

# 1st DISEC

*Novice GA*



**TOPIC:** Private Military Companies

**CHAIRS:** Jack Swenson, Veronica Escopete

LAIMUN XXIX

*December 2-3*

# ☛ LAIMUN XXIX ☛

**Letter from the Secretariat**

3

**Introduction to the USG**

4

**Introduction to the Dais**

5

**Committee Description**

8

**Topic: Private Military Companies**

9

**LAIMUN XXIX**

*December 2-3*

## Letter from the Secretaries-General

Dear Delegates,

On behalf of our entire staff, it is our pleasure to welcome you to Session XXIX of the Los Angeles Invitational Model United Nations (LAIMUN) conference. LAIMUN XXIX will take place on Saturday, December 2 and Sunday, December 3 of 2023 at the Mira Costa High School (MCHS) campus.

Our staff, composed of over 120 MCHS students, has been working tirelessly to make your debate experience the best it can be. You will find your dais members to be knowledgeable about the issues being debated and MUN procedure. We pride ourselves in hosting a conference that is educational and engaging, and we hope you take advantage of that as you prepare and debate.

At LAIMUN, we value thorough research and preparation. We ask that delegates write position papers following [these directions](#). The deadline to submit position papers to be considered for Committee and Research Awards is Friday, November 24 at 11:59 PM PT. The deadline to submit to be considered for Committee Awards is Thursday, November 30 at 11:59 PM PT.

We also encourage all delegates to read the [LAIMUN Rules of Procedure](#) for conference-specific information and as a reminder of points and motions that can be made during committee.

Feel free to reach out to our staff with any questions or concerns you may have. Delegates can find their chairs' contact information next to their committee profile and the Secretariat's email addresses on the staff page. Any member of the LAIMUN staff will be happy to assist you.

We look forward to seeing you in December!

Sincerely,

Akash Mishra and Lily Stern  
Secretaries-General, LAIMUN XXIX  
[secretarygeneral@mchsmun.org](mailto:secretarygeneral@mchsmun.org)



## Introduction to the USG

Welcome, Delegates, to LAIMUN XXIX!

My name is Naomi Kim, and I am so excited to conclude my fourth and final year at Mira Costa Model UN by being the Under-Secretaries General of the General Assembly!

Every year, we select the GA committee topics to reflect the diversity of issues present in our rapidly modernizing world, and this year is no exception. I am excited to hear the novel, creative, and detailed solutions each of you have to address these complex problems, and I hope that all of you can leave LAIMUN not just having given an awesome speech and spectacular formal caucus sessions, but with an enriched and diversified outlook.

But in order to have another amazing LAIMUN, I want to remind you all of our strict no pre-written resolutions policy. Under no circumstances is pre-written resolutions acceptable; additionally, delegates are only allowed to work on resolutions during committee sessions, not during breaks. Your chairs will outline this policy in greater detail before the start of debate, and we urge you all to comply.

Our staff have worked incredibly hard to create an informed, professional environment, and we hope that you enjoy it. Come equipped with knowledge, strong solutions, and your sleek WBA, but do not forget—MUN is fun!

If you have any additional questions or concerns, feel free to contact me at the following address: [GA@mchsmun.org](mailto:GA@mchsmun.org). If not, I look forward to seeing you all in December!

Best Regards,

Lily Stern and Akash Mishra  
Secretaries-General

Naomi Kim  
Under-Secretary General

## Introduction to the Dias

Dear Delegates,

My name is Jack Swenson and I am a junior at Mira Costa High School. I am currently involved in a variety of activities on campus outside the Model UN program, playing for our Varsity Water Polo and Swim Teams. I am the Founder and President of the Entrepreneur Insights Club, which hosts local business leaders and entrepreneurs on the first Tuesday of every month, and is something I am very passionate about. Because of this interest I also participate in the Wharton Global Youth Program, which is an international investment competition, where I appreciate learning about different investment strategies with a group of friends two times a week at lunch. I also am a part of a few other clubs on campus, such as the Ski and Snowboard Club, where I serve as Treasurer. As a part of this role, I am working to raise money for a group ski trip to Mammoth this winter, which is an event I am really looking forward to. I am also involved in the South Bay Food Initiative Club, where myself and others, drive donated food to a storage facility in Torrance each month.

