

The G4S Record: Human Rights Violations, Corruption and Management Failures

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Executive Summary

G4S is a British multinational corporation that has grown to be the largest security company in the world. The company operates in 120 countries, and employs more than 50,000 employees in the U.S. It provides a broad array of security services to government, corporate, and industrial clients.

G4S has been plagued by scandals and negative media coverage linked to violations of human rights, ripping off taxpayers, and gross mismanagement. As a result, the company has come under sharp criticism from Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and ColorofChange.com. Examples of high profile G4S problems include:

- **G4S Involvement Israeli Prisons and Check Points:** G4S provides security services and equipment for Israeli prisons that routinely violate the human rights of children and Palestinian adults. Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and Defense for Children International have published multiple reports documenting these abuses. This has led international leaders including Archbishop Desmond Tutu to speak out against G4S complicity in violations of international law.
- **G4S Security Subsidiary Overbilling Miami Taxpayers:** Wackenhut, a G4S Subsidiary, engaged in massive overbilling scheme that led to a \$7 million settlement with Miami-Dade County. Lawyers for a whistle-blower who tipped off authorities estimated that the actual amount of overbilling was in the range of \$17 to \$22 million. Public officials engaged in a five-year legal battle with the company to reach a settlement.
- **G4S Overcharging UK Government:** In November 2013, G4S admitted it had overcharged the British Ministry of Justice approximately \$38 million for electronic monitoring services. G4S had a “tagging” contract to monitor offenders with electronic ankle bracelets. Government investigations determined that G4S was billing for monitors that didn’t exist. The company issued an apology to the British Ministry of Justice and was forced to reimburse the charges.¹
- **Critical Failures in Employee Screening:** In 2009, G4S security guard Danny Fitzsimons shot and killed two of his fellow security officers within 36 hours of arriving on the job in Iraq.² The BBC found that prior to hiring Fitzsimons, another G4S employee warned the company that Fitzsimons was unstable and had a violent criminal past. When G4S hired Fitzsimons, he was facing outstanding criminal charges of assault and a firearms offense. Doctors had also diagnosed him as having post-traumatic stress disorder.

¹ <http://www.theguardian.com/business/2013/nov/19/g4s-admits-overcharging-ministry-of-justice-tagging>

² http://www.securitywatchdog.org.uk/blog/News_and_Events/post/critical-failures-highlighted-in-g4s-screening-procedures/

In Florida, The ABC Action News I-Team reported that G4S hires employees with troubling pasts. G4S employee Vivianne Hernandez-Trejo was fired after being accused of having sexual relations with a teenage boy. The I-Team reported that 5 months earlier, Hernandez-Trujio had been fired from the Florida Department of Corrections for having inappropriate sexual relations with an inmate. The I-Team also reported that G4S employee Richard Bostic, Jr. who was charged with sexually molesting two boys at Palmetto Youth Academy, had already been on probation for felony habitual driving without a license and contempt of court.³

- **Security Guards Cheating on Terrorism Drills at Nuclear Complex:** At the Y-12 National Security Complex – a weapons-grade uranium facility in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, at least seven instances were documented of G4S security guards sleeping on the job.⁴ At the same facility, as reported on CBS 60 Minutes, security guards were cheating on terrorism drills.⁵
- **Gross Mismanagement of Florida Youth Detention Centers:** G4S operates 23 youth detention facilities in Florida. Its mismanagement of these facilities has been so extensive, that ColorOfChange.org, the nation's largest online civil rights organization has called on the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (FDJJ) to stop contracting with G4S and other for-profit prison contractors. ColorOfChange.org specifically urged the FDJJ to not renew any contracts with G4S that were valued at \$120 million.⁶ In the past year, problems at the facilities include:

July 2015: State Attorney Jerry Hill and Polk County Sheriff Grady Judd held a press conference to discuss a grand jury report on the G4S-operated, Highlands Youth Academy in Avon Park, Florida.⁷ The grand jury issued a report calling the G4S facility a “disgrace,” and calling for the facility to be permanently shut down.

May 2015: In Stuart, Florida, two employees working for Martin Girls Academy are suing the G4S to be reinstated after being fired in retaliation for reporting inappropriate sexual behavior between a supervisor and a resident minor at the facility.⁸

March 2015: The latest of three riots occurred at the Les Peters Academy that G4S operates in Tampa, Florida. Since 2011, Tampa Police records show officers have been called 42 times to respond to problems at Les Peters Academy.

