



Agenda - Deliberating the Role of Private Military Companies (PMCs) with Special Emphasis on the African Region

DISSEG



TABLE OF CONTENTS

S.No	TOPIC
1.	Letter from the Bureau
2.	Introduction to the Committee
<u>3.</u>	Introduction to the Agenda
<u>4.</u>	Key Terms
<u>5.</u>	Understanding Private Military Corporations 5.1) What are PMCs? 5.2) Advent of Modern PMCs 5.3) Services Provided by PMCs
<u>6.</u>	PMCs in Africa 6.1) Events Leading Africa to become the Target Market 6.2) Chronology of PMC Entry in Africa
<u>7.</u>	Consequences of PMC Activity 7.1) Exploitation of African Sovereign Wealth 7.2) Civilian Security and Human Rights Concerns
<u>8.</u>	Existing Legal Architecture 8.1) Definitional Loopholes 8.2) Existing Frameworks 8.3) Challenges in Determining State Responsibility
<u>9.</u>	Case Studies 9.1) Wagner Group and Africa Corps 9.2) Executive Outcomes
<u>10.</u>	Conclusion
<u>11.</u>	Questions a Resolution Must Answer
<u>12.</u>	Expected Outcomes
<u>13.</u>	Bibliography

LETTER FROM THE BUREAU:

Greetings Delegates,

We are incredibly excited to welcome you all to the Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC) for the SISMUN 2026.

Over the course of the conference, we hope you approach this agenda with curiosity, engage thoughtfully with different perspectives, and leave with a stronger understanding of the challenges shaping international security today. As your dais, we assure you that we will create a committee room where strong research, creative thinking, and dynamic debate are both expected and celebrated.

This year's agenda for DISEC is: **"Deliberating the Role of Private Military Companies (PMCs) with Special Emphasis on the African Region."** The nature of warfare is changing, and private military companies are playing an increasingly visible role in conflicts across Africa. Their presence raises important questions about accountability, sovereignty, security, and the future of modern conflict.

We encourage delegates to look beyond the study guide, explore different perspectives, and think critically about the motivations, consequences, and long-term implications of PMC involvement. The most engaging debates will come from delegates who arrive informed, curious, and ready to challenge ideas.

The committee room rewards preparation, diplomacy, and strategic thinking. The strongest delegate in the committee is not the one with the loudest speeches, but the one who knows exactly when to speak, what to say, and how to make it impossible to ignore.

We look forward to meeting a few of them. Until then, research well, think critically, and come prepared.

Deetya Dhakad
Chairperson

Chitransh Garg
Vice-Chairperson

Aira Saluja
Vice-Chairperson

INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE:

The Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC) was created when the UN Charter was signed in 1945. It was the first of 6 committees created for the General Assembly. Hence, it is also known as the First Committee. Initially, DISEC was established to discuss and resolve issues related to peace and security. All 193 UN member states are a part of this body. The committee operates frequently to discuss problems affecting global peace and security. It talks about issues like wars, terrorism, weapon disarmament and various other military disagreements. Its objectives are to prevent conflicts from intensifying, support alliances between nations, and provide a platform for debating various global issues. DISEC's goals also align with the objectives of the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA). Even though the UNODA supervises a wider range of disarmament, it assists DISEC in achieving its targets.

DISEC operates through formal debate and with the help of moderated and unmoderated caucuses. It also includes draft resolutions and voting procedures, where delegates represent the policies and interests of their respective countries. The UN Security Council (UNSC) is responsible for keeping peace and security globally. Even though DISEC can't make decisions for the UNSC, it can bring up issues for the council to talk about and solve. What DISEC talks about isn't always officially put into action, but these discussions do influence the actual decisions the council makes. DISEC's committee meetings are held at the UN headquarters. During these meetings, they often talk about some of the world's most urgent problems.

The United Nations General Assembly First Committee stands today to promote regional cooperation and press for legal reform. It is also required to combat security concerns like terrorism, cybersecurity, and peacekeeping missions. It is essential to balance powers in the coming years and ensure global peace.

INTRODUCTION TO THE AGENDA:

The agenda for DISEC this year is “Deliberating the Role of Private Military Corporations with Special Emphasis on the African Region.” This is not a new concern, but it has increased significantly over the last three decades as the outsourcing of military and security functions to private actors has become increasingly common.