I am so fortunate to be a part of the MUN program at Mira Costa and have definitely enjoyed my time here thus far. Over the course of the three years that I have been a part of the class, I have completely changed the way I see the world and have become a far more confident version of myself through overcoming public speaking challenges. Last year I even got the opportunity to travel to Chicago for a conference and had an awesome experience with my friends in the Windy City for a week. I am very excited to hear what you all have to say in this debate specifically, because I believe this topic is unique, important, and often overlooked for

# ☪ LAIMUN XXIX ☪

other topics surrounding conflict. My favorite part about committee is when someone is able to take charge in their unmod group whilst facilitating meaningful discussions to create a well thought out resolution. MUN provides a rare opportunity to hear a wide range of perspectives, so I am looking forward to hearing all of yours.

Sincerely,

Jack Swenson

# ΦΨ LAIMUN XXIX ΦΨ

Hello Delegates!

My name is Veronica Escopete and I will be one of your co-chairs for 1st DISEC Novice this year! I am a current junior and have been in the MUN program since freshman year, participating in many local conferences. Additionally, I debated in this LAIMUN committee as a freshman, legalled in it as a sophomore, and this year, I am finally chairing this committee—it is nice to see this come full circle. I am super excited to see all of you in committee!

Outside of MUN, I am part of Costa's Biotechnology program, the Costa Swim Team, a national choir, and president of the Girls Advancing Leadership in STEM (GALS) Club. Some of my hobbies include singing, swimming, crocheting, writing poetry, doing art, listening to Christmas music, and watching Legally Blonde. A fun fact about me is that I love cheese despite the fact that I am lactose intolerant. My favorite type of cheese is manchego. Another fun fact is that I have been singing since I was five and have participated in a Grammy Award winning performance and am working on a holiday album with the London Symphony Orchestra.

In 1st DISEC Novice, I would love to see a diverse range of solutions that regard many of the subtopics we mention in our synopsis. While it is crucial for delegates to take the topic seriously and work hard, let's still keep debate fun and enjoyable! I would love to see some interesting and light-hearted hooks. If you have any questions don't hesitate to email [disecc.nov.laimun.xxix@gmail.com](mailto:disecc.nov.laimun.xxix@gmail.com). Let's make this the best LAIMUN committee this year.

Looking forward to joining you all in debate,

Veronica Escopete

## Committee Description

DISEC or the Disarmament and International Security Committee is one of six committees under the General Assembly of the United Nations. It is tasked with the maintenance of international security, dealing with issues of disarmament and global threats to peace.

Following the creation of the United Nations (and DISEC) after the conclusion of the first world war, DISEC set about to return the world to a state of peace, with its first resolution being an attempt to moderate and regulate the proliferation of nuclear weapons. This goal of maintaining global stability and peace is echoed throughout the history of DISEC. All member states of the United Nations having an equal voice, DISEC has proven to be one of, if not the most influential of all the United Nations bodies (in spite of the fact that it's mandate limits its action to suggestions). DISEC committee sessions are structured in three stages: general debate, thematic discussions, and closing with actions on drafts. This proceeding allows for DISEC to best solve challenges to international security, and work efficiently in creating regulations for various armaments. DISEC works closely with other UN bodies such as the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Geneva-based Conference on disarmament, which has helped achieve lower levels of international armaments. The dais hopes that delegates take the role of DISEC into account when preparing for debate at LAIMUN XXIX.



## Topic: Private Military Companies

### I. Background

Private military companies (PMCs) first appeared during World War II and have since experienced a growth in demand. Today, there are more than 150 private military companies that offer services in over 50 countries.<sup>1</sup> Private military companies are hired military personnel that offer clients war and conflict related services in combat operations, planning, or training. These aerial, maritime, and ground services can be hired by clients including governments, companies, and individuals. The recent trends in the use of PMCs have been for military support, border security, combat surrogates, and international commercial support.<sup>2</sup> Lately, with the high cost of war, governments have been utilizing PMCs to cut down on war costs, leading to excessive demands for these companies.

Although making their debut in World War II, their existence became publicly known after being used by western governments in Iraq and Afghanistan after 9/11.<sup>3</sup> PMCs were involved in numerous historical events ranging from the dissolution of Yugoslavia to the Iraq war. In the Iraq War alone, private military contractors generated a profit of \$138 billion, a

---

<sup>1</sup> D C A F. (n.d.). Ethz.Ch. Retrieved June 16, 2023, from [https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/17438/background\\_09\\_private-military-companies.pdf](https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/17438/background_09_private-military-companies.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Swed, O. (n.d.). The global expansion of PMSCs: Trends, opportunities, and risks. Ohchr.org. Retrieved June 16, 2023, from <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Mercenaries/WG/ImmigrationAndBorder/swed-burland-submission.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Debusmann, By Bernd, Jr. "Private Military Firms See Demand in Ukraine War." *BBC News*, 9 Mar. 2022, [www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-60669763](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-60669763).

