

PRIVATE MILITARY AND SECURITY COMPANIES
IN INTERNATIONAL LAW

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AND SECURITY COMPANIES
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A Challenge for Non-binding Norms:
the Montreux Document and
the International Code of Conduct
for Private Security Service Providers

Corinna SEIBERTH



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Corinna Seiberth

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*For Einat
You will always be an inspiration*

FOREWORD

This is a well-written and well-argued monograph, which explores in great detail the position of private military and security companies (PMSCs) in international law, specifically the value and effect of softer forms of regulation embodied in the recently adopted Montreux Document for states and the International Code of Conduct for PMSCs themselves.

The book starts (in the introduction and chapter 1) by establishing the hypothesis to be tested, that PMSCs are a growing development and problem as states increasingly outsource (some of) their military functions, whose presence and conduct in post-conflict and conflict zones lead to violations of international law and that, unlike states' militaries where direct state responsibility is inherent, there are problems in making both the private contractors and the states that employ them responsible for any violations of international law. Traditional forms of international law, treaties and custom, are inapplicable to PMSCs themselves, and so the thesis explores whether softer forms of international law in the form of a non-binding document (the Montreux Document) and a code of conduct (the International Code of Conduct for Private Security Providers) can fill that normative gap, and moreover, can provide for regulation of the norms they purport to contain.

The methodology is primarily doctrinal, but with any doctrinal analysis of soft law, which does not sit comfortably within the traditional sources of international law, it is necessary to look at the normative effect of soft law and to this end the thesis considers relevant conceptual discussions of norms, rules and legal orders. The story and analysis of the Draft Convention on the regulation of PMSCs provides a useful counterpoint throughout the thesis, enabling the author to point to the problems of trying to achieve a traditional form of regulation, and the advantages and disadvantages that such an approach has in comparison to softer forms of regulation.

While chapter 1 establishes the normative challenge the thesis aims to address, chapter 2 considers the phenomenon of PMSCs themselves, distinguishing them from mercenaries in a convincing manner and considering relevant methods of classification of types and functions of PMSCs. Chapter 3 lays out in impressive detail the existing international law applicable to PMSCs, in order to expose the lacunae and gaps in the normative framework and regulation of PMSCs in international law. This chapter shows a fine grasp of the rules and problems in their application, especially those of human rights law, international humanitarian law and the rules on state responsibility (from host state, home

state and contracting state perspectives), as well as institutional, individual and corporate responsibility. As a piece of sustained and comprehensive legal analysis of the current position of PMSCs under international law, this forms the heart of the book, and its comprehensive accuracy enables the author to go on to make original contribution by examining the development of soft law against this broader legal background. Chapter 3 is a detailed, rigorous and sustained piece of legal exposition, laying bare the bones of the international legal framework applicable to PMSCs and thereby exposing its weaknesses. The analysis is soundly based on traditional sources and literature, but also incorporates the latest developments and debates (for example in the area of institutional responsibility). The section on due diligence obligations also shows how the analysis considers all angles in relation to PMSCs.

Chapter 4 then explores the content and meaning of the Montreux Document and digs deeply into its layered provisions, exploring both existing obligations and good practices that exist within a non-binding document. The examination of the premises upon which the Document is constructed, and the comparison made with the Draft Convention (which has a much stronger notion of state functions) is again insightful and moves the debate forward. No aspect is left unconsidered and the section on good practices is particularly noteworthy and informative when considered alongside the due diligence obligations of states unearthed in chapter 3. The conclusion is a sober and forensic analysis of both the strengths and weaknesses of the Montreux Document, and leads nicely into chapters 5-6 on corporate social responsibility, the International Code of Conduct and the development of the Oversight Mechanism. The account of the International Code is both thorough and convincing in terms of its analysis of the general and specific commitments. John Ruggie's 'Protect, Respect and Remedy' framework for business and human rights, in particular, is deployed to critical effect. Chapter 6 includes a comparative analysis of the Oversight Mechanism and existing corporate social responsibility tools discussing potential benefits and deficiencies.