Private Military Corporations (PMCs) are privately owned companies that provide services such as combat, training, intelligence, and logistics for profit. They answer to contracts rather than governments. This puts them in a legal grey zone, i.e., a space where existing laws are unclear and difficult to enforce. PMCs exploit this gap and carry out operations while avoiding accountability under international law.

Africa has become their target market. Decades of colonial rule, security vacuum, weak institutions and ongoing insurgencies have created conditions in which PMCs can move in quickly. African governments that did not have Western support turned to these private actors for military and security services, often at the cost of their own sovereignty and natural resources.

The consequences have been severe. Across Africa, PMC operations have been linked to civilian massacres and displacement. Existing international legal frameworks have largely failed to hold them accountable.

The challenge for this committee is to determine how the international community can address these gaps and ensure that security is not achieved at the expense of the very people it's supposed to protect.

KEY TERMS:

Term	Definition
Mercenaries	Individuals are hired to fight in wars for money rather than for loyalty to a country or cause. Since it is an umbrella term, it covers all hired military actors, including PMCs. However, the 1989 UN Mercenary Convention defines it so narrowly that PMCs technically fall outside it, and they exploit that gap deliberately to avoid accountability.
Private Military Companies (PMCs)	Private businesses that provide military and security services, such as combat support, training, intelligence, or logistics, in exchange for payment.
State-Directed PMCs	PMCs that appear private but operate in close coordination with, or under the influence of, a government to advance state interests.
Non-State Actors	Groups or organisations that operate independently of governments, including PMCs, rebel groups, militias, and terrorist organisations.
forcibly recruited into armed groups (IHL)	The body of international law that regulates armed conflict and seeks to protect civilians and others not participating in hostilities.
Legal Grey Zone	A situation where existing laws are unclear or difficult to apply, making accountability and enforcement challenging.
Sahel Region	A semi-arid region stretching across Africa south of the Sahara Desert, including countries such as Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, and Chad.
Insurgency	An organised rebellion against a government or authority, often involving armed groups seeking political or territorial control.
Counterinsurgency	Military, political, and security measures used by governments to defeat insurgent groups and restore state control.
State Sovereignty	A state's authority to govern its territory and make decisions without external interference.
Resource Extraction	The removal of natural resources such as gold, diamonds, oil, or uranium for economic gain.
Junta	A government led by military leaders who have taken power, usually through a coup d'état.

Coup d'État	The sudden and illegal seizure of governmental power, typically by military or political elites.
War Crimes	Serious violations of forcibly recruited into armed groups committed during armed conflict, such as targeting civilians or torture.
Peacekeeping Operations	International missions, often led by the UN, aimed at maintaining peace and protecting civilians in conflict zones.
Privatisation	The transfer of functions traditionally controlled by governments to private companies operating for profit.

UNDERSTANDING PMCs:

Definition and Characteristics of PMCs:

We often relate wars to soldiers fighting in uniforms under one flag. Armies that are accountable to the government and to international law. However, over time, a new actor has emerged. One that works for profit and sidelines accountability. These actors are Private Military Corporations. A PMC is a privately owned company that provides military services in exchange for currency. They operate on a contractual basis rather than owing allegiance to a particular state. Their client could be a weak government or any multinational company.

The key difference between a mercenary and a PMC is their structure. Mercenaries are individually hired fighters whose activities are restricted or prohibited under certain international treaties and domestic laws. Since PMCs do not fight under a country's name, it is tricky to classify them as combatants or civilians. Further, many PMCs operate under shell companies, making it even harder to trace their actions.

Supporters say that PMCs fill security gaps where governments are weak and justice is slow. Critics, however, argue that profit-driven actors with no accountability will always prioritise their own interests over civilian protection. Both sides of this debate will come up in the committee.

Combatant	Civilian
Fights under a state's armed forces	Has no direct role in the conflict
Can be legally targeted/attacked	Protected from direct attack under IHL
Must follow the laws of war	Protected from direct attack unless they directly participate in hostilities.
Eg- A soldier in the Malian national army	Eg- A villager in Moura, Mali

PMC fighters fall into neither category cleanly. They carry weapons and participate in wars, but are rarely **formally** a part of any state's military. This is exactly what makes holding them accountable so hard.