concerningly large amount given that—while wages depend on the circumstances of the task—PMC workers are typically paid very little.<sup>4</sup>

Private military companies have experienced considerably high demand, especially for countries with weak military forces or low budgets towards warfare, as they are a cheaper and more effective method for these countries, giving them an edge in combat. However, many developed countries also use private military companies, such as the United States, United Kingdom, Chile, Canada, and Russia; in fact, the Pentagon budgeted \$320 billion for contractors in 2017. This then begs the question: if both poorer countries and superpowers can access PMCs, what will wars and combat between nations look like in the future? Countries may be able to buy more assistance from PMCs, giving them access to more fighters, better strategies, and greater health of soldiers due to a possible sufficiency of aid that private military companies could provide. As this leads to the possibility of longer wars with more fatalities, the UN must ensure the safety of innocent people and prevent longer, bloodier conflicts.

Private military companies and mercenaries are two separate entities. While PMCs recruit soldiers into their organization, mercenaries are individual soldiers who may be hired by any client. PMCs have access to heavy militia such as planes and tanks, making them more powerful and dangerous than Mercenaries alone, who carry light arms and are often recruited under PMCs. Moreover, when private soldiers work for PMCs, they are bound by authorities of a country and its law, rather than the individual mercenary who does not obtain these ties and fights solely for

---

<sup>4</sup> The Virginia Journal of International Affairs. “PRIVATE MILITARY COMPANIES: SHINING a LIGHT ON OUR SHADOW MILITARY — VA Journal of Intl Affairs.” *VA Journal of Intl Affairs*, Aug. 2020, [vajournalia.org/opeds-1/2020/8/15/private-military-companies-shining-a-light-on-our-shadow-military#:~:text=The%20industry%20of%20private%20military,foreign%20policy%20and%20moral%20ideals](http://vajournalia.org/opeds-1/2020/8/15/private-military-companies-shining-a-light-on-our-shadow-military#:~:text=The%20industry%20of%20private%20military,foreign%20policy%20and%20moral%20ideals).

pay. Due to the fact that private military companies are bound by the law of a state, the legality of their actions becomes controversial when they operate outside of the country they are allowed to work in as these PMCs are not bound to the laws of the country they have been deployed in, and neither are they necessarily bound to those of the country they came from, as jurisdiction might not apply.<sup>5</sup> This leads to a lack of accountability and a possible increase in recklessness for they do not possess consequences for any action, unlike the regular soldier who may be court-martialed if they violate applicable military laws.

The largest growth in the number of private military companies has occurred in the last two decades. In 2003, the number of international PMCs had almost doubled since 2001, from 38 to 79 new companies. The highest influx of PMCs occurred between 2011 and 2013 during the Iraq War. The majority of these PMCs were concentrated in the United States and the United Kingdom, accounting for over 55% of all of the private military companies in the world. The number of PMCs soared in 2011, when 120 new PMCs were created, and by 2012, about 1,200 total PMCs existed across the globe.<sup>6</sup> During this time, the amount of private military contractors used by the United States exceeded or was equal to the number of American soldiers sent out. In the 20th and 21st centuries, 81 countries, primarily Australia, New Zealand, Russia, and those located in North America and Europe, hosted one or more PMC headquarters. However, the

---

<sup>5</sup> Tekingunduz, Alican. "Are Private Military Contractors Any Different From Mercenaries?" *Are Private Military Contractors Any Different From Mercenaries?*, 16 Oct. 2018, [www.trtworld.com/americas/are-private-military-contractors-any-different-from-mercenaries-20680](http://www.trtworld.com/americas/are-private-military-contractors-any-different-from-mercenaries-20680).

<sup>6</sup> Swed, O. (n.d.). The global expansion of PMSCs: Trends, opportunities, and risks. Ohchr.org. Retrieved June 16, 2023, from <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Mercenaries/WG/ImmigrationAndBorder/swed-burland-submission.pdf>

leading states in the number of PMCs are the United States, China, the United Kingdom, and South Africa, making up 70% of the industry combined. As we can see, the trend regarding the creation and use of PMCs is exponentially growing, for better or for worse.

Although private military companies have many enticing qualities to them, such as their affordability and international influence they provide nations across the globe, one can observe how the use of them can be dangerous for the future of our species and our planet. The International Committee of the Red Cross as well as the United Nations have both condemned the use of PMCs in warfare, addressing concerns over the compliance of private military companies with international humanitarian law due to the lack of accountability measures.<sup>7</sup> It is for the countries of today to determine whether or not they shall continue to use private military companies and if they allow for restricting measures to be put into place.

