



The United Nations Working Group on the use of mercenaries today announced the start of a study on the use of private military and security companies (PMSCs) by the UN bodies worldwide. The five-strong expert body will report outcomes of the study to the UN General Assembly in 2014.

"The Working Group hopes to analyze the use of PMSCs by the United Nations on the ground and contribute to the development of a coherent UN-wide policy on this issue," said human rights expert Anton Katz, who currently heads the Group. The announcement was made at the end of the expert body's five-day session in Geneva.

The expert group, which has drafted a possible international convention on private military and security companies, has already provided an overview of the United Nations policy vis-à-vis the use of PMSCs in its previous report to the UN General Assembly in 2010*.

From 11 to 15 March, the Working Group also discussed the results of its recent country visits to Somalia and Honduras, and progress and next steps on initiatives involving the increasing use of private military and security contractors operating on the international market. The experts noted with interest and concern the reference by the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic of the aggravating role that mercenaries play in the conflict in that State, in his presentation to the Human Rights Council.

The Working Group also reviewed responses from Bahrain, Bosnia and Herzegovina, France, Germany, Ghana, Mauritius, Poland, Switzerland and Togo to its request for information relating to persons convicted of mercenary-related crimes. The UN expert group is mandated by Human Rights Council to establish a database of convicted mercenaries.

The independent human rights experts met representatives of Governments of Honduras, Nicaragua, South Africa, the Syrian Arab Republic and Switzerland, as well as international and civil society organizations. The next session of the Working Group will be held in July in New York.

[\(*\) Check the Working Group's reports to the 65th UN General Assembly](#)

Additional links:

- The **Working Group** on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination was established in 2005 by the then Commission on Human Rights. It is composed of five independent experts serving in their personal capacities: Mr. Anton Katz (Chair-Rapporteur, South Africa), Ms. Faiza Patel (Pakistan), Ms. Patricia Arias (Chile), Ms. Elżbieta Karska (Poland) and Mr. Gabor Rona (United States/Hungary). Learn more, [log on here](#)

- Check the [Working Group's draft](#) of a possible Convention on Private Military and Security Companies.

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