Advent of PMCs:

To understand how PMCs came to exist, we need to go back to what colonialism left behind after the Cold War. When European powers withdrew from Africa, they didn't leave behind functioning states or strong institutions. The borders they drew made little sense, splitting communities apart and forcing together groups with long histories of conflict. The armies left

behind were not to defend a country; they were left to control the population. Countries were given freedom, but not a foundation to go alongside.

This may seem insignificant, but the instability was not random. It was the result of systems that had never considered Africa in the first place. The Cold War only worsened this situation. Africa was seen as a battlefield at most and suffered the most. They paid the price for a war that wasn't even theirs. When the war ended, many trained soldiers were suddenly let go. Their services were no longer needed. This was also accompanied by the demand for security and military aid. At such a moment, PMCs were almost inevitable. One of the earliest and most influential modern PMCs in Africa was Executive Outcomes, which provided military support against rebel groups in Sierra Leone and Angola. This sparked a new concept in Africa. It was a new beginning of military services. Various other PMCs, such as SADAT, the Wagner Group, followed. The closure of Executive Outcomes didn't end the story. Foreign powers saw an opportunity to access Africa's wealth, and PMCs became the means to acquire it.

Services Provided by PMCs:

Military Advice and Training:

- The majority of the services offered by PMCs are in the form of training to help government forces fight rebel groups and terrorist organizations.
- PMCs provide specialised mentorship to armies, presidential guards and special units in combat training, weapon handling and intelligence gathering.
- The Executive Outcomes helped the governments of Angola and Sierra Leone fight back against rebel groups like UNITA.
- Western and French PMCs sought to bring changes in the army and rebuild the collapsed armed force.
- Recently, the Wagner group has been training elite specialised units as well as bodyguards of politicians in Burkina Faso, Niger and the Central African Republic

Logistical and Technical Support:

- PMCs also provide logistical assistance during conflict.
- These services include transportation of troops and weapons, maintenance of weapons and building new camps and bases.
- Sometimes, they also participate in rescue missions and assist in missions which can't be accomplished by the military.
- Turkish SADAT used to provide equipment like new drones and bombers to countries like Mali. PMCs from China also offered to protect railway lines and mines across Africa.

Security and Protective Services:

- The most debatable services provided by PMCs are protection services.
- Often, PMCs are hired to protect important leaders, resource mines, oil fields and pipelines. These services were often justified as protecting strategic infrastructure from armed groups.
- The Wagner Group was hired in the Central African Republic to protect the president and the gold mines that were economically valuable to the company.
- In Angola, EO was hired to protect the Soyo oil fields. Similarly, it was also required in Sierra Leone to safeguard the diamond-rich mines

PMCs IN AFRICA

Events Leading to Africa Becoming the Target Market:

As stated above, PMCs are, at their core, commercial, lucrative, and profit-driven enterprises. Therefore, since the advent of modern PMCs, they have been on a continuous lookout for the perfect region where corruption, instability and insurgency are so deeply rooted that existential support is necessary. And that description is precisely Africa. Enlisted below are the fundamental reasons why PMCs thrived in Africa:

- 1) Independent African States were Designated to Fail: When European Colonial Powers left Africa in the 1950s and 1970s, African states, like every other colonised nation, were not functional, sovereign states. These were known as “quasi-states or juridical states” by political scientists. What this essentially means is that they possessed full legal sovereignty like UN membership, protection from invasion, access to foreign aid, etc., but they lacked the institutional capacity to govern their own population, which included basic actions like struggling to enforce law, collect taxes or provide infrastructure. The militaries that were left behind were trained to exert control over populations on behalf of the colonial administration, not to defend borders, not to fight insurgencies, and not to maintain territorial integrity. This resulted in pure instability. The leaders of weak states, in a bid to outwit their rivals, willfully transformed their states into regimes that serve foreign interests, openly inviting powerful private military companies to help them deal with local rivals.
- 2) Abundance of Resources, Paradoxically leading to instability: Africa hosts approximately 30% of global mineral wealth. Yet it remains the world’s poorest continent. And this raises a very intuitive question: why do these African nations, despite having resources that the developed nations would die for, continue to live in abject poverty? And the reason for that is correlated to our first point, African governments are incapable of taxing their populations or building their economy, hence they become dependent on rents, royalties, concessions, and extraction fees on their resources, for that is the most valuable thing they can offer. This creates a fatal dependency. What this means is that because the governments are dependent on their resources to act as payment, protecting the mines matters more to them than protecting their citizens. And when the security of those mines is threatened by rebels, by insurgents or by ethnic militias, the government will pay any price to restore it. And this is where PMCs come into being; their services come at a cost. The same areas that they were hired to protect, whether it be the diamond mines or gold and mineral sites, the payment included extracting rights and concessions from those very territories. The more dependent the government becomes on PMC-provided security, the more leverage the PMC has to extract resource concessions.