January 2015: Police were called to the G4S East-Lake Academy near Tampa, Florida, when a riot was reported in the girls' wing of the facility. Deputies told a local news station that more needs to be done to keep everyone safe.⁹

³ <http://www.abcactionnews.com/news/local-news/i-team-investigates/i-team-g4s-hires-employees-with-troubling-pasts>

⁴ <http://www.knoxnews.com/news/local-news/new-report-7-guards-caught-sleeping-y12>

⁵ <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/nuclear-insecurity-12-02-2004/>

⁶ <http://www.colorofchange.org/press/releases/2014/6/9/civil-rights-organization-demands-end-floridas-pro/>

⁷ http://www.baynews9.com/content/news/baynews9/news/article.html/content/news/articles/bn9/2015/7/20/avon_park_riots.html

⁸ http://www.tcpalm.com/news/local-news/martin-county/lawsuit-filed-against-company-that-runs-martin-girls-academy_68368030

⁹ <http://www.wtsp.com/story/news/local/2015/01/21/riot-juvenile/22123445/>

The G4S Track Record: Violations of Human Rights, Mismanagement and Corruption

A. G4S Contracts in Israel and the Palestinian Occupied Territories

Who Profits, a research project of the Coalition of Women for Peace, has done extensive research on G4S and its role in supporting Israel's illegal occupation of Palestine.¹⁰ Through its Israeli subsidiary, G4S provides security systems for Israeli prisons and detention centers in Israel and the occupied Palestinian Territories. While not the focus of this report, G4S also provides security services for Israeli military checkpoints, businesses operating in illegal settlements, and the Israeli police headquarters in the occupied West Bank.¹¹

1. G4S Complicity in Israeli Prison System*

As described on the WeDivest.org website:

"In 2007, G4S Israel signed a contract with the Israel Prison Authority (IPA), agreeing to provide security systems for IPA facilities in occupied territory and inside Israel. G4S Israel installed and operates the entire security system of the Ktziot Prison, the central control room of the Megido Prison, and security services to Damon prison. The Ktziot, Megido, and Damon Prisons, located inside Israel, are incarceration facilities designated for Palestinian political prisoners.

Holding prisoners from occupied territory within Israel is in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits the relocation of prisoners; [Article 76 reads](#): "Protected persons accused of offenses shall be detained in the occupied country, and if convicted they shall serve their sentences therein." Additionally, the location of prisons within Israel further hinders visitation by family members living in occupied territory who need special permits that are often refused for 'security considerations.'

G4S installed peripheral defense systems on the walls surrounding the Ofer prison and operates a central control room for the entire Ofer compound. Ofer is an Israeli prison for Palestinian political prisoners, located in the West Bank, near the settlement of Givat Ze'ev. In addition, G4S provides security systems for Hasharon compound – Rimonim prison, Abu Kabir, Kishon ("Al-Jalameh") and Jerusalem ("Russian Compound") detention and interrogation facilities."¹²

In April 2015, Corporate Watch, a UK based research group, issued a report entitled *Imprisoned Voices: Corporate Complicity in the Israeli Prison System*. According to this report, "800,000 Palestinians have been detained by the Israeli authorities since the beginning of the occupation,

¹⁰ <http://www.whoprofits.org/sites/default/files/WhoProfits-PrivateSecurity-G4S.pdf>

¹¹ <https://wedivest.org/company/68/g4s#.VVSUmNNVhBc>

¹² Ibid.

* It should be noted that due to pressure from the BDS Movement, G4S has announced that it will not renew contracts in the OPT and Israel in 2017. The BDS Movement has responded by continuing its campaign, demanding that G4S immediately sever all business activities in Israel and the OPT.

meaning that 40 percent of the Palestinian men have been arrested at least once.”¹³ Corporate Watch reports:

- Currently, 6,500 Palestinians are prisoners in the Israeli Prison System;
- 454 Palestinians are held without charges under the administrative detention laws;
- 200 children under the age of 18 are in Israeli prisons and treated as adults;
- 14 Palestinian legislators and one government minister are currently serving prison terms.