## II. United Nations Involvement

Although the United Nations was quick to acknowledge the emergence of PMCs and their impact on World War II, steps to mitigate the harmful effects of these groups were not taken until the early twenty-first century. The first time PMCs were addressed in the UN was during 2005 with the establishment of the UN Working Group on the Use of Mercenaries through the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).<sup>8</sup> The working group aims to reduce human rights violations that often come as a result of mercenary use. Due to the fact that mercenaries are hired specifically for the purpose of causing violence, their power

---

<sup>7</sup> “Can’t Do With, Can’t Do Without: The Use of Private Military.” *Political Science*, 25 July 2022, [www.colorado.edu/polisci/2020/03/02/cant-do-cant-do-without-use-private-military-contractors-us-war-efforts](http://www.colorado.edu/polisci/2020/03/02/cant-do-cant-do-without-use-private-military-contractors-us-war-efforts).

<sup>8</sup> OHCHR. “Working Group on the Use of Mercenaries.” *OHCHR*, [www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/wg-mercenaries](http://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/wg-mercenaries).

is regularly abused against individuals in the area of conflict. Types of abuse range from human trafficking to targeting civilian institutions during warfare, which is considered a major war crime. The UN Working Group on the Use of Mercenaries has been taking strides to raise awareness and international discussion of the topic, but plans to continue increasing cognizance of the issue.

There have also been legislation developments to promote civilian safety in the presence of PMCs such as the Montreux Document which was finalized in 2008 with 17 states supporters worldwide. The Document has slowly grown in influence and today has the support of 58 countries and three international organizations.<sup>9</sup> Fundamentally, it serves as a global reminder that humanitarian laws and rights must be observed and preserved in the midst of PMC activity. By agreeing to the Montreux Document, a state essentially agrees to acknowledge these principles and to promote them respectively. There has yet to be executive force or legal bondage to these agreed terms, but the Document still acts as a groundwork for more substantial action to be taken. Therefore, its ideas have inspired other groups to promote and protect these values in different ways. Most notably, an association was created that outlined basic provisions for the use of PMCs with respect to human rights regulations, called the International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers (ICoCA). Founded in Switzerland in 2010, the organization works to uphold these principles by working with governments as a company.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> *About - Montreux Document Forum.*

[www.montreuxdocument.org/about/#:~:text=The%20Montreux%20Document%20is%20Supported%20by%2058%20States%20and%203%20International%20Organisations.](http://www.montreuxdocument.org/about/#:~:text=The%20Montreux%20Document%20is%20Supported%20by%2058%20States%20and%203%20International%20Organisations.)

<sup>10</sup> ICoCA - International Code of Conduct Association. "The Code - ICoCA - International Code of Conduct Association." *ICoCA - International Code of Conduct Association*, 29 July 2022, [icoca.ch/the-code](http://icoca.ch/the-code).

Though it does not yet have any legal binding force, it has been more successful on smaller scales than the Montreux Document due to its ability to work much more closely with its state patrons.

### III. Topics to Consider

#### A. Creating Systems Accountability and Political Authority

As of now, PMCs are largely able to operate freely between borders and with very limited regard to political sovereignty. This is primarily due to a lack of robust legal accountability for these groups, allowing PMCs to dispute a state's right to control the force within its territory. In addition, privately contracted groups are often able to slip past the jurisdiction of laws and regulations imposed on military forces by respective governments, simply because they are not officially affiliated with said governments. For example, in the United States, the government is bound to Freedom of Information Act which requires a measure of disclosure of unreleased federal documents to public authorities by request.<sup>11</sup> However, PMCs are not subject to this regulation. This illustrates how the lack of legal accountability that is imposed on these privatized organizations is becoming an increasingly relevant issue. Therefore, to quell the growth of this problem, it is essential that more effective international legislation and frameworks be introduced. Without a functional legal basis to control PMCs, the question of sovereignty will continue to be challenged, creating a system of decreased accountability for

---

<sup>11</sup> *Accountability of Private Military Contractors – the Justice Journal*. 13 Jan. 2021, gwjusticejournal.com/2021/01/13/accountability-of-private-military-contractors.

governments. Moreover, if this movement remains unregulated, militaries could potentially evade the legal liabilities of traditional warfare with larger-scale use of PMCs.

