



Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office

2022 UK Annual Update Report on the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights for Businesses Operating in Complex or Fragile Environments

This update report details the action the United Kingdom (UK) undertook in 2022 to implement the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (Voluntary Principles). As a member of the Voluntary Principles Initiative (VPI), the UK is required to produce a full report every three years and an update report every year on its work to implement the Voluntary Principles. The last full UK annual report, covering 2021, was published on 25 February 2022¹.

Commitment to the Voluntary Principles

The UK Government remains committed to supporting the growth, sustainability and impact of the VPI and considers the Voluntary Principles (VPs) a key framework in helping implement the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) alongside the UK National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights.

Throughout 2022, the UK continued to be an active participant in the VPI, including as a member of the VPI Steering Committee. The UK participated in the Annual Plenary held in Toronto in May, Government Pillar meetings and the Steering Committee Strategic Retreat held in November to support the ongoing

development and delivery of the VPs. The UK's engagement focused on the Strategic Evaluation of the Initiative to help shape future objectives of the VPI; the creation and launch of a new Brazilian In-Country Working Group, set up to tackle human rights and security related issues and changes to the VPI's admission process to provide clearer guidelines to better evaluate applicants.

We are pleased with the progress made in 2022 towards expanding the government pillar. The Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo was provisionally voted as an Engaged Member², and we hope this will provide the momentum for more African governments to join the initiative.

Promotion and Implementation of the Voluntary Principles

We have publicly expressed our support for the VPs and reported on our commitment in the UK Government's 2021 Annual Human Rights and Democracy Report³. In support of transparency within the VPI, the UK VPI Annual and Update Reports are published on GOV.UK and the UK. The UK encourages all participants in the VPI to make their reports publicly available.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/voluntary-principles-on-security-and-human-rights-for-businesses-operating-in-complex-or-fragile-environments-2021-uk-annual-report#:~:text=Corporate%20report-.Voluntary%20Principles%20on%20Security%20and%20Human%20Rights%20for%20businesses%20operating,and%20Human%20Rights%20in%202021>

² <https://www.voluntaryprinciples.org/news/voluntary-principles-initiative-welcomes-new-members-3/>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/human-rights-and-democracy-report-2021> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/human-rights-and-democracy-report-2021/human-rights-and-democracy-the-2021-foreign-commonwealth-development-office-report>



Mozambique: H.E Helena Mateus Kida, Minister of Justice, Constitutional and Religious Affairs meeting with H.E Helen Lewis, British High Commissioner and delegates of the VPI Mission to Mozambique

Country Focus

Globally, in 2022, the UK continued to support the VPs through its diplomatic missions including through an international delegation to strengthen implementation in country:

In **Colombia**, the British Embassy helped guide the development of a risk assessment and management toolkit to pilot in an extractive company's operational sites in Antioquia and Meta regions. The guide aims to help solidify the government's enhanced human rights due diligence in Colombia's conflict-affected mining regions. The Embassy also played an active role in the monitoring of an extractive company's implementation of the VPs to ensure they undertake meaningful steps towards strengthening their security operation.

In **Peru**, the British Embassy continued to support VP implementation through its participation in the VPs Working Group in Lima. The Group met twice in February and March to agree their annual work plan. Peru's political crisis and resulting polarisation hindered the work of the group, which meant that no further meetings were held in the following months. In December the British Embassy met with part of the Working Group's Steering Committee to discuss its future work and their initiative to re-invigorate the group. The appointment of a new leadership and re-examination of the group's structure and goals was agreed, in order to resume activities in the midst of increased social unrest in the country. Work is continuing, including attempts to forge links with the Working Group in Cusco through its leader, to re-engage with civil society organisations in Lima.

In **Mozambique**, the British High Commission funded webinars and workshops on the VPI in Maputo and Cabo Delgado in partnership with a local NGO, the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) and the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs. This led to the launch of Mozambique's two VPs Working Groups and renewed public dialogue and debate over the importance of the VPI for Mozambique⁴.

The British High Commission also funded training of 200 troops of the Mozambique Defence Armed Forces stationed in Cabo Delgado on compliance with human rights norms. The training broadened participants' understanding of the VPs, in particular the rules on the use of force.