2. Administrative Detention of Prisoners in G4S Equipped Prisons

Administrative detention is the imprisonment of Palestinians without charge or trial and on the basis of secret evidence for up to six-month periods, indefinitely renewable by Israeli military courts.¹⁴

According to B’Tselem, an Israeli human rights organization that monitors the Occupied Territories, “Israel’s use of administrative detention blatantly violates the restrictions of international law. Israel carries it out in a highly classified manner that denies detainees the possibility of mounting a proper defense. Israel has placed thousands of Palestinians in administrative detention for prolonged periods of time, without trying them, without informing them of the charges against them, and without allowing them or their counsel to examine the evidence. In this way, the military judicial system ignores the right to freedom and due process, the right of defendants to state their case, and the presumption of innocence, all of which are protections clearly enshrined in both Israeli and international law.”¹⁵

Human rights organizations throughout the world have demanded that Israel end administrative detention of Palestinian prisoners. In a report entitled, *Starved for Justice, Palestinians Detained Without Trial by Israel*, Amnesty International is highly critical of Israel for “placing Palestinian hunger strikers in solitary confinement and jailing non-violent Palestinian activists”.¹⁶

Sarah Leah Whitson, the Middle East Director for Human Rights Watch said, “It is outrageous that Israel has locked these men [and women] up for months without either charging them with crimes or allowing them to see the evidence it says it has against them.”¹⁷

Prisoners held under administrative detention have often used hunger strikes to protest incarceration without due process, as well as conditions in Israeli prisons. In 2012, more than 2000 political prisoners ended their hunger strike when the Israeli government agreed to release 19 Palestinians from long-term solitary confinement and limit the use of administrative detentions. However, Israel did not honor this agreement. According to the U.S. National Lawyers’ Guild, “The treatment of 2014’s hunger strikers was brutal. They were isolated, in

¹³ <http://www.corporatewatch.org/news/2015/apr/17/imprisoned-voices-corporate-complicity-israeli-prison-system>

¹⁴ <http://samidoun.net/category/campaigns/administrative-detention/>

¹⁵ http://www.btselem.org/administrative_detention

¹⁶ <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/amnesty-international-urges-israel-end-administrative-detention-of-palestinian-prisoners-1.434818>

¹⁷ <http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/02/23/israel-end-abusive-detention-practices>

solitary confinement; the military withheld vitamins and salt; and the guards would cook and eat their food in front of the hunger strikers in an effort to torture and demoralize them.¹⁸

3. Children Jailed in G4S Equipped Prisons

Of the nearly 200 children held in Israeli prisons, many are accused of throwing stones. Under Military Order 1651, throwing stones can carry a ten-year jail sentence.¹⁹ According to Brad Parker, an attorney with Defense for Children International, Palestine Section, "Ill treatment of Palestinian children in the Israeli military detention system is widespread and systematic, as nearly three out of four kids experience some form of physical violence during arrest, transfer or interrogation."²⁰

In 2013, UNICEF issued a report entitled, Children in Israeli Military Detention.²¹ UNICEF describes how children are arrested, interrogated and incarcerated by the Israeli military.

Many children are arrested in the middle of the night, awakened at their homes by heavily armed soldiers. Some children are arrested in the streets near their homes, near bypass roads used by Israeli settlers or at army checkpoints inside the West Bank. Many of the children arrested at home wake up to the frightening sound of soldiers banging loudly on their front door and shouting instructions for the family to leave the house.

For some of the children, what follows is a chaotic and frightening scene, in which furniture and windows are sometimes broken, accusations and verbal threats are shouted, and family members are forced to stand outside in their night clothes as the accused child is forcibly removed from the home and taken away with vague explanations such as "he is coming with us and we will return him later", or simply that the child is "wanted". Few children or parents are informed as to where the child is being taken, why or for how long.

Once a child has been identified, he or she is hand-tied and blindfolded and led to a waiting military vehicle for transfer to an interrogation site. Children are often prevented from saying goodbye to their parents and from putting on appropriate clothing for the journey. When the child is not transferred directly to an interrogation centre, he is often taken to another location, frequently a settlement in the West Bank, where he may wait until after daybreak before continuing the trip to the interrogation centre.

Many children are subjected to ill-treatment during the journey to the interrogation centre. Some endure physical or verbal abuse; some suffer from painful restraints or from being forced to lie on the hard floor of the vehicle. The transfer process can take many hours and often includes intermediate stops at settlements or military bases where further ill-treatment is reported, including in some cases prolonged exposure to the elements and a lack of water, food or toilet facilities.

The report goes on to describe how children are treated at the interrogation site:

The absence of independent oversight of the interrogation process is significant, because third-party scrutiny of the methods of interrogation can be an effective measure to limit the use of ill-treatment and other coercive techniques during questioning. This oversight can be provided by having the child's lawyer and family member present during

¹⁸ <http://www.nlginternational.org/report/PrisonersOfInjustice-Report.pdf>

¹⁹ <http://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21583674-release-prisoners-touches-palestinians-their-core-why-they-count>

²⁰ <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/04/israeli-courts-convict-hundreds-palestinian-children-150405064416744.html>

²¹ http://www.unicef.org/oPt/UNICEF_oPt_Children_in_Israeli_Military_Detention_Observations_and_Recommendations_-_6_March_2013.pdf

questioning and by making an audio-visual recording of the proceedings. Recording the proceedings, implemented in a number of jurisdictions (including the Israeli civilian legal system in certain circumstances) provides some measure of protection to the detainee against ill-treatment. It also protects the interrogator against false allegations of wrongdoing.