## B. Civilian Safety and Human Rights Violations

Another primary concern when considering the impacts of PMCs is their effect on their surroundings. Since they are less connected to governmental institutions (and therefore inherently more difficult to trace than traditional militaries), the reduction of collateral damage left behind from conflict is not always prioritized. Furthermore, due to a lack of standardized contracts between PMCs and state employers, proper compensation for those affected by PMC violence is not regularly given.<sup>12</sup> As a result, these military organizations and their employers are not required to take responsibility for the destruction of buildings or the accidental killing of civilians. Therefore, as the use of PMCs increases, it becomes even more crucial to increase awareness and action towards creating systems that protect citizens and their surrounding communities against violence. Additionally, while PMCs are active in target areas, human rights abuses have become extremely common due to a lack of supervision and regulation, regularly granting PMCs complete impunity for their actions.<sup>13</sup> The UN Working Group on the Use of Mercenaries has even reported PMCs using maritime vessels for human trafficking purposes.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> Dickinson, L. A. (n.d.). Chapter 12 -Contract as a tool for regulating private military companies. Princeton.edu. Retrieved June 16, 2023, from

[https://lapa.princeton.edu/conferences/military07/restricted/dickinson2\\_military07.pdf](https://lapa.princeton.edu/conferences/military07/restricted/dickinson2_military07.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Daza, Felip, and Nora Miralles. "The Disturbing Rise of the Corporate Mercenaries." *openDemocracy*, 6 Aug. 2021, [www.opendemocracy.net/en/disturbing-rise-corporate-mercenaries/](http://www.opendemocracy.net/en/disturbing-rise-corporate-mercenaries/).

<sup>14</sup> OHCHR. "Violations by Mercenaries and Private Military and Security Companies Highlight Urgent Need for Maritime Security Oversight: UN Experts." *OHCHR*, [www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/11/violations-mercenaries-and-private-military-and-security-companies-highlight](http://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/11/violations-mercenaries-and-private-military-and-security-companies-highlight).

However, the fact that this UN Working Group is unable to take any action against abusers, highlights the lack of development for protective measures in this field. It is also important to consider that human trafficking is not the only facet of human rights abuses that civilians face from PMCs. Excessive use of force and discriminatory attacks against minorities have also been prevalent issues in target zones, and continue to go largely unchecked and unpunished.<sup>15</sup>

### C. Illicit Small Arms Trade

Serving both as buyers and sellers, PMCs play an integral role in the illicit small arms trade around the world. Not all PMCs engage in direct combat, and some may play different roles in the illicit small arms trade. As suppliers, PMCs can provide large amounts of weaponry to their clients for their use and sometimes will even act as armed transport personnel.<sup>16</sup> PMCs will also purchase weaponry, whether that be to sell or to use in combat themselves. Trade activity has become increasingly concerning in areas such as Africa, the Americas, and Asia where organized crime has notably increased since 2004 due to the use of illegally-purchased weapons, many of these being utilized by PMCs.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, it is of utmost importance to limit the influence of PMCs in the illicit small arms trade. By decreasing their involvement, crime and conflict around the world would be decreased significantly as well.

### D. Cyber Espionage

---

<sup>15</sup> Zadzorova, Nikola. "Private Military Companies: An Efficient Way of Meeting the Demand for Security?" *E-International Relations*, Sept. 2015, [www.e-ir.info/2015/09/20/private-military-companies-an-efficient-way-of-meeting-the-demand-for-security](http://www.e-ir.info/2015/09/20/private-military-companies-an-efficient-way-of-meeting-the-demand-for-security).

<sup>16</sup> GSDRC. "Private Military Companies and the Proliferation of Small Arms: Regulating the Actors - GSDRC." *GSDRC - Governance, Social Development, Conflict and Humanitarian Knowledge Services*, 4 Sept. 2015, [gsdrc.org/document-library/private-military-companies-and-the-proliferation-of-small-arms-regulating-the-actors](http://gsdrc.org/document-library/private-military-companies-and-the-proliferation-of-small-arms-regulating-the-actors).

<sup>17</sup> Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. "Arms Trafficking and Organized Crime | GI-TOC." *Global Initiative*, 23 Aug. 2022, [globalinitiative.net/analysis/arms-trafficking-and-organized-crime](https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/arms-trafficking-and-organized-crime).



There has been a recent rise in cyber-mercenaries, with cyber espionage becoming a key service offered by PMCs. In addition to subcontracting armies of hackers, PMCs are also producing surveillance technologies that are being utilized by interested parties, including government intelligence agencies. One example of this can be observed in the United Arab Emirates' (UAE) Raven project of 2019 where the UAE set up an intelligent unit of cyber-mercenaries, including some who were previously hired by the United States.<sup>18</sup> This project, as well as similar projects by other governments, have allowed PMCs to spend years and national resources monitoring those who oppose government policy, such as journalists and activists. This has become a major problem, with PMCs spying on or even killing numerous human rights defenders.