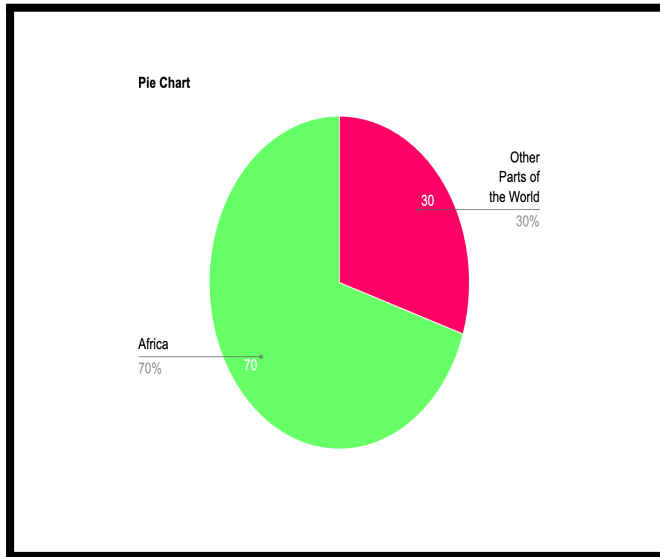


Fig - 1
Africa's Share in Global Wealth

- 3) The Post-Cold War Situation: Throughout the Cold War, both the US and the USSR had flooded the continent with weapons, military advisors, and proxy forces. Now, what is fundamental to understand here is that neither the US nor the USSR aided Africa for the welfare of the continent, nor for democracy, nor for legitimacy. They functioned over one single variable, which country and manner times which rebel group will give them a strategic advantage over the other superpower. And the problem is, they left both governments *and* rebel groups armed, trained, and militarised when the Cold War ended. For three decades, weak African governments had survived because they had either Washington or Moscow, providing arms, training and intelligence. When this suddenly ended, governments that had never built independent security capacity suddenly had to face armed insurgencies without support. And the PMC industry, at precisely this moment, had a surplus of trained personnel from downsized Western militaries, a proliferation of cheap weapons from collapsed Soviet arsenals, and a continent full of desperate governments willing to pay for security in any currency, including resource concessions.

- 4) Juntas, Coups, Unstable Governance: Africa has been the hub of military coups since 2020. Mali (2020, 2021), Guinea (2021), Sudan (2021), Burkina Faso (2022), Niger (2023), Gabon (2023), Madagascar (2025). These juntas share a common profile: they lack democratic legitimacy, they face active insurgencies they cannot defeat, they are suspended from regional organisations like "ECOWAS (Economic Community of Western African States, whose primary goal is to promote economic growth and democratic governance), and they are cut off from Western military assistance conditioned on democratic governance. For these juntas, the PMC is an **existential necessity**. A junta that cannot defeat a jihadist insurgency(an armed rebellion that

uses terrorism to establish a radical Islamist State) will be overthrown. A junta that cannot provide basic security will lose whatever tenuous public support it has. And a junta that is sanctioned by the West cannot access IMF loans, foreign aid, or bilateral military cooperation. Western Governments would not offer these Juntas support because, as stated above, their military assistance came conditional on democratic governance, human rights compliance, and political accountability, none of which those Juntas could provide. PMCs had no such conditions. They offered two things Western partners structurally could not: operational military reach and a denial of involvement in any atrocities performed by the PMCs to fulfil their mission. These PMCs helped in the survival of these illegitimate governments without any conditionality, which no one agreed to provide, and this is the exact gap all PMCs operating in Africa have built their entire strategy around.