The interrogation mixes intimidation, threats and physical violence, with the clear purpose of forcing the child to confess. Children are restrained during the interrogation, in some cases to the chair they are sitting on. This sometimes continues for extended periods of time, resulting in pain to their hands, back and legs. Children have been threatened with death, physical violence, solitary confinement and sexual assault, against themselves or a family member.

Most children confess at the end of the interrogation. The interrogator prints out some forms and orders the child to sign them, though the child often lacks a proper understanding of their contents. In most cases the forms are in Hebrew, which the overwhelming majority of Palestinian children do not understand.

After interrogation, children are brought before a military court in “leg chains and shackles, wearing prison uniforms.” Charges before the court are often based solely on the confessions that have been obtained under duress. UNICEF describes the process as follow:

Most children see their lawyers for the first time when they are brought to the court. Not all lawyers have easy access to the applicable military orders as they are not always made available in Arabic, as is required under international law.³⁷ Further, some Israeli criminal legislation, which also applies in the military courts, has never been translated into Arabic. This failure to make the applicable laws (as amended) and decisions of the courts readily available in Arabic places Palestinian defence lawyers at a distinct disadvantage and jeopardizes an accused child’s chances of receiving a fair trial.³⁸ A military court judge is authorized to extend the initial four-day period³⁹ of detention for a period not exceeding 30 days. Each time the period of detention expires, the judge can extend it again, up to a maximum of 188 days, with a military judge reviewing the detention every 30 days.⁴⁰ These provisions are not in line with the international standard requiring that a child be brought before a judge within the first 24 hours after arrest, with a review every two weeks thereafter.

There are dozens of news reports about Palestinian children who have been imprisoned. In most, if not all cases, these children are held in prisons or detention centers that are equipped by G4S. Some examples are as follows:

- July 22, 2015: Amer Bajawi, age 14, has been sitting in an Israeli military prison for two months awaiting trial. Balawi is held in Megiddo Prison inside Israel. G4S has a contract to provide security services for the Megiddo Prison control room. On May 23, 2015, Balawi was hiding in an olive tree with his friend on the edge of Yabad, his home village in the occupied [West Bank](#), when they were spotted and shouted down by Israeli soldiers. The two teens were immediately cuffed and blindfolded on suspicion of throwing stones at cars driven by Israeli settlers returning home to a nearby Jewish-only settlement, according to an affidavit taken on 1 June by Defense of Children International – Palestine. During the first six hours of detention and interrogation, Amer was denied use of a toilet. With his wrists cuffed, he was made to sit on the floor of a military jeep while being shuffled to three different detention centers. In interrogation, he confessed to throwing rocks and now faces a sentence of 10 years in prison – most likely a prison where G4S provides security services.²²

²² <https://electronicintifada.net/content/palestinian-child-faces-10-years-israeli-jail/14707>

- May 6, 2015: Statistics on Palestinian minors in the custody of the Israeli security forces. At the end of March 2015, 182 Palestinian minors were held in Israeli prisons as security detainees and prisoners. Another 2 Palestinian minors were held in Israel Prison Service facilities for being in Israel illegally.²³
- April 30, 2015: Police arrested and detained a 9-year-old boy from Wadi Joz in East Jerusalem on Tuesday, without allowing his parents to meet with him. Part of the time the child was held in a squad car, and during questioning he was asked if he wanted to be a martyr. Undercover operatives stopped their patrol car near the boy and his older brother, 12, on Tuesday at around 7:30 P.M., and arrested them both. According to police, the boys had just thrown rocks at a bus. By law, children under 12 years of age, the age of criminal responsibility, may not be arrested or detained. The children were taken by squad car to National Police Headquarters, where family members saw them in the vehicle in the parking lot. At 11:30 P.M. the children were taken to the Shalem police station. The 9-year-old was not released to his parents until 3:30 A.M. The police brought the older brother to court yesterday and requested a three-day remand, but the judge ordered him released under restrictions.²⁴
- April 6, 2015: Arrested on Christmas Day, 15-year-old remains behind Israeli bars. Hussam al-Sheikh held up a picture of his 15-year-old son, Khaled, and explained how Israeli soldiers arrested him on Christmas Day. Khaled was arrested while playing with friends near [Israel's wall in the occupied West Bank](#) to the south of Beit Anan, the [Jerusalem](#)-area village where the al-Sheikh family lives. Israeli soldiers accused him of throwing stones, although Hussam maintains there was no one in the area to hurt.²⁵
- February 17, 2015: Journalism Student & Folk Dancer, Lina Khattab, Sentenced to Six Months. The Israeli military court in the Ofer prison, in the occupied West Bank, sentenced on Monday, a Palestinian journalism student who is also a Folk Dancer and activist, Lina Khattab, to six months imprisonment and a 6000 Shekel fine. The court also instated a three-year suspended sentence of Khattab, 17 years of age, for what it called "participating in a protest in solidarity with Palestinian political prisoners," in front of the Ofer prison.²⁶
- March 14, 2013: An Israeli woman and her three daughters traveling between settlements on the West Bank were involved in a serious auto accident causing a 3 year-old girl to be paralyzed and suffer brain damage. Following the accident, Israeli soldiers detained 11 Palestinian teenagers from the town of Hares for throwing stones at vehicles and causing the accident. After arrest and interrogation, six of the boys were released and five were charged with 25 counts of attempted murder. Defense for Children International – Palestine reports that the boys were held in solitary confinement, beaten and intimidated into confessing to throwing stones. The boys say they confessed under duress and now deny the charges. The boys' names are Ali Shamlawi, Mohammed Kleib, Mohammad Suleiman, Tamer Souf, and