The doctrinal and evaluative elements of the thesis in chapters 1-6 are convincing in themselves, but the author shows her inquisitive side by pushing further into thinking (rather convincingly) about the normative contribution of the Montreux Document and of the International Code of Conduct. Deploying the theoretical positions of Hart and Teubner, the author shows the reader the contribution of the applicable soft law, but also introduces us to a method for evaluating how, in the future, we should judge the internalization of the norms contained in the Document and the Code. The book is then completed by an authoritative and convincing conclusion – while these soft instruments make positive steps toward filling the gaps in regulation they do not (and cannot) do that completely and, therefore, a Convention may well be necessary after all.

Overall this book contributes significantly to the growing debate and concern about the rise of corporate security and the difficulties in achieving its effective regulation.

Professor Nigel D. WHITE
University of Nottingham, UK

PREFACE

This book is the result of four years of research conducted at the University of Lucerne and the University of Nottingham. The eighteen months spent at the University of Nottingham were made possible through a fellowship for prospective researchers funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation and the kind support of Professor Nigel White. It provides an in depth analysis of international law applicable to PMSCs with a focus on the contribution of the Montreux Document and the International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers. The topic is part of a wider debate under contemporary international law on business and human rights, shining a light on the content of the state duty to protect and the corporate responsibility to respect in the context of PMSCs. This was only possible through the support of many people. Many thanks to my family, Helga, Jürg and Jessica for always supporting me and to Rory, for his musical distraction, love, support and encouragement. Thank you, Thorsten, Clotilde and Isabel – you know for what. I would also like to thank Luzia and Nico for their advice regarding my proposal for Nottingham and great times on their lovely balcony. Thank you Kelly, Ana and the law PhD students at the University of Nottingham for being so welcoming and inspiring. Many thanks to Flavia for her moral support throughout this process. I would like to thank Professor Nigel White and Professor Sebastian Heselhaus for their professional advice and support. Finally, I would like to thank my team from the Health and Education Project of Usthi Foundation Switzerland in Odisha for giving me perspective and inspiration.

Keonjhar (Odisha), September 2013

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CONTENTS

<i>Foreword</i>	vii
<i>Preface</i>	xi
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xxi
<i>Table of Cases</i>	xxiii
<i>Table of Treaties, Legislation and International Instruments</i>	xxvii
<i>Table of Reports and Other Documents</i>	xxxv
Introduction	1
I. Significance of the Project.....	1
1. The Case for Stronger PMSC Regulation.....	1
2. Legal Concerns with the Use of PMSCs.....	3
3. Relevance of Non-Binding Norms for PMSC Regulation.....	5
A. A Political Climate in Favour of Self-Regulation.....	5
B. Non-Binding PMSC Norms.....	8
II. Structure.....	11
Chapter 1. Conceptual Framework	13
I. Scope: Foreign PMSCs Active in a Territorial State in the Context of Stability Operations.....	13
1. Foreign PMSCs Active in a Territorial State.....	13
2. Stability Operations: Pre-, During- and Post- Conflict Environments.....	14
3. International Legal Framework Applicable to the Use of PMSCs....	16
II. Method.....	16
III. Definition of Key Concepts.....	20
1. Regulation and Self-Regulation.....	20
2. Standard Setting and Standards.....	23
3. PMSCs as Corporate Non-State Actors.....	24
4. Non-Binding Norms: Soft Law and Codes of Conduct.....	26
A. Soft Law.....	26
a) The Concept of Soft Law.....	26
b) Reasons for Choosing Soft Law over Hard Law.....	28
c) Functions of Soft Law.....	29
B. Codes of Conduct.....	31