#### E. Involvement of Oil Companies

A highly competitive environment, the oil fields of the Middle East have been a large source of conflict and profit since the end of World War II. As a result of their high value, oil companies have begun utilizing PMCs and mercenaries to undermine ownership of other oil fields. For example, Syria has reportedly paid significantly more to mercenaries who seize terrorists with rights to mining and oil, only further incentivizing mercenaries to engage in oil-related violence.<sup>19</sup> Oil companies, like Evro Polis and Stroytransgaz, have also been seen hiring PMCs such as the Wagner Group to seize oil, gas, and mining fields from The Islamic

---

<sup>18</sup> Daza, Felip, and Nora Miralles. "The Disturbing Rise of the Corporate Mercenaries." *openDemocracy*, Aug. 2021, [www.opendemocracy.net/en/disturbing-rise-corporate-mercenaries](http://www.opendemocracy.net/en/disturbing-rise-corporate-mercenaries).

<sup>19</sup> "Mercenaries and War: Understanding Private Armies Today." *National Defense University Press*, 4 Dec. 2019, [ndupress.ndu.edu/Media/News/Article/2031922/mercenaries-and-war-understanding-private-armies-today/](http://ndupress.ndu.edu/Media/News/Article/2031922/mercenaries-and-war-understanding-private-armies-today/).

State (ISIS or ISIL) in Palmyra.<sup>20</sup> Seeing this success, many oil companies have continued to push other groups out of rightfully-owned territory to increase profits, causing the practice of mercenary use to become commonplace in the oil fields of the Middle East.

#### IV. Case Study

One of the most recent uses of private military companies is in the ongoing Russia-Ukrainian War. Not only is Russia using traditional militaries, but it is also employing the use of PMCs, like the Wagner Group. The Wagner group is Russia's largest PMC, and is now used heavily in the war with 50,000 men in Wagner uniforms fighting for Russia. The prolongation of the war has led to the creation of new Russian private military companies due to the Russian government's desire for more soldiers in Ukraine.

One of the main reasons and advantages for Putin to utilize PMCs during his war is that “their casualties aren't counted among the official war dead.”<sup>21</sup> This becomes concerning as the U.S. estimated that ten thousand Wagner Group soldiers have died in Ukraine since December 2022, and their deaths will not be counted towards the total deaths this war has and is producing. This strategy has the potential to maintain domestic support for the war as it has given the Russian government the ability to deny war crimes and hide Russian casualties, as they were technically not using their own militia for a lot of missions. The Russian government has denied the use of PMCs as they are illegal by Russian law, however they are still being used by the

---

<sup>20</sup> Kramer, Andrew E. “Russia Deploys a Potent Weapon in Syria: The Profit Motive.” *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 5 July 2017, [www.nytimes.com/2017/07/05/world/middleeast/russia-syria-oil-isis.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/05/world/middleeast/russia-syria-oil-isis.html).

<sup>21</sup> Bauer, Ryan. “Russian Private Military Companies Thriving Due to War With Ukraine.” *The Moscow Times*, 17 Sept. 2023, [www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/06/14/russian-private-military-companies-thriving-due-to-war-with-ukraine-a81490](http://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/06/14/russian-private-military-companies-thriving-due-to-war-with-ukraine-a81490).

government— as are mercenaries or silent professionals—as seen by the recent use of Wagner combatants conducting Soledar’s capture in Bakhmut to encircle Ukrainian forces. However, Russia claims that they are not true PMCs as they were generated by and affiliated with the Russian government.<sup>22</sup>

In response to Russia’s call for PMCs against Ukraine, the Ukrainian government is encouraging and calling upon international volunteers to help fight against Russia, forming the International Legion of Defence of Ukraine.<sup>23</sup> Hence, on both sides of the war, foreigners are joining to fight in this ongoing conflict. If these foreign soldiers commit a terrorist offense, however, they may acquire combatant status and could likely be prosecuted under their national legislation.

With the war becoming more and more lethal as thousands die at the hands of this violence, there does not seem to be an end in sight, indicating that the end of private military companies does not appear to be near. Because of this, salaries for military units have increased from \$2,000 per month to over \$4,000 since the start of Russia’s full-scale invasion.<sup>24</sup> The need for private military companies has been in such high demand that ads have become prolific, appearing in public areas like metro stations to websites.

---

<sup>22</sup> Kossov, Igor. “Army of Hired Guns: How Russia’s ‘PMCs’ Are Becoming the Main Invasion Force.” *The Kyiv Independent*, June 2023, [kyivindependent.com/army-of-hired-guns-how-russias-pmcs-are-becoming-the-main-invasion-force](https://kyivindependent.com/army-of-hired-guns-how-russias-pmcs-are-becoming-the-main-invasion-force).