²³ http://www.btselem.org/statistics/minors_in_custody

²⁴ <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/1.654234>

²⁵ <http://electronicintifada.net/content/arrested-christmas-day-15-year-old-remains-behind-israeli-bars/14398>

²⁶ <http://www.imemc.org/article/70620>

Ammar Souf.²⁷ The boys are being tried as adults and face lengthy prison sentences. They have court appearances scheduled in the coming month.²⁸

4. Palestinian Legislators and Human Rights Activists Held in G4S Equipped Prisons

Many Palestinians have been jailed in G4S equipped prisons for engaging in non-violent protests. The Israeli government has charged these activists for participating in “illegal demonstrations.” For example, in response to arrest of Palestinian activists at the separation wall, Human Rights Watch has said, “The Israeli authorities are effectively banning peaceful expression of political speech by bringing spurious charges against demonstrators, plus detaining children and adults without basic due process protections.”²⁹

Some of the high-profile political prisoners who are currently detained are Palestinian legislators and human rights activists. Below are profiles of some of these leaders.

Khalida Jarrar: Palestinian Parliament Member, Held in Ofer Prison

On April 2, 2015, Khalida Jarrar was arrested in her home in Ramalla. She is held in Ofer Prison where G4S installed the peripheral defense system and operates the prison’s central control room. In addition to serving as an elected official with the Palestinian Legislative Council, she is a former executive director and current board member of the Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association.³⁰ In an opinion piece in Haaretz, the editorial board called for Jarrar’s release. The Haaretz editorial states, “Judging by all the evidence, Jarrar is not a terrorist but rather a nonviolent activist who is working to liberate her people from the occupation.”³¹

On May 28, an Israeli military judge ruled that Jarrar be released on bail, stating that the prosecution’s case was based on insufficient and dated evidence. Prosecutors appealed the ruling, and the court reversed its decision, requiring that Jarrar be held until all legal proceeding are concluded. She continues to be held in Ofer Prison and her next hearing is scheduled for August 4, 2015.

Mohammad Al-Natsheh: Palestinian Member of Parliament, Held in Megiddo Prison

Al-Natsheh was arrested on March 27, 2013. He has been arrested 10 times and has served a total of 18 years in Israeli prisons. In January 2015, just before he was due to be released, Israeli military authorities extended his administrative detention for the fifth consecutive time. The

²⁷<http://www.dcipalestine.org/palestinian-teen-charged-with-attempted-murder-for-stone-throwing-confessed-after-torture>

²⁸<http://samidoun.net/2015/04/hares-boys-to-face-military-court-appearances-in-the-coming-month/>

²⁹<http://www.hrw.org/news/2010/03/05/israel-end-crackdown-anti-wall-activists>

³⁰<http://mondoweiss.net/2015/04/palestinian-parliamentarian-arrested>

³¹<http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/1.653530>

Israeli military bases his detention on secret documents that are not available to his attorneys.³² Al-Natsheh is held in Megiddo Prison inside Israel. G4S has a contract to provide security services for the Megiddo Prison control room.

