

Trinidad and Tobago

The private security sector in Trinidad and Tobago

The private security sector in Trinidad and Tobago is growing rapidly and employs more than **50'000 private security personnel**, outnumbering public security forces **by a factor of 1.6**. With a high level of informality, reports suggest that the actual size of the industry is around three times larger than indicated by official figures. The growth of the sector is associated with experienced insecurity due to the increase in crime, rapid urbanisation, and economic growth of extractive industries and other businesses.

Advisory support to Trinidad and Tobago

National stakeholders called on the government to develop comprehensive private security regulations to raise standards in the industry and protect human rights, including the labour rights of PSC personnel. The advisory support in national private security regulation provided by the Montreux Document Secretariat focused on the following aspects:

Rationale for advisory support

In the absence of comprehensive regulations and accountability mechanisms, the activities of PSCs have raised valid concerns for the respect of human rights as well as international standards. The private security sector in Trinidad and Tobago poses several governance challenges, including:

- poor or inadequate standards and labor conditions;
- insufficient training for PSC personnel;
- lack of clear provisions on the use of force by private security guards.



Stakeholder mapping

To build a strong basis for informed policy-making, the MDF Secretariat mapped out the main national stakeholders and studied the national private security context.

This was carried out based on prior research and engagement with the Caribbean Community, and coordinated with the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC).



Practitioners Roundtables

Subsequently, MDF Secretariat facilitated two practitioners roundtables with national oversight actors (in particular, parliamentarians and civil society representatives) to further contextualize insights on the private security industry in Trinidad and Tobago, reflect on challenges for implementation of private security legislation and to introduce international norms and good practices on private security regulation.



Legal and regulatory reform

The MDF Secretariat thoroughly reviewed Trinidad and Tobago's draft bill on private security and provided extensive inputs with a particular focus on strengthening human rights protection, ensuring sufficient capacity of the private security regulatory authority, clarifying licensing requirements and the Use of Force by private security personnel as well as accountability and effective remedies to victims.

Outcomes

The national advisory project conducted by the Montreux Document Forum Secretariat facilitated a holistic and research-based approach to strengthening private security regulation in Trinidad and Tobago. The private security law is currently discussed in parliament.

DCAF highly encourages the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago to adopt the private security law. Upon adoption, the new law would allow to more effectively regulate the sector, strengthen the protection of human rights and address the high level of informality. First, a dedicated Private Security Regulatory Authority will be set up by in line with international norms and good practices. Further, monitoring and oversight of the private security industry will be strengthened; licensing requirements adopted and training of private security personnel improved.