



Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights

Transforming security
from defensive reaction
to inclusive pro-action



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What are the VPs?

- The only guidelines specifically for security and human rights issues in the extractives sector
- Developed in 2000 by multi-sectoral group
- Provide guidance on three issues:
 1. Risk assessment
 2. Engagement with public security forces
 3. Relations with private security services

The Voluntary Principles are...

- VOLUNTARY...
- Mandatory only for:
 - Companies who have opted in, or
 - Companies accepting finance or insurance from a source which requires the VPs, or
 - Companies accepting contracts with VP signatories
- VPs are referenced in IFC Safeguards & OECD Guidelines

The Voluntary Principles are...

- PRINCIPLES...
- There is no audit or checklist
- Guidelines to be interpreted in individual context
- Art rather than science
- Participation criteria set in 2007 remain general, focussed on communications & reporting

28 Signatories

- Governments: Netherlands, Norway, UK & USA
- NGOs: Amnesty International, The Fund for Peace, Human Rights Watch, Human Rights First, International Alert, Pax Christi
- Companies: Amerada Hess, Anglo American, AngloGold Ashanti, BG Group, BHP Billiton, BP, Chevron, ConocoPhillips, ExxonMobil, Freeport McMoRan, Marathon Oil, Newmont Mining, Norsk Hydro, Occidental Petroleum, Rio Tinto, Shell, Statoil
- Observers: IPIECA, Int. Comm. Red Cross
- Secretariat: Business for Social Responsibility & International Business Leaders Forum



Risk Assessment

Risk is not just something the company faces,
it is also something the company creates

- ⦿ Review human rights records of security providers
- ⦿ Evaluate rule of law & judicial capacity
- ⦿ Understand root causes & future potential for conflict
- ⦿ Manage equipment transfers to security forces & risk of abuse



Public Security

Some public security forces are known abusers of human rights, which puts companies and communities at risk

- Communicate with government, communities, other companies, NGOs on relations and arrangements with public security
- Support efforts to improve standards & training
- UN Guidelines on use of force & firearms, proportional to the threat
- Record & report alleged human rights abuses



Private Security

Private security providers may be a key point of contact with the community therefore their comportsment is of critical importance.

- Background checks, technical competence, ethical standards, transparency, agreement to VPs
- Termination clauses in contracts relating to human rights
- Provide only preventative and defensive services and should not engage in activities which are the responsibility of state military or law enforcement authorities



Why use the VPs?

1. Genuinely improve security

- Broader understanding of risk, more effective monitoring of context, improved mitigation
- Improved community relations – good neighbours are the best security
- Attempts to improve standards in security forces which will stabilise the operating environment



Why use the VPs?

2. Assist with reputational risk

- Builds relations with local & international NGOs who will hopefully come to before going to press
- Creates alliances with other companies to collectively address shared problems, spreads the risk of individual exposure
- Reduces the risk of being considered complicit in mercenary action or foreign military assistance



Why use the VPs?

3. Good legal defence

- Things will still go wrong, but essential to show that you tried to prevent them
- Disclaimers: if people lie about their human rights record, dismissal can be based on the lie
- Focus on documentation, paper trails, transparency
- Reduces risk of claims under Alien Torts Claims Act

Criticisms of VPs in 5-Year Review

- VPs are currently an 'exclusive' club
- Lack of audit mechanism or clear standards
- Need for more home government commitment & assistance to host governments
- Need for implementation tools & training:
 - Anvil Mining & MIGA developing an implementation guide

Example of the DRC: Challenges

- Post-conflict country, continued issues of stability
- Entrenched corruption
- Lack of law enforcement & judicial capacity
- Poor human rights record of public security forces
- Public security poorly paid, trained & equipped
- No armed private security, rely on public forces
- Demand exceeds supply for private security
- Legacy of illegal artisanal mining & trading
- Extreme poverty, high expectations of companies

Example of the DRC: Activities

- Companies working individually & collaboratively
- Pact Congo assists with implementation with central funding from USAID
- Linking social development to security through Community Development & Security Committees
- Monthly meetings on human rights & security
- Development of protocols on requisition, involuntary deployment of army, police standards
- Companies committing to support police reform
- Local workshops, training, dialogue

Where to start?

- Read them! Only 3 issues, 2 pages long!
- Assess how VPs can be incorporated into and complement existing security strategies
- Security, social development, public affairs departments should all work together
- Find a champion – get senior management buy-in
- Discuss with other companies in your area
- Consider NGO partnerships & a local working group, trial collective activities, get training
- Engage, engage, engage....



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Thank you, Merci!
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