Mahmoud Ramahi, Secretary-General of the Palestinian Legislative Council, Held in Ketziot Prison

Ramahi's most recent arrest was on November 23, 2012, less than 5 months after he was released from a previous period of administrative detention. Ramahi told Haaretz that he was arrested because he was working on the Palestinian reconciliation process between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank. This is the fourth time he has been arrested and placed under administrative detention. As with other administrative detention cases, the reasons for Ramahi's arrest is based on information kept secret by the Israeli government. Ramahi's lawyers have not been given the reasons for his arrest and he has not been afforded due process to defend himself.³³ Ramahi is held at Ketziot Prison, where G4S provides security systems.

Ayman Nasser, Legal Unit Coordinator at Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, Held at Ofer Prison

Nassar was arrested on October 15, 2012 – it is the third time he has been placed under administrative detention. He is the legal coordinator of the Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association. According to Addameer, "Since 2008 Ayman has been working with Addameer as a researcher in its documentation unit and has represented Addameer in many local human rights coalitions, including the Coalition against Torture and the Coalition against the Death Penalty. He is also Addameer's representative on the 'High Committee for Palestinian Political Prisoners', which includes various human rights organizations, representatives from the Ministry of Prisoners Affairs and political parties that advocate on behalf of Palestinian political prisoners."³⁴ Nassar is being held under administrative detention and has not been charged with any crime. The U.S. National Lawyers Guild International Committee has called on the Israeli government to release Nassar.³⁵ He is being held at Ofer Prison where G4S installed the peripheral defense system and operates the prison's central control room.

Shireen Issawi, Human Rights Lawyer, Reports She is Being Held in Hasharon or Ramla Prison

³² <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/news/middle-east/16515-administrative-detention-of-mp-renewed-for-fifth-time-1-day-before-release>

³³ <http://www.addameer.org/etemplate.php?id=330>

³⁴ <http://addameer.org/etemplate.php?id=526>

³⁵ <http://www.nlginternational.org/report/Letter-NLG-Afroni-AymanNasser.pdf>

Shireen Issawi was arrested on March 6, 2014. She is a human rights lawyer and prominent advocate for Palestinian prisoner rights from occupied East Jerusalem. She has been held under administrative detention for 17 months. On May 14, 2015, it was reported that Issawi was beginning an open-ended hunger strike to protest her detention.³⁶

While in prison, Issawi received the **2014 Alkarama Award for Human Rights Defenders**, which is presented to individuals or organizations that have made major contributions to protecting human rights in the Arab world. When the award was announced, Maurad Dhina, Alkarama's Executive Director said, "The Alkarama Foundation is proud to honor Shireen Issawi for her significant work, incredible bravery and unfailing commitment in exposing the violations committed by the Israeli authorities against Palestinian human rights defenders. Shireen could not have been more aware of the risks she was taking in defending the cause of Palestinian political prisoners; yet, she has tirelessly and peacefully worked to bring change to the issue of Palestinian prisoners' conditions and rights."³⁷ Alkarama released a video on Shireen Issawi – see link: <https://youtu.be/YVW5ATHBXPk>

Bushra Al-Taweel, Journalist and Human Rights Activist, Held in Hasharon Prison

Bushra Al-Taweel was arrested on July 2, 2014. She is a 21 year-old student and journalist who performs voluntary work for the Aneen Al-Qaid news organization which publishes information about Palestinian prisoner issues. She also performs voluntary work for the Prisoners Club and is a participant in a European Union sponsored project on documenting human rights violations specifically relating to human rights defenders. Al-Taweel was previously arrested and held under administrative detention at the age of 17. On May 17, 2015, Al-Taweel was released from prison.³⁸

B. G4S Management of For-Profit Juvenile Detention Centers

The juvenile justice system is ostensibly meant to rehabilitate young people and offer services and supports so that they can become healthy and productive adults. Private for-profit prisons squarely undermine good juvenile justice practices because these companies' business models predicate high incarceration and recidivism rates for kids so that they can continue to fill beds in their facilities.³⁹ They reinforce the school-to-prison pipeline that takes kids who might benefit from additional education and counseling services, and funnels them into a system where they are isolated, punished and criminalized.⁴⁰

³⁶ <http://www.imemc.org/article/67794>

³⁷ <http://en.alkarama.org/1505-palestinian-lawyer-shireen-issawi-to-receive-2014-alkarama-award-for-human-rights-defenders>

³⁸ <http://addameer.org/etemplate.php?id=723>

³⁹ <https://www.aclu.org/blog/perhaps-saddest-profit-motive-ever>

⁴⁰ <https://www.aclu.org/issues/racial-justice/race-and-inequality-education/school-prison-pipeline>

1. G4S Youth Detention in the U.S.

According to the G4S USA website, the company operates 27 for-profit facilities for children who have entered the juvenile justice system. G4S has one facility in Arkansas, one in Tennessee, one in Texas, and 23 facilities in Florida.

