



Reinforcing Capacities for Civil Society Oversight of the Private Security Sector in Africa

CIVIL SOCIETY AND PRIVATE SECURITY IN AFRICA

Private security is burgeoning in Africa with a growing demand for services ranging from protection of individuals and facilities to training of public security forces and counter-piracy. The private security industry in many African states is poorly regulated, undermining social and economic development and creating a permissive environment for human rights abuses. Civil society organizations (CSOs) play a fundamental role in promoting accountability and transparency. As the private security industry grows in significance, it is essential that engaged and capable CSOs ensure good governance in this sector. However, the lack of available information, as well as inadequate monitoring mechanisms, can limit the impact of CSO engagement.

To play an effective role in promoting good private security governance, the exchange of experiences, challenges and good practices is essential. Established in 2014 with the support of DCAF, the **Private Security Governance Observatory** seeks to reinforce African civil society in order to play a full role in promoting good governance of the private security sector. From 20 members in 2014, there are currently 82 CSO members of the Observatory, representing 18 countries.¹

The work of the Observatory is facilitated through an interactive online platform which enables the sharing of experiences: <http://observatoire-securite-privee.org/en/>

¹ Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, and Togo.





The project seeks to reinforce the role of African civil society to promote effective oversight and accountability of the private security sector. In order to better understand the realities on the ground, the Observatory fosters applied research: national baseline studies have been conducted in Kenya, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Guinea. The Observatory has developed important knowledge products including a Practical Guidance Tool for CSOs: “The Role of Civil Society Organizations in the Good Governance of the Private Security Sector”. This tool has been used to support CSOs in different national settings; in Kenya a workshop on the role of CSOs and the media in private security regulation led to the CSO *Usalama Reforms Forum* developing radio content and delivering interviews on the topic of private security through community radio.

“ Thanks to this workshop, I acquired knowledge that will have a positive impact on communities’ rights. I intend to share what I have learnt with the other CSOs of South Kivu who could not participate in these activities.

Mr. Blaise Bubala,
representing l’Action des Chrétiens Activistes des Droits de l’Homme Ashabundad,
ACADHOSHA, D.R. Congo



CSO members of the Observatory have organized national level events, fostering dialogue and engaging constructively with actors from the industry and government. National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) are also being engaged; in Mali this has led to the NHRI requesting regular meetings with local CSOs to discuss human rights concerns around private security. Through targeted awareness raising, international initiatives are being reinforced with many CSOs becoming members of the International Code of Conduct Association (ICoCA) and taking an active role in the Montreux Document Forum.

The Security and Human Rights Implementation Mechanism (SHRIM) - Enabling Multistakeholder Action

The DCAF SHRIM supports coherent, targeted and cost-effective security, development and human rights programming in fragile contexts. This project was enabled thanks to the support of the United Kingdom and other donors.