<sup>23</sup> Politica, London. “Private Military Contractors on the Ukraine-Russia War: A Mapping of Their Involvement — London Politica.” *London Politica*, May 2023, [londonpolitica.com/intelligence-department-articles/politicalriskexplained-2](https://londonpolitica.com/intelligence-department-articles/politicalriskexplained-2).

<sup>24</sup> Kossov, Igor. “Army of Hired Guns: How Russia’s ‘PMCs’ Are Becoming the Main Invasion Force.” *The Kyiv Independent*, June 2023, [kyivindependent.com/army-of-hired-guns-how-russias-pmcs-are-becoming-the-main-invasion-force](https://kyivindependent.com/army-of-hired-guns-how-russias-pmcs-are-becoming-the-main-invasion-force).

Not only are veterans being hired, but the Russian Defense Ministry is reportedly trying to recruit inmates from prisons in at least 25 different regions of the country, offering money and release in exchange for front-line combat.<sup>25</sup> This operation began in September of 2022 where they were in search of those in prisons who were former members of Russian military, security services, and law enforcement. Soon, in January of 2023, civilian jails have since been included in this search. While prisoners who agreed and signed a petition to join in the war effort were promised \$1,800 to \$2,500 monthly, they are currently being paid \$500 a month. Along with the Defense Ministry, the Wagner group has also decided to employ prisoners, promising an erased criminal record after serving for six months. As of now, we are unsure if the PMC will live up to their promises, as they have since ended their recruitment in January. Needless to say, private military companies have become a big part of this ongoing war, and we will likely see an increasing surplus of them in the future of this war and of the world.

## V. Guiding Questions

1. How can the use of PMCs for the purpose of reducing the state employer's war crimes be addressed?
2. How can we ensure that wars don't last longer due to countries using PMCs?
3. How can we limit the use of PMCs where they are illegal?

---

<sup>25</sup> Times, Moscow. "Russian Army Found to Have Recruited Prisoners to Fight in Ukraine." *The Moscow Times*, 17 Sept. 2023, [www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/05/03/russian-army-found-to-have-recruited-prisoners-to-fight-in-ukraine-a81023](http://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/05/03/russian-army-found-to-have-recruited-prisoners-to-fight-in-ukraine-a81023).

4. How can we make sure that civilians stay safe and that their human rights and property is protected?
5. Has your country used PMCs in warfare? How does this affect your policy towards PMC usage?
6. How has the use of PMCs impacted economic industries at different scales?
7. What systems can be created to formalize the use of PMCs or restrict their use?

Works Cited

*About - Montreux Document Forum.*

[www.montreuxdocument.org/about/#:~:text=The%20Montreux%20Document%20is%20Supported%20by%2058%20States%20and%203%20International%20Organisations.](http://www.montreuxdocument.org/about/#:~:text=The%20Montreux%20Document%20is%20Supported%20by%2058%20States%20and%203%20International%20Organisations.)

*Accountability of Private Military Contractors – the Justice Journal.* 13 Jan. 2021,

[gwjusticejournal.com/2021/01/13/accountability-of-private-military-contractors.](http://gwjusticejournal.com/2021/01/13/accountability-of-private-military-contractors.)

Bauer, Ryan. “Russian Private Military Companies Thriving Due to War With Ukraine.” *The*

*Moscow Times*, 17 Sept. 2023,

[www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/06/14/russian-private-military-companies-thriving-due-to-war-with-ukraine-a81490.](http://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/06/14/russian-private-military-companies-thriving-due-to-war-with-ukraine-a81490.)

“Can’t Do With, Can’t Do Without: The Use of Private Military.” *Political Science*, 25 July 2022,

[www.colorado.edu/polisci/2020/03/02/cant-do-cant-do-without-use-private-military-contr actors-us-war-efforts.](http://www.colorado.edu/polisci/2020/03/02/cant-do-cant-do-without-use-private-military-contr actors-us-war-efforts.)

Daza, Felip, and Nora Miralles. “The Disturbing Rise of the Corporate Mercenaries.”

*openDemocracy*, Aug. 2021,

[www.opendemocracy.net/en/disturbing-rise-corporate-mercenaries.](http://www.opendemocracy.net/en/disturbing-rise-corporate-mercenaries.)

D C A F. (n.d.). Ethz.Ch. Retrieved June 16, 2023, from

[https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/17438/background\\_09\\_private-military-companies.pdf](https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/17438/background_09_private-military-companies.pdf)

Debusmann, By Bernd, Jr. “Private Military Firms See Demand in Ukraine War.” *BBC News*, 9

Mar. 2022, [www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-60669763.](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-60669763.)