In Florida, G4S facilities have come under particular scrutiny. ColorOfChange.org, the nations' largest online civil rights organization has called on the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (FDJJ) to stop contracting with G4S and other for-profit prison contractors. ColorOfChange.org specifically urged the FDJJ to not renew any contracts with G4S that were valued at \$120 million.⁴¹

Other civil rights organizations have been outspoken on for-profit prisons and G4S. Dream Defenders has said that “. . . the private prison industry has continued in this country as a systemic form of oppression motivated by profit.”⁴² Black Lives Matter, an organization that has supported BDS and sent a delegation to Palestine, has said, “Our schools are designed to funnel our children into prisons. Our police departments have declared war against our community. Black people are exploited, caged, and killed to profit both the state and big business.”⁴³

There have been many press reports of problems and abuse at G4S juvenile facilities.

- July 2015: State Attorney Jerry Hill and Polk County Sheriff Grady Judd held a press conference to discuss a grand jury report on the G4S-operated, Highlands Youth Academy in Avon Park, Florida.⁴⁴ The grand jury issued a report calling the G4S facility a “disgrace,” and calling for the facility to be permanently shut down. Describing the \$40 million contract that G4S has to operate the facility, the grand jury report stated, “While the citizens are essentially being ripped off – the juveniles are being even more poorly served. The Highlands Youth Academy should cease to exist.”⁴⁵
- May 2015: In Stuart, Florida, two employees working for Martin Girls Academy are suing the G4S to be reinstated after being fired in retaliation for reporting inappropriate sexual behavior between a supervisor and a resident minor at the facility.⁴⁶
- March 2015: The latest of three riots occurred at the Les Peters Academy that G4S operates in Tampa, Florida. Since 2011, Tampa Police records show officers have been called 42 times to respond to problems at Les Peters Academy.

⁴¹ <http://www.colorofchange.org/press/releases/2014/6/9/civil-rights-organization-demands-end-floridas-pro/>

⁴² <http://www.dreamdefenders.org/slavestate>

⁴³ <http://blacklivesmatter.com/state-of-the-black-union/>

⁴⁴ http://www.baynews9.com/content/news/baynews9/news/article.html/content/news/articles/bn9/2015/7/20/avon_park_riots.html

⁴⁵ <http://media2.abcactionnews.com/document/2015/07/HighlandsYouthAcademyReport.pdf>, Page 2.

⁴⁶ http://www.tcpalm.com/news/local-news/martin-county/lawsuit-filed-against-company-that-runs-martin-girls-academy_68368030

- January 2015: Police were called to the G4S East-Lake Academy near Tampa, Florida, when a riot was reported in the girls wing of the facility. Deputies told a local news station that more needs to be done to keep everyone safe.⁴⁷
- August 2014: At a residential facility that G4S operates in Okeechobee, Florida, a staff member was charged with sexual battery after paying a 17 year-old victim for sex.⁴⁸
- August 2014: In Florida, a Youth Specialist employed at the Palmetto Youth Academy was arrested for sexually assaulting two boys, a 15 year-old and 17 year-old, while working at the facility. The employee was charged with sexual battery, lewd and lascivious molestation and introduction of harmful material to a minor.⁴⁹
- August 2014: The Disability Rights Center (DRC) of Arkansas issued an interim report on the G4S operated Arkansas Juvenile Assessment and Training Center. DRC is a federally funded organization that is authorized to protect the civil rights of Arkansas residents with disabilities. The report raises serious concerns regarding a rise in assaults at the facility, verbal and physical abuse by staff, limiting youths' access to family and attorney phone calls, and discrepancies in reports of youth placed under controlled observations and restraints. DRC found that a former employee who was fired for assaulting a resident was rehired and then fired again for assaulting another youth. In interviews with youth, DRC was told that staff would frequently "reward" youth for punching, or slapping another youth per staff order.⁵⁰
- August 2013: In Florida, when a riot broke out at the Avon Park Youth Academy operated by G4S, 150 police officers were called to respond. Seven residents at the detention center were injured, the most serious with a broken leg. It was reported that 18 of 20 buildings at the facility were destroyed.⁵¹
- November 2009: Lawsuits against G4S Hastings Youth Academy in Florida have cited use of excessive force and conspiring to cover it up. A family is sued G4S when their 17 year-old son's shoulder was shattered by an employee. In another lawsuit, a former employee is suing G4S under the Florida whistleblower law. The employee says she was fired by G4S for reporting incidents of excessive force against boys at the facility.⁵²

