

**16 April 2015**

Dear Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon,

We, the undersigned Palestinian civil society organisations, are writing to share with you some information regarding the conduct of G4S, the international security company with which the UN has a number of major high-level contracts. G4S is contracted to provide services to UN facilities and agencies in Kenya, Cyprus, Serbia, Dominican Republic, Morocco and Jordan.

We request that you dutifully engage with the evidence contained in this letter and the attached reports from reputable human rights organisations that G4S is deeply complicit with Israeli human rights violations and does not support or respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights.

### **G4S role in Israel's prison system**

G4S has an on-going contract with the Israeli Prison Service to provide and maintain security systems at five prisons inside Israel and one prison in an illegal Israeli settlement in occupied Palestinian territory<sup>1</sup> at which Palestinians from occupied Palestinian territory are detained.. The Israeli Prison Service recently confirmed that G4S provides on-going maintenance and operation of “supporting management systems” at Israeli prisons that hold Palestinian political prisoners from the occupied Palestinian territories.<sup>2</sup> This includes cameras, control room technology and other equipment vital to the operation of the prisons.<sup>3</sup> Through its involvement in prisons inside Israel, G4S is complicit in Israel's violations of Article 76 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits the transfer of prisoners from occupied territory into the territory of the occupier.

Palestinian human rights organisations such as Addameer have documented that torture, including torture of children, and detention without trial are widespread in the prisons that G4S is helping to operate.<sup>4</sup>

Defence for Children International Palestine last year published research showing that three in four Palestinian children detained by the Israeli military in the occupied West Bank last year endured physical violence during arrest and interrogation.<sup>5</sup> G4S helps to operate the Damon prison and others at which child prisoners are held and subjected to violence.

As Israel intensifies its forced displacement of Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory, it has also sought to increase its use of mass incarceration of Palestinians as a means by which to dissuade them from opposing its violations of international law. There are currently more than 6,000 political prisoners in Israeli jails.

### **G4S participation in Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory**

G4S also participates in Israel's violations of international law related to its occupation of Palestinian territory and its forced displacement of Palestinians to make way for illegal Israeli settlements. G4S provides equipment and services to checkpoints that make up the route of Israel's Wall, ruled illegal by the International Court of Justice in 2004, and to private businesses in illegal Israeli settlements and to Israeli police facilities in other Israeli

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.whoprofits.org/company/g4s-israel-hashmira>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.whoprofits.org/content/corporations-provide-services-israeli-prisons>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.diakonia.se/globalassets/documents/ih/ihl-resources-center/g4s-report.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.bdsmovement.net/files/2015/04/G4S-Factsheet-English\\_Final.pdf](http://www.bdsmovement.net/files/2015/04/G4S-Factsheet-English_Final.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.dci-palestine.org/documents/palestinian-children-israeli-military-custody-face-physical-violence>

government buildings in the occupied West Bank. In addition, G4S has provided equipment to checkpoints that enforce the siege of Gaza.<sup>6</sup>

### **Failure of G4S to end participation in Israeli violations of international law**

In 2012, the *Report of the independent international fact-finding mission to investigate the implications of the Israeli settlements on the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the Palestinian people throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem*, called on businesses and states to take steps to reduce the contribution made by businesses to Israeli violations of international law.<sup>7</sup>

A legal study conducted by the Diakonia International Humanitarian Law Resource Centre found that G4S has “failed to demonstrate a genuine commitment to comply with international law in good faith” and is complicit in several of Israel’s violations of international law. The report outlines various ways in which G4S is not in compliance with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, particularly principle 19 and 21. The report urges G4S partners to contemplate “unparalleled risk to their investment in business activity whose profit model is conflict- dependent and potentially illegal”.<sup>8</sup>

A 2012 report by the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 criticises G4S for its complicity with Israeli violations of international law.<sup>9</sup>

We understand that G4S has made various announcements regarding the possibility of stopping some aspects of its business in service of Israel’s prison system and its illegal Israeli settlements in occupied Palestinian territory. However, G4S has yet to end any of its various forms of complicity with Israeli violations of international law or set out a clear timeline for doing so. Vague promises to end participation in human rights abuses at an undetermined point in the future cannot be a means by which to escape accountability.

### **UN responsibility to uphold international law and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights**

Principle 6 of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights sets out that “states should promote respect for human rights by business enterprises with which they conduct commercial transactions”.

The UN Supplier Code of Conduct states “the UN expects its suppliers to support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights and to ensure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses”.<sup>10</sup>

We urge the UN to implement its own policies and standards and to publicly commit to take action to ensure that it does not renew any of its existing contracts with G4S or award the company any new contracts until such time as G4S has ended all aspects of its complicity with Israeli human rights abuses and violations of international law.

Kind regards,

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.whoprofits.org/company/g4s-israel-hashmira>

<sup>7</sup> A/HRC/22/63

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.diakonia.se/globalassets/documents/ihl/ihl-resources-center/g4s-report.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> A/67/379

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.un.org/Depts/ptd/sites/www.un.org.Depts.ptd/files/files/attachment/page/2014/February%202014/conduct\\_english.pdf](http://www.un.org/Depts/ptd/sites/www.un.org.Depts.ptd/files/files/attachment/page/2014/February%202014/conduct_english.pdf)

Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association



Jerusalem Legal Aid and Human Rights Center



Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling



Defence for Children International - Palestine Section



Center for Defense of Liberties and Civil Rights "Hurriyat"



Ramallah Center for Human Rights Studies

