

## WHAT ARE PRIVATE SECURITY COMPANIES USED FOR ?

### Results

- **The missions are more diverse than it seems**
- **A sector that supports and assists**

We are offering today an analysis of the work done by researchers at the Freie Universitat Berlin regarding the use of private security companies by governments and International Organizations (IOs) during missions of assistance to failed states, between 1990 and 2007.

The results can be found in the *Private Security Database*.

You can find the tab gathering all the information at the following link: [http://www.conflictdata.org/psd/Data\\_Download/index.html](http://www.conflictdata.org/psd/Data_Download/index.html)

A failed state is a state that no longer controls its territory and that is unable to implement its political decisions. A failed state also lost its *monopoly over the use of legitimate force*.

This concept of *monopoly over the use of legitimate force* from Marx Weber was first enunciated at the beginning of the previous century: it states that only the official State can, when it is justified, use force through the police and the army against civilians when violence becomes unavoidable.

The use of coercion by police officers against aggressive rioters during demonstrations about the law project on labor in France in 2016 is a striking example. This concept is among the first and most fundamental ones that are taught in any studies related to security or political science.

The article analyzes the following countries that have known or are currently under the intervention of external governments and IOs in order to help the failed state regain its capacities:

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**Figure1**

List of studied countries and proportion by continent

Afghanistan	Croatia	Nigeria
Albania	Ethiopia	Peru
Algeria	Georgia	Philippines
Angola	Guatemala	Rwanda
Azerbaijan	Guinea-Bissau	Sierra Leone
Bosnia	Iraq	Somalia
Burundi	Côte d'Ivoire	Sudan
Cambodia	Lebanon	Tajikistan
Colombia	Liberia	Uganda
Congo-Brazzaville	Mozambique	Yugoslavia (Serbia & Kososvo)
Congo-Kinshasa	Nepal	

Region	Instances	%
Americas	3	9
Europe	5	16
Middle East	2	6
Africa	15	47
Asia	7	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100</b>

A first interesting fact: the researchers estimated that it was necessary to distinguish each use of a private security company according to the type of contract they signed.

Here is the 12-points list of the different missions these private security companies signed in the context of operations to help failed states.

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**Tableau 2**

Variation of missions into failed states depending on their nature (1990 to 2007)

Echelle	Mission	Description	Nombre de Contrats
1	Combat and military operations	Armed private actors are directly involved in military operations and fighting	15
2	Military assistance	Private actors provide military training and consulting (e.g. tactics) to parties	89
3	Operational support	Private actors operate and/or maintain combat-related goods (e.g. weaponry, satellites) and/or fulfil certain functions in the command and control chain	103
4	Logistics support	Transportation of soldiers and/or combat-related goods	97
5	Intelligence	Private actors provide risk assessments, reconnaissance or translation services and/or are part of interrogations	35
6	Quasi-police tasks (prevention) and border patrol	Private actors provide services that would usually be ascribed to the police, including the safety of public places and/or protection of state and local borders	6
7	Security/protection (individuals and facilities)	Private actors provide (mobile) security for individuals and/or facilities; this task refers to protective services details	89
8	Police advice and training	Similar to military assistance, private actors providing training and/or consulting to police forces	27
9	Demining	Military and humanitarian demining for the destruction and removal of land and/or naval mines	26
10	Humanitarian aid	Private actors provide armed material or logistical services for humanitarian purposes such as transportation of food in crisis zones	0
11	Weapons disposal/destruction	Deinstallation, destruction and disposal of warfare-related goods and facilities	12
12	Facility and infrastructural build-up	Private actors construct and build military infrastructure such as military bases	46
<b>TOTAL CONTRACTS</b>			<b>545</b>

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This first step proves that the private security companies fulfill assignments of all kinds and that these missions rarely involve direct combat.

The contracts mainly ask for support missions to allow governments and IOs to complete their own tasks to rebuild the State.

It is important to note that the most common missions have a support and assistance nature, and don't involve direct intervention.

The missions of type n°6 and n°1, that ask for a direct participation to combats or to fulfill police-like assignments, only represent 21 contracts for all the 1990-2007 period, only 0.038%.

The missions of type n°1 were given by Angola, Colombia, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and always in their own territory. The missions of type n°6 were ordered by the United-States in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Iraq.

The absence of type n°10 assignments (Humanitarian aid) can be explain by the will of NGOs and IOs to dissociate as much as possible their humanitarian activities from military ones. The frontier between humanitarian and soldier becomes increasingly blurry.

Consequently, humanitarian teams are becoming potential targets.

The United Nations signed 41 contracts, the United-States 362. The UNO budget explains this gap.

Like we saw in our article "The Security Agent of the World", for the year 2015-2016, the UN has a budget of \$8.27 billion for its operations. For the same period, the Netherlands gathered \$8.87 billion

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## SOURCES

Data on Armed Security Conflict. Private Security Database Data Download.

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Data on Armed Security Conflict. Private Security Database Data Index.

<http://www.conflict-data.org/psd/Definitions/index.html>

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Parlement Européen. *Blurring the lines between humanitarian and military action undermines aid.*

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/20110415STO17907/Blurring-the-lines-between-humanitarian-and-military-action-undermines-aid>