Chronology of PMC Entry in Africa:

Now that the reasons for entry have been established, it is essential to understand which PMCs have been active in Africa over the past three decades. The advent of PMCs in Africa can be categorised into a simple timeline of three consecutive waves.

1) Wave One: Executive Outcomes (1993-1999)



(Executive Outcome Officials in Sierra Leone)

EO was a South African private military company that bundled military services with mining companies, logistics firms, and air transport under one parent holding company.

EO's operations were largely in Sierra Leone and Angola, and in both cases, the pattern was identical: a government facing military collapse and a rebel group threatening resource-rich territory, EO contracted to restore control, and the diamond fields or oil infrastructure were secured before the civilian population.

However, while EO was militarily effective, it was institutionally catastrophic. In Sierra Leone, the moment EO's contract was terminated under international pressure in 1997, the

state had zero security capacity to replace it, and as a result, its civil war dragged on until 2002, five years after EO left. A government that outsources its security never builds its own. Hence, right from the first wave, it was evident that **PMCs do not build institutions; their presence makes institution-building unnecessary while they are there, and impossible after they leave. Every PMC deployment in Africa since has reproduced this dynamic.**

2) Wave Two: Western PMCs(2000-2012)



French soldiers of the 126th Infantry Regiment and Malian soldiers, part of operation Barkhane(one of the many anti-terrorism campaigns led by France)

The United States, after every catastrophic African Crisis of the 1990s, made a deliberate policy decision not to send American Soldiers to African conflicts, as it was not worth the political cost. However, Africa was strategically important to them, and this was solved by PMCs. Their ideology was to fund private military companies through State Department contracts to maintain operational reach without political visibility.

While not a PMC, France maintained a permanent military presence across its former African colonies through bilateral defence agreements, through an arrangement known as *Françafrique*. France had launched several anti-terrorism, decade-long campaigns, but the outcome was deep unpopularity instead of gratitude. By 2019, 79% of Malians surveyed were unsatisfied with the French presence, and the jihadist insurgency at the point of French withdrawal was larger, more geographically spread, and more deeply entrenched than when France arrived.

As with Executive Outcomes, military effectiveness without institutional building produces dependency rather than stability. The American training programmes produced African armies that could perform on parade grounds and in exercises, but that collapsed under pressure from motivated insurgents with local legitimacy.

3) Wave three: The Current PMC Landscape in Africa (2017-Present)

Wagner Group entered African countries country by country from 2017, deploying the strategy that Executive Outcomes had rigorously used in Angola and Sierra Leone: regime survival in exchange for resource extraction. It protected presidents, fought insurgencies, and paid itself in gold mines and diamond concessions.

Then, in 2023, after the death of Wagner's founder, Wagner was replaced by Africa Corps, and the distinction matters enormously.



PMC Wagner mercenaries in the Central African Republic

Africa Corps operates under the direct authority of the Russian Ministry of Defence. And where Wagner operated like a private enterprise with its own financing networks and no direct connection with the Russian State, the Africa Corps carries the full backing of the Russian State.

Russia is not the only power on the continent. Wagner's success was visible to every external actor with African interests and the means to pursue them. Turkey and China both expanded their security presence across Africa in the years that followed, and both have received the same benefit: security provision exchanged for access, with African sovereignty absorbing the cost.

CONSEQUENCES OF PMC ACTIVITIES:

Various PMC activities in Africa have created major economic and humanitarian consequences. Even though they were initially hired to restore peace and security, their involvement has increased instability and has led to civilian casualties and human rights violations.

- a) Exploitation of African Sovereign Wealth: Africa is one of the world's most resource-intensive regions. It has around 30% of the world's minerals, including 40% of the world's gold and 90% of the world's platinum and chromium. These resources are used to buy services provided by PMCs. These services are necessary because of the weak militaries these countries have. However, this also makes the PMCs dependent on the resources. Due to this, they prioritise the protection of these resources over protecting civilians and fighting terrorism. This also leads to the transfer of control over these resources into foreign hands.

In the past, gold from Malian mines was smuggled by various PMCs to areas in the Middle East. To make sure the gold's origin couldn't be traced, other minerals were added to the gold to change its composition. Similarly, the Wagner group has been exploiting billions of dollars worth of gold in Sudan and the Central African Republic. Just to ensure no one would interfere in their practices, they supported various non democratic regimes. These regimes allowed them to carry on their work in exchange for protection. This model represents a form of exploitation where military protection is exchanged for control over sovereign resources.

