection to any one national government also complicates the role of international bodies like the United Nations in enforcing accountability. When abuses occur, UN mechanisms often stall or fail entirely due to jurisdictional disputes and political resistance.

In conclusion, PMCs have become an indispensable yet deeply problematic feature of modern warfare and international security. On one hand, they provide critical capabilities that many governments—particularly those facing internal crises—cannot muster on their own. They offer specialized skills, flexible deployments, and additional manpower that can help stabilize fragile regions. On the other hand, their legal status, profit motives, and lack of oversight introduce serious risks, including human rights violations, corruption, and the erosion of state accountability. As the global security landscape continues to evolve, the role of PMCs is likely to grow even further,

necessitating urgent reforms in international law, oversight mechanisms, and ethical standards. Without such reforms, the privatization of war may continue to outpace the world's ability to control it.

Schedule: THIS COMMITTEE IS ONLY ON SUNDAY JULY 20TH

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WINMUN II SCHEDULE

15 minute break between sessions

ALL TIMES IN UTC+0

DAY 2: SUNDAY JULY 20TH UNSC AND EU ONLY

12:00 PM UNSC/EU OPENING CEREMONY

12:30 PM UNSC/EU SESSION 1

1:15 PM UNSC/EU SESSION 2

2:30 PM UNSC/EU SESSION 3

3:45 PM UNSC/EU SESSION 4

4:00 PM UNSC/EU SESSION 5

5:30 PM UNSC/EU CLOSING CEREMONY

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Statement of the problem:

PMCs, while providing an effective solution to countries in crisis, operate in a legal and regulatory grey zone. It is critical that the United Nations establish an effective framework to prevent human rights abuses, fraud, corruption, and unreliable withdrawals from these organizations to reinforce our continued commitment to peace and the people of this planet.

Key topics:

- Usage of peacekeepers against PMCs
- Human rights accountability framework for PMCs
- Accountability for PMCs against uncoordinated withdrawals
- Establishing a policy for when usage of PMCs is justified
- Defining when a country is responsible for a PMCs actions, and which country, the one that hired them or the one in which they are based, or both?