In November, a VPI Mission to Mozambique consisting of government representatives (from the UK, Switzerland, Canada, and US), the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF), the International Code of Conduct Association for Private Security Providers (ICoCA), Lite Africa and Fund for Peace sought to strengthen political engagement with the VPI. The delegation met the Minister of Justice, Constitutional and Religious Affairs and Minister of National Defence and secured their commitment to nominate focal points to lead the process in country.

Also in November, a high level event in Maputo⁵ for key stakeholders raised awareness and continued dialogue on the VPs, including on the broader context of business, security and human rights⁶. In Pemba, the Regional Technical Working Group met and exchanged knowledge and best practice including discussions on current and future activities of the working group.



Mozambique: Ms. Helen Lewis, British High Commissioner and Mr Cristóvão Arthur Chume, Minister of Defence with the delegation of the VPI Mission to

Projects

The UK contributed £170,410 to the Security and Human Rights Implementation Mechanism (SHRIM), the multi-donor fund established by the UK in 2016 in partnership with DCAF to support targeted implementation of security and human rights good practice in a cost effective way in conflict affected and complex environments. Funding in 2021/22 brings the UK's total contribution to the SHRIM to £1,059,956 since its creation. Building on the UK's funding to the SHRIM, other donor support further amplified the benefits of the UK's contribution throughout 2022:

In **Colombia**, the Colombian Mining and Energy Committee on Security and Human Rights (CME), Regional Centre for Responsible Companies Entrepreneurship (CREER) and DCAF developed an implementation toolkit to facilitate the joint undertaking of security and human rights risk assessment and management by extractive companies, public security forces, and

⁴ <https://www.securityhumanrightshub.org/node/494>

⁵ <https://cddmoz.org/high-level-delegation-and-partners-reiterate-their-support-for-mozambiques-adhesion-to-the-voluntary-principles-initiative-2/>

⁶ <https://en-gb.facebook.com/CDDMoz/videos/702068264272020/>

communities to more effectively identify and help mitigate community-corporate conflicts.

In December, briefings on the toolkit for the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Mines, public institutions and companies, led to commitment from the government as well as an extractive company to field test the toolkit around an oil exploitation site in Puerto Gaitan. This has generated interest for the toolkit to become the standard to implement the governments Protocol for the Identification and Management of Security and Human Rights Risks between public security forces and extractive companies as part of the enhanced human rights due diligence in Colombia's conflict-affected mining regions.

In **Kenya**, DCAF and a local NGO partner, the Usalama Reforms Forum, delivered a practical guide and an online course "Private security governance challenges and the relevance of international norms and best practices: a guide for civil society and journalists in Kenya"⁷. In April, the guide was presented at a launch event⁸ for civil society, media representatives, private security industry actors and representatives of Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) to emphasize their oversight functions for the Industry to secure their more active role in monitoring, identifying, and promoting solutions that will improve the human rights compliance of private security actors in Kenya.

The project further facilitated the creation of a network of CSOs, journalists, private sector clients and security provider associations who will seek to reinvigorate this work beyond 2022.

In **Mozambique**, DCAF and its national partner, the Center for Democracy and Development (CDD) created two VP Working Groups: a National Working Group in Maputo and an Operational VPs Working Group in Cabo Delgado. Both groups are led by the Ministry of Justice, Constitutional and Religious Affairs. Funding also supported the delivery of a research paper "Mozambique and the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights: Incentives for engagement and implementation", through Chatham House, on the VPs and their relevance for Mozambique⁹. Funding also supported a baseline study on "Implementing the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights in Cabo Delgado, Mozambique"¹⁰ to identify the thematic priorities for the Regional Technical Working Group in Cabo Delgado for members and partners. In November, the UK led a multi-stakeholder delegation of the Voluntary Principles Initiative to Mozambique, resulting in deepened commitment by the government to join the Initiative and to support VPs implementation throughout the country.