- b) Civilian Security and Human Rights Concerns: There have been various reports about how PMCs in Africa have worsened the situation they were paid to fix. Their activities have violated the security of citizens, human rights and accountability. Even though PMCs have disregarded forcibly recruited into armed groups, governments still transfer more and more power to them. This power is used for corruption in the form of massacres, harassment and torture.

Among the most affected are women and children. UNICEF reports claim that PMC activities have led to all 6 grave violations against children. Children are being killed, maimed, recruited to armies forcefully, abducted and denied their access to humanitarian aid. In many places, schools and universities are also being bombed and destroyed. The fear created in the minds of civilians has prevented them from seeking any help or reporting any crimes.

PMCs have also demonstrated the dangers of governments relying on foreign powers. Earlier, the Executive Outcomes in Angola and Sierra Leone did temporarily assist the government in pushing back rebel groups, but the air strikes and heavy bombing led

to many civilian casualties. French and Western PMCs further fueled the tension as they used to prioritise the protection of mines and oil fields over the local populations.

Currently in Mali and the Central African Republic, the Wagner group has intensified civilian conflicts. Recently, the Moura Massacre in Mali was one of the worst PMC-related incidents recorded. In this incident, Malian Armed Forces and Russian mercenaries from the Wagner Group unlawfully executed at least 500 civilians and committed acts of violence and torture during a five-day military operation in Moura under the pretence of fighting a jihadist insurgency.



Fig - 2

The Nisour Square Incident - Private security contractors from the U.S. firm Blackwater opened fire on unarmed civilians in a crowded Baghdad intersection, killing 17 Iraqis.

EXISTING LEGAL ARCHITECTURE:

The Definitional Loophole

The most relevant international instrument is the 1989 UN Convention Against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries. It offers a six-part definition of a mercenary. An individual must satisfy *all six criteria* simultaneously to qualify:

1. Is specially recruited to fight in an armed conflict
2. Does, in fact, take direct part in hostilities
3. Is motivated essentially by private gain
4. Is neither a national nor a resident of a conflicting party
5. Is not a member of the armed forces of a party
6. Has not been sent by a state on official duty

This definition is too narrow for any modern PMC employee. For example, The first criterion: PMC contractors are recruited by a corporation under a service contract, not "specially recruited" for a specific conflict. Their employment exists independent of any particular war.

The second criterion, a PMC can easily escape it as a contractor working with government forces who is described on paper as a "trainer" or "adviser" as he technically falls outside the threshold of direct combat participation, regardless of what he actually does on the ground. Or the fourth criterion, A Russian citizen fighting for Russia's geopolitical interests in Mali fails this test immediately. Since Russia is the directing state, its own nationals cannot qualify as mercenaries under this criterion.

Existing Frameworks

Now, in the absence of a binding law, several voluntary frameworks have come into being, like the Montreux Document, the International Code of Conduct (ICoC, 2010/2013) and the UN Working Group on Mercenaries. And the problem with all three of these frameworks is that they are non-binding; the PMCs do not face any accountability or any repercussions for them. Under the forcibly recruited into armed groups, every person in an armed conflict is either a combatant or a civilian. Combatants can be lawfully targeted; civilians are protected. PMC employees fall into a legal grey zone:

- The Montreux Document and ICRC classify PMC contractors as **civilians**.
- But they carry weapons, participate in operations, and commit acts of violence.
- Classifying armed contractors who directly participate in hostilities as "civilians" weakens the civilian protection regime under forcibly recruited into armed groups, because civilians are meant to be people who are not taking part in fighting. If individuals who carry weapons and engage in military operations are still treated as civilians, the distinction between genuine non-combatants and armed private actors becomes blurred.

- However, classifying PMC personnel as combatants creates another legal problem. Combatant status is normally linked to membership in a state's armed forces or an organised armed group. Most PMC personnel do not clearly belong to either category, because they are usually neither formally incorporated into a state military nor part of an organised armed group recognised under international law. Instead, they operate through private contracts and corporate structures. As a result, it becomes uncertain which legal framework governs their actions, which state bears responsibility for them, and through which chain of command they can be held accountable.