a)	Corporate Social Responsibility and the Corporate Responsibility to Respect.....	31
b)	The Concept of Codes of Conduct	33
c)	Functions of Codes of Conduct.....	34
IV.	Concluding Remarks	36
Chapter 2. Private Military and Security Companies		37
I.	The Nature of PMSCs.....	37
1.	Services Provided by PMSCs.....	37
2.	Why is there a Market for PMSCs?	39
3.	PMSCs and Peace Operations.....	41
II.	Defining Elements of PMSCs.....	47
1.	The Different Approaches for a PMSC Terminology	47
A.	The Active / Passive, Offensive / Defensive and Combat / Non-Combat Divide	47
B.	The Security / Military Distinction of PMSC Services	50
C.	The ‘Tip of the Spear’ Typology and the Two-Dimensional Approach	52
a)	The ‘Tip of the Spear’ Typology.....	52
b)	The Two-Dimensional Approach	54
2.	Evaluating the Social-, Political Sciences Taxonomy	56
III.	Defining PMSCs in International Law	57
1.	International Law on Mercenaries and PMSCs	58
A.	Defining Mercenaries	59
B.	The Proximity between PMSCs and Mercenaries.....	61
C.	International Legal Instruments Addressing Mercenaries.....	62
a)	Legal Definition of a Mercenary under International Law ...	63
b)	Consequences.....	65
2.	International Law on PMSCs.....	67
A.	The Montreux Document	67
B.	The Draft Convention on the Use of PMSCs	68
C.	International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers.....	71
IV.	Concluding Remarks on PMSC Definition and Terminology	72
Chapter 3. International Law Applicable to the Use of PMSCs.....		75
I.	Accountability of States for Unlawful PMSC Conduct.....	75
1.	State Obligations under Human Rights Law (HRL) and International Humanitarian Law (IHL).....	75
A.	HRL	75

a) International Jurisprudence on Extraterritorial Application of Human Rights	77
B. IHL.....	80
2. Attribution of Unlawful PMSC Conduct to the State: ILC Articles on State Responsibility	82
A. Attribution of Conduct of Organs of the State.....	83
a) Article 4	83
b) The PMSC as a <i>De Facto</i> Agent of the State	84
B. Conduct of Persons or Entities Exercising Elements of Governmental Authority (Article 5).....	85
C. Conduct Instructed, Directed or Controlled by a State (Article 8)	88
3. State Accountability Based on a State's Failure to Show Due Diligence	92
A. Due Diligence in International Law	92
B. Due Diligence of Territorial- Contracting and Home States	94
a) Due Diligence Obligations of the Territorial State.....	94
b) Due Diligence Obligations of the Home State.....	94
aa) Due Diligence Based on Extraterritorial Jurisdiction ...	94
bb) Due Diligence Based on the Place of Incorporation of the PMSC.....	95
c) Due Diligence Obligations of the Contracting State	96
aa) Due Diligence Based on Extraterritorial Jurisdiction ...	96
bb) Due Diligence Based on a Contractual Relationship	96
II. Accountability of International Organisations for Unlawful PMSC Conduct	97
1. Obligations of International Organisations Contracting PMSCs under International Law.....	97
2. Attribution of Unlawful PMSC Conduct to the UN.....	99
A. UN Practice of Institutional Responsibility: PMSCs Acting under UN 'Authority, Command and Control'	100
a) Establishing 'Authority, Command and Control': Effective Control or Overall Control?	102
B. The Approach Taken by the ILC Draft Articles on the Responsibility of International Organisations.....	103
a) Article 7 ILC Draft Articles: Attribution of PMSC Conduct as Part of a Subsidiary Organ of the UN.....	104
b) Article 6 ILC Draft Articles: Attribution of PMSC Conduct as Agents of the UN.....	104
c) Applicability of the 'Effective Control' Test and Attribution of Responsibility to International Organisations.....	105
III. Individual Accountability for Unlawful PMSC Conduct.....	106
1. The Status of PMSC Employees under IHL.....	106