In **Nigeria**, DCAF supported capacity building events organised by Prisoners Rehabilitation and Welfare Action (PRAWA), in partnership with LITE-Africa, to facilitate the resolution of community-based security and human rights concerns with Ozawa and Ibeno community members. This fostered the first-ever participation of community groups in national meetings between the Nigerian government, companies and communities in this multi-stakeholder forum in March. The project helped change perceptions of company-community dialogue, willingness to continue such exchanges and strengthened government

⁷ <https://www.observatoire-securite-privee.org/en/content/launch-event-publication-%E2%80%9Cprivate-security-governance-challenges-and-relevance-international>

⁸ <https://www.observatoire-securite-privee.org/en/content/launch-event-publication-%E2%80%9Cprivate-security-governance-challenges-and-relevance-international>

⁹ <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/2021-11-24-Mozambique-and-the-voluntary-principles-on-human-rights-vandome-vines.pdf>

¹⁰ [Implementing the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights in Cabo Delgado, Mozambique 2 \(2\) \(securityhumanrightshub.org\)](https://www.implementingthevp.org/2021/11/24/mozambique-2-2/)

engagement in the VPs. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) agreed to engage further and to support monitoring at regional level with NHRC State Coordinators.



Nigeria: Owaza community engagement in meetings on the Voluntary Principles

Public and Private Security

The VPs provide a framework for businesses to co-operate with the implementation of security by public and private security providers. The UK encourages extractive companies working with public security to use the VPs as a method to reduce conflict and human rights incidents. The UK played a leading role in the drafting of the International Code of Conduct for Security Providers (ICoC) in 2010, which sets out principles for security providers and related standards and the launch of the oversight mechanism, the International Code of Conduct Association for Security Providers (ICoCA).

The UK continues to take a leading role in ICoCA through the UK's role as a Board Director. The UK supported ICoCA's increased focus on expanding the definition of security services, development of thematic issues on working conditions, migration and technology; and participated in the Annual General Assembly in December on discussions around the development of a ten-

year strategic plan 2023-2032 to set the direction of the Association. The UK also engaged in outreach meetings with States to grow the government pillar.

The UK continued to engage with industry partner, the Security in Complex Environments Group (SCEG), a special interest group for private and maritime security companies. This has included UK participation in meetings on the abolition of the Indian Ocean High Risk Area (HRA) for piracy and a SCEG hosted event on 'Security on the Northern Flank' which discussed the security challenges posed to Sweden and Finland by their border with Russia and in the Baltic Sea.

Projects

UK funding in 2022 enabled ICoCA to build the capacity of private security providers and their clients through:

- a. The translation of a Prevention of Sexual, Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) online training¹¹ course into Arabic, Chinese, French, Portuguese, Russian, Somali, Spanish and Swahili extending the impact to non-English speaking Private Security Personnel. In total, 1,800 individuals from 52 companies across Africa, Europe and Middle East completed the training building their capacity on how to deal with sexual violence and to prevent abuses from occurring.
- b. An online course on the Code of Conduct¹² and its translation into Arabic, Chinese, French, Portuguese, Russian, Somali, Spanish and Swahili. The course was completed by 1,156 individuals in 54 countries, raising their awareness on the use of force, prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading

¹¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QdtF2BcpmEk&t=7s>

¹² [NEW ONLINE TRAINING COURSES NOW AVAILABLE - ICoCA - International Code of Conduct Association](#)

treatment ensuring that front line security guards are better prepared to respect human rights during their day-to-day work. The course is now mandatory training for a number of private security companies operating in Iraq, east Africa, and Israel/Palestine.

- c. A Procurement Guide for Contracting Responsible Private Security Providers¹³ and campaign to promote it, which resulted in the guide being viewed almost one million times on social media platforms and downloaded 600 times. The campaign generated interest from multi-national organisations with an increasing number of clients introducing the requirements for ICoCA Membership in their tender process, driving private security companies to enquire about joining the Association. 22 private security companies joined ICoCA during the year. The guide provides

organisations with the steps to embed human rights due diligence in their procurement process and promote duty of care to communities where private security providers operate

Lessons Learned

This report has highlighted the importance of collective action as a way to embed security and human rights.

Shared experience has proved to be the most effective type of outreach to encourage more governments and the extractive industry to implement the Voluntary Principles and strengthen private security sector governance. In-country experiences has been persuasive and helped demonstrate the value added benefit and positive impact that the Voluntary Principles.

¹³ [Procurement Guide - ICoCA - International Code of Conduct Association](#)