Challenges in Determining State Responsibility for PMCs

This is the most consequential problem that our committee faces.

Existing legal frameworks were developed to address proxy militias, insurgent groups, and indirectly supported armed factions. Because these groups are formally separate from the state, international law focuses on determining when their conduct can be attributed to a state based on the degree of control exercised over them. For example, if Country X is suspected of supporting an armed rebellion, courts may apply the effective control standard to assess whether Country X exercised sufficient control over the group's specific operations for those actions to be legally attributable to the state.

However, the same cannot be said for Private Military Companies (PMCs), because they are not informal proxies but contractual entities deliberately hired by states to perform military and security functions. Their relationship with the state is established through contracts, creating a level of institutional integration that existing attribution standards (designed for covertly supported non-state actors like armed proxies, rebel groups etc) were never intended to address. For example, if Country X hires a PMC to conduct security operations in another state and the PMC commits violations of forcibly recruited into armed groups, determining whether those acts are attributable to Country X becomes legally complex, especially if the company retains a degree of operational autonomy. This creates accountability gaps, allowing Country X to benefit from the use of force while arguing that the violations were committed by an independent commercial entity rather than by the state itself.

Another problem is the state-directed Private Military Companies one. Unlike traditional proxies, these entities may receive initial funding, direction, and supervision directly from a state, while still maintaining a private corporate structure. Consequently, existing rules do not clearly address situations where an organisation, though legally private, functions as an instrument of state power in practice. The main legal question is whether international law should continue treating such entities as private contractors, or whether their close integration with the state through shared control, command, funding, and strategic purpose means they should be recognised as de facto state organs.

CASE STUDY 1: EXECUTIVE OUTCOMES

Origins of Executive Outcomes. Executive Outcomes was the first major PMC in Africa, established in the early 1990s. It emerged as a result of the end of the Apartheid system in South Africa. The end of such an oppressive system marked the breakup of various military groups in Africa. Due to this, many trained and skilled military fighters were let go. These fighters were organised to become the manpower of EO. After being founded, Executive Outcomes offered military support to weak governments facing insurgencies and civil wars. EO's presence reflected the post-Cold War situation in Africa, where governments could not maintain security independently.

Services and Military Operations: EO provided a wide range of military services, including direct combat operations, military training, intelligence gathering and protection of economic infrastructure. In Angola, EO helped government forces fight rebels and protect the Soyo oil fields, which are vital to the country's economy. For instance, EO was hired to fight the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone, which terrorised civilians with mass violence. It quickly drove the rebels away from major territories and secured the diamond-rich Kono district, restoring temporary stability.

Privatisation of National Security: This was a major impact of the Executive Outcomes. Many governments in Africa realised that their militaries were not powerful enough to fight various wars. Instead, they started hiring PMCs like EO to perform the tasks the Army is expected to do. Instead of boosting their own armed forces, PMCs were expected to perform all duties. This had a terrible consequence. When EO started backing out of countries, the governments would collapse and fail to operate as a functional unit. This showed that EO only gave temporary relief to governments and that there was no concept of self-dependence.

Long-term Impact and Criticism: As mentioned above, governments only remained stable as long as EO performed all military needs. This would transform into chaos soon after its withdrawal, indicating that long-term peace was very far-fetched. This showed that the company focused on eliminating temporary threats rather than focusing on issues such as weak governance and corruption. EO, in particular, has also been criticised for normalising the concept of directly taking part in warfare. It has also been noticed that EO supported instability and found wars to be profitable.



Fig - 3

Executive Outcomes Personnel in the Angolan Civil War

CASE STUDY 2: WAGNER GROUP

AFRICA CORPS 59%

Origins: Wagner first tested its model in Syria, where it seized and defended oil and gas assets alongside pro-government forces. This became the same model later used in Africa: regime security in exchange for access to natural resources. Syria also showed the biggest advantage of Wagner's corporate structure. When 100–300 Wagner personnel were killed in a single battle in February 2018, Russia simply denied any connection to them.