A.	Are PMSC Employees Civilians or Combatants under IHL?	106
a)	PMSC Employees as Members of the Armed Forces?	106
b)	PMSC Employees as Combatants – Part of a Militia or Volunteer Force Belonging to a Party to the Conflict?	107
c)	PMSC Employees as Civilians Accompanying the Armed Forces?	109
B.	Consequences of the Civilian Status of PMSCs under IHL	110
C.	PMSC Employees in Non-International Armed Conflicts	112
2.	Individual Criminal Accountability of PMSC Employees	113
IV.	Accountability of the Corporation for Unlawful PMSC Conduct?	116
1.	Direct Obligations under HRL and IHL for Corporations?	116
2.	Domestic Regulatory Approaches on PMSCs.	116
3.	Corporate Social Responsibility	117
V.	Conclusion: Limitations, Gaps and Grey Zones of International Law on PMSCs	118
 Chapter 4. The Montreux Document.		123
I.	The Structural Characteristics of the Document	123
1.	The Evolution, Structure and Negotiation of the Document	123
2.	The UN Draft Convention on PMSCs as a Parallel Process of PMSC Regulation	129
II.	Premises, Obligations and Recommendations Applicable to States	130
1.	Premises Regarding Outsourcing of State Functions and the Position of States Regarding PMSC Use on Foreign Territory	130
A.	Non-Transferable Responsibilities.	130
B.	Territorial, Contracting, and Home State	132
2.	International State Obligations, State Responsibility and Due Diligence	134
A.	Obligation to Ensure Respect for IHL	134
B.	Obligation to Protect Human Rights	135
C.	State Responsibility for Unlawful PMSC Conduct	135
D.	State Accountability Based on Due Diligence	138
3.	Good Practices to Ensure Compliance with State Obligations	139
A.	Compliance with IHL and HRL.	139
a)	Licensing and Authorisation Systems	139
b)	Transparency and Supervision	142
c)	Evaluation of Past Conduct	142
d)	Subcontracting	143
e)	Use of Force, Use and Possession of Firearms	144
f)	Recommendations Similar for all States	145
g)	Recommendations to Ensure Human Rights Compliance	146

B.	Recommendations to Monitor Compliance and Ensure Accountability.....	147
a)	Individual Criminal Accountability	147
b)	Non-Criminal Accountability	148
4.	Monitoring Implementation of the Montreux Document’s Recommendations?	149
III.	Institutional Accountability.....	150
IV.	Individual Status, Rights and Duties of PMSC Employees	151
1.	Status under IHL.....	151
2.	Right to Self-Defence.....	152
3.	Superior Criminal Responsibility	153
4.	PMSCs and Mercenaries.....	153
V.	Corporate Responsibility	154
VI.	Conclusion: Does the Montreux Document Address Gaps and Grey Zones in International Law as Applicable to the Use of PMSCs?.....	156

Chapter 5. The International Code of Conduct for Private Security

	Service Providers	161
I.	The Structural Characteristics of the Code	161
1.	The Evolution of the Code	161
2.	Scope: Private Security Companies Performing Security Services in Complex Environments.....	162
3.	International Soft Law and CSR Foundations of the Code	164
II.	The Material Commitments of the Code	167
1.	General Commitments Implementing a Corporate Human Rights Policy	167
A.	Acting in Accordance with the Law	167
B.	Implementing a Corporate Policy Commitment through Contracts	168
C.	Preventing or Mitigating Adverse Human Rights Impact of Others	169
2.	The Code’s Human Rights Principles Reflecting Areas of Potential Adverse PMSC Impact	169
A.	The Human Rights Catalogue	169
a)	General Conduct	169
b)	Rules for the Use of Force and Use of Firearms	170
c)	Detention and Apprehending Persons.....	174
d)	Prohibition of Torture or Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment	176
e)	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse or Gender-Based Violence and Human Trafficking.....	177

f)	Prohibition of Slavery and Forced Labour and Prohibition of the worst Forms of Child Labour	178
g)	Discrimination.....	178
h)	Identification and Registration of Vehicles and Material.	178
i)	Human Rights Guarantees Missing in the Code	179
B.	Evaluation	179
3.	Specific Commitments Regarding Management and Governance Providing a Starting Point for a Human Rights Due Diligence Process.....	181
A.	The Codes Compilation of Management and Governance Commitments.....	181
a)	Incorporation of the Code into Company Policies.....	181
b)	Selection and Vetting of Personnel.....	182
c)	Company Policies and Personnel Contracts	183
d)	Training of Personnel and Weapons Training	184
e)	Management of Weapons and Management of Materiel of War.....	185
f)	Incident Reporting	185
g)	Safe and Healthy Working Environment	185
h)	Company Internal Grievance Procedures	186
i)	Meeting Liabilities.....	187
B.	Evaluation	187
4.	Review of the Code.....	188
III.	Conclusion: Does the International Code of Conduct Implement the Requirements of the Responsibility to Respect?.....	189