Dickinson, L. A. (n.d.). Chapter 12 -Contract as a tool for regulating private military companies.

Princeton.edu. Retrieved June 16, 2023, from

[https://lapa.princeton.edu/conferences/military07/restricted/dickinson2\\_military07.pdf](https://lapa.princeton.edu/conferences/military07/restricted/dickinson2_military07.pdf)

Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. “Arms Trafficking and Organized

Crime | GI-TOC.” *Global Initiative*, 23 Aug. 2022,

[globalinitiative.net/analysis/arms-trafficking-and-organized-crime](https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/arms-trafficking-and-organized-crime).

GSDRC. “Private Military Companies and the Proliferation of Small Arms: Regulating the

Actors - GSDRC.” *GSDRC - Governance, Social Development, Conflict and*

*Humanitarian Knowledge Services*, 4 Sept. 2015,

[gsdrc.org/document-library/private-military-companies-and-the-proliferation-of-small-arms-regulating-the-actors](https://gsdrc.org/document-library/private-military-companies-and-the-proliferation-of-small-arms-regulating-the-actors).

ICoCA - International Code of Conduct Association. “The Code - ICoCA - International Code of

Conduct Association.” *ICoCA - International Code of Conduct Association*, 29 July

2022, [icoca.ch/the-code](https://icoca.ch/the-code).

Kossov, Igor. “Army of Hired Guns: How Russia’s 'PMCs' Are Becoming the Main Invasion

Force.” *The Kyiv Independent*, June 2023,

[kyivindependent.com/army-of-hired-guns-how-russias-pmcs-are-becoming-the-main-invasion-force](https://kyivindependent.com/army-of-hired-guns-how-russias-pmcs-are-becoming-the-main-invasion-force).

“Mercenaries and War: Understanding Private Armies Today.” *National Defense University*

*Press*, 4 Dec. 2019,

ndupress.ndu.edu/Media/News/Article/2031922/mercenaries-and-war-understanding-private-armies-today/.

Politica, London. “Private Military Contractors on the Ukraine-Russia War: A Mapping of Their Involvement — London Politica.” *London Politica*, May 2023, londonpolitica.com/intelligence-department-articles/politicalriskexplained-2.

Swed, O. (n.d.). The global expansion of PMSCs: Trends, opportunities, and risks. Ohchr.org.

Retrieved June 16, 2023, from

<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Mercenaries/WG/ImmigrationAndBorder/swed-burland-submission.pdf>

Tekingunduz, Alican. “Are Private Military Contractors Any Different From Mercenaries?” *Are Private Military Contractors Any Different From Mercenaries?*, 16 Oct. 2018, www.trtworld.com/americas/are-private-military-contractors-any-different-from-mercenaries-20680.

The Virginia Journal of International Affairs. “PRIVATE MILITARY COMPANIES: SHINING A LIGHT ON OUR SHADOW MILITARY — VA Journal of Intl Affairs.” *VA Journal of Intl Affairs*, Aug. 2020, vajournalia.org/opeds-1/2020/8/15/private-military-companies-shining-a-light-on-our-shadow-military#:~:text=The%20industry%20of%20private%20military,foreign%20policy%20and%20moral%20ideals.

Times, Moscow. “Russian Army Found to Have Recruited Prisoners to Fight in Ukraine.” *The Moscow Times*, 17 Sept. 2023,



[www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/05/03/russian-army-found-to-have-recruited-prisoners-to-fight-in-ukraine-a81023](http://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/05/03/russian-army-found-to-have-recruited-prisoners-to-fight-in-ukraine-a81023).

OHCHR. “Violations by Mercenaries and Private Military and Security Companies Highlight Urgent Need for Maritime Security Oversight: UN Experts.” *OHCHR*, [www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/11/violations-mercenaries-and-private-military-and-security-companies-highlight](http://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/11/violations-mercenaries-and-private-military-and-security-companies-highlight).

OHCHR. “Working Group on the Use of Mercenaries.” *OHCHR*, [www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/wg-mercenaries](http://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/wg-mercenaries).

Zadzorova, Nikola. “Private Military Companies: An Efficient Way of Meeting the Demand for Security?” *E-International Relations*, Sept. 2015, [www.e-ir.info/2015/09/20/private-military-companies-an-efficient-way-of-meeting-the-demand-for-security](http://www.e-ir.info/2015/09/20/private-military-companies-an-efficient-way-of-meeting-the-demand-for-security).