Services and Military Operations: Wagner entered African countries one by one between 2017 and 2021, including Sudan, the CAR, Libya, and Mali. In each case, the basic transaction was the same. In Sudan, it protected the regime of an ICC-indicted president in exchange for access to gold mining. In the CAR, it provided presidential security and combat support in exchange for diamond and gold concessions. In Mali, its most prominent deployment, the junta paid Wagner \$10 million per month along with gold concessions. In 2023, with Russian support, Malian forces recaptured Kidal, a separatist stronghold that French forces had failed to retake for years. This was widely promoted as Russia's biggest military success in Africa.

Privatisation of National Security: The shift from Wagner to Africa Corps is one of the most important structural changes in recent PMC history. After its leader's death in August 2023, Africa Corps came under the direct command of the Russian Ministry of Defence. At the same time, the resource extraction model changed from Wagner's direct looting through front companies to formal state-to-state agreements involving gold refineries, uranium extraction, and nuclear cooperation. This new system is harder to sanction and harder for host states to leave. In every country where it operates, the result is similar: a government that depends on a foreign military actor for survival cannot govern independently. In such cases, the security contract and state sovereignty become inseparable, and only one side truly controls both.



Fig - 4
Wagner Group mercenaries in Koundjili, CAR Corps

QUESTIONS A RESOLUTION MUST ANSWER:

- 1) When a PMC is funded, commanded, and deployed by a government but still calls itself "private," at what point should international law stop treating it as a private company?
- 2) If a PMC commits atrocities in a foreign state, what legal responsibility does the country where it is registered bear?
- 3) What rules currently protect civilians in areas where PMCs operate, and who actually prosecutes PMC personnel when those rules are broken?
- 4) Should the African Union and ECOWAS have a formal role in regulating PMCs, given that African states bear the consequences while the companies themselves are external?
- 5) How do we stop governments from paying for security by signing away their own natural resources to foreign military companies?

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

Now, delegates, as your dais, we are not here to impose the committee's trajectory. However, there are certain expectations we have that we wish you to address and meet in the committee.

Firstly, all of you as delegates must produce a framework that creates accountability without eliminating sovereignty, that creates binding obligations without triggering a political collapse, and that addresses the entire legal architecture loophole directly because that is the gap that everything else flows through.

Second, the two fundamental questions your resolution must answer are: when a private military company is funded by a state, commanded by a state, deployed in service of a state's foreign policy, and supervised by that state's military intelligence, at what point does international law stop calling it private? And when a state hires a PMC to wage war on its behalf, at what point should the law stop treating violations committed by that company as the acts of an independent contractor and instead hold the state itself responsible?

Those answers will define whether this committee produces something that moves the debate forward, or something that gets filed alongside every other resolution that failed to hold anyone accountable.

CONCLUSION:

Private Military Corporations are not a new phenomenon, but their consequences have never been more visible. They are privately owned companies that sell military services for profit, operating in a legal grey zone that existing international law was never built to handle. Understanding what they are and what they are not is the foundation of every debate this committee will have.

Africa did not become their target market by accident. Colonial rule left behind fragile institutions, and when the Cold War ended, the continent was abandoned mid-conflict. That instability created an opening for PMCs to enter. Governments traded sovereignty and resources for security and military support, civilians paid the price, and existing legal frameworks weren't able to hold them accountable for their actions.

The case studies bring the stakes into focus. Executive Outcomes showed that PMCs can be effective. Wagner showed what that effectiveness looks like without any accountability attached to it. Both lessons matter, and both will come up in committee.

This study guide is a **starting point**, not a substitute for research. It is meant to give you the foundation, not the entirety of what you need. The research you will do **on your own** is what will distinguish you as a delegate. Look into your country's position, read beyond what is here, be prepared and engage seriously, and come to the committee with your own understanding of the topic.

Good preparation means more than knowing facts. It means being ready to engage with arguments you disagree with and propose something that actually moves the debate forward!

A few things to keep in mind are that in this era of large language models and chatbots infiltrating every single aspect of life, it would be unrealistic to expect delegates not to use artificial intelligence. However, what we want from this conference is that you interpret, analyse, reflect on the agenda, and primarily grow as individuals. **Therefore, use AI to understand and draw the line then and there.** All research, speeches, solutions and more must reflect your own work and your own ideas.

We are eager to see the engaging debate this committee will produce. We can't wait to welcome you all to the committee, so come prepared, stay curious, and give it your best!

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