**Chapter 6. The ICoC Oversight Mechanism – Benefits and Deficiencies
in Light of Existing CSR Tools** 191

I.	The Oversight Mechanism Established by the Articles of Association..	192
1.	Establishment of the Private Security Service Providers’ Association.....	192
2.	Legal Structure, Organs and Membership.....	192
3.	From Signatory Company to Member Company.....	195
A.	Certification.....	196
B.	Performance Assessment.....	196
a)	Reporting.....	197
b)	Monitoring	198
c)	Specific Compliance Review.....	199
d)	Outcome of Performance Assessment.....	200
e)	Sanctions	201
C.	Complaints Process.....	201
4.	Standardisation.....	203

II.	Comparative Analysis: Benefits and Deficiencies of IGOM and Existing Corporate Tools for PMSC Oversight	205
1.	The UN ‘Protect, Respect and Remedy Framework’	205
2.	The Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights	208
3.	Other CSR Frameworks Relevant to the Use of PMSCs.	209
A.	The OECD Guidelines for Multinational Corporations	209
B.	The Global Compact	212
4.	Regional Codes and Industry Self-Regulation Applicable to PMSCs	214
A.	Regional Codes	215
a)	The Sarajevo Code of Conduct for Private Security Companies	215
b)	CoESS Code of Conduct and Ethics	216
B.	Industry Association Codes	217
a)	BAPSC Charter, PSCAI Code of Conduct, PASA Code of Principles and Code of Conduct	217
b)	ISOA Code of Conduct and Enforcement Mechanism	219
III.	Evaluation	222
IV.	Conclusion	225

Chapter 7. The Normative Contribution of the Montreux Document and the ICoC to the International Legal Framework on PMSCs... 229

I.	The Conceptual Approach to Assess the Contribution of Non-Binding Norms in International Law	229
1.	Contribution	229
2.	The Process of Internalisation as a Pre-Stage of <i>Opinio Juris</i>	231
A.	Internalisation According to Hart	231
B.	Applied to the Montreux Document and the ICoC	232
a)	The Montreux Document	232
b)	The ICoC	234
II.	The Contribution of the Montreux Document	239
1.	The Potential of the Montreux Document to Fill Gaps and Grey Zones	239
2.	The Potential Contribution of the UN Draft Convention	241
3.	The ‘Normative’ Value of the Montreux Document	243
A.	Participants	243
B.	State Practice	245
a)	Explicit State Practice Implementing the Montreux Document	245
b)	Non-Explicit State Practice Implementing the Montreux ...	250
C.	Evaluation	254

a)	The Montreux Document's Potential to Develop into Customary International Law	254
b)	The 'Normative' Value of the Montreux Document below the Threshold of Customary International Law	255
III.	The Contribution of the International Code of Conduct for Security Service Providers	257
1.	The Potential of the ICoC to Fill Gaps and Grey Zones	257
2.	The 'Normative' Value of the ICoC	260
A.	State Support for the ICoC: the Interplay between the Montreux Document and the ICoC	260
B.	The Potential Development of a 'Corporate Custom' Based on the ICoC	262
a)	Participants	262
b)	Corporate Practice	263
c)	Evaluation: Evolution of a Common, Accepted Set of Core Principles and Standards?	266
IV.	Conclusion and Outlook	266
	Conclusion	271
	<i>Bibliography</i>	279
	<i>Index</i>	291

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACHR	American Court of Human Rights
AP I	Additional Protocol I
AP II	Additional Protocol II
art/arts	Article/s
BAPSC	British Association for Private Security Companies
ECHR	European Court of Human Rights
edn	Edition
ed/eds	Editor/s
CoESS	Confederation of European Security Services
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICoC	International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers
ILC	International Law Commission
IO	International Organisation
ISOA	International Stability Operations Association
LNTS	League of Nations Treaty Series
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
para/paras	Paragraph/s
PASA	Pan African Security Association
PISCAI	Private Security Company Association Iraq
PMSCs	Private Military and Security Companies
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNCHR	United Nations Commission on Human Rights
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSRSG	UN Special Representative to the Secretary-General
UNTS	United Nations Treaty Series

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