2. G4S Youth Detention in the United Kingdom

In May 2015, a UK regulatory agency issued a report on the Rainsbrook G4S youth prison in

⁴⁷ <http://www.wtsp.com/story/news/local/2015/01/21/riot-juvenile/22123445/>

⁴⁸ <http://www2.wptv.com/web/wptv/news/region-okeechobee-county/employee-at-state-juvenile-detention-center-charged-with-sexual-battery-of-a-minor-housed-therectress>

⁴⁹ <http://www.bradenton.com/2014/08/14/5301867/250000-bond-set-for-former-palmetto.html>

⁵⁰ <http://www.disabilityrightsar.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Arkansas-Juvenile-Assessment-and-Treatment-Center-Report.pdf>

⁵¹ <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/aug/19/florida-detention-center-riots-cup-noodles>

⁵² <http://jacksonville.com/news/metro/2009-11-25/story/lawsuits-raise-more-questions-about-troubled-youth-program-in-hastings>

Northamptonshire. The inspectors rated the G4S facility as “inadequate” – the lowest rating that they give. Inspectors reported, “ “Poor staff behaviour has led to some young people being subject to degrading treatment, racist comments, and being cared for by staff who were under the influence of illegal drugs.” Inspectors found that essential medical care to children was delayed at the direction of G4S staff. “The report said that doctors’ advice was often overruled by senior managers, meaning that one young inmate who suffered a fracture – potentially as a result of being restrained by guards – did not receive medical treatment for 15 hours.”

After reviewing the report, Frances Cook, Chief Executive of the Howard League for Penal Reform said, “This is the worst report on a prison I have ever seen because it is a catalogue of abusive practices that have been inflicted on young children who have no escape. I visited Rainsbrook some years ago and found it to be claustrophobic and obsessed with security, a recipe for exactly the disaster now happening. These child jails run for profit are secretive and should never have been set up in the first place. Rainsbrook should be closed immediately. No child is safe at this jail.”⁵³

C. G4S Contracts to Detain and Transport Immigrants

G4S is one of the corporations profiting most from the militarization of the US-Mexico border, as well as crackdowns on immigrants throughout the world.

1. G4S Immigration Contracts in the U.S.

G4S has a \$234 million contract with the U.S. Customs and Border Protection – a division of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). On its website, G4S describes the contract as follows: “G4S supports the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection (CPB), with its operations at the U.S. Mexico border and with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to transport illegal immigrants in selected urban areas. Annually, our G4S fortified buses log millions of miles and transport hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants, while freeing up front line CPB and ICE personnel for other essential services.”⁵⁴

In a promotional brochure, G4S brands its service as “The Bus No One Wants to Catch – The End of the Road for Illegal Immigrants.”⁵⁵ Raising the threat of “criminals, drug dealers and potential terrorists,” the website reports, “a team of 600 G4S customs protection officers operate more than 100 buses and vans in order to carry the huge number of apprehended individuals, the majority of whom are Mexican, to the processing centers.”⁵⁶

⁵³ <http://www.howardleague.org/rainsbrook/>

⁵⁴ http://www.g4s.us/~media/Files/USA/G4S_Gov_Services1.pdf

⁵⁵ <http://www.g4s.us/~media/files/usa/pdf-case-studies/customs%20and%20border%20patrol%20112311%20final.ashx>

⁵⁶ Ibid.

In March 2012, activists chained themselves together and blocked the entrance to the G4S transportation headquarters and bus terminal. Their protest was aimed at drawing links between the profiteering off the misery of those who suffer from the militarization of the US-Mexico border and Palestine.

2. G4S Immigration Contracts in Australia

In Australia, G4S has been one of the main contractors operating immigration detention centers for individuals who have been refused entry to the country or have violated terms of their visas. Australian immigration law requires that these people be detained while their claims to stay in the country are considered.

G4S operated the offshore Manus Island Detention Center in Papua New Guinea which held 1,332 detainees. An Australian officer described the Center as a “horrendous chicken pen” where guards regularly had to cut down detainees who were attempting to hang themselves.⁵⁷ Whistleblowers blamed the Centers’ problems on poor management by G4S and massive turnover of staff.

In February 2014, riots took place at the Detention Center and Reza Barati, an Iranian asylum seeker was killed. Australia’s Human Rights Center conducted an inquiry into the riots. Rachel Ball, director of advocacy at the Human Rights Center said, “In February this year, G4S guards at the detention facility on Manus Island went on what can only be described as a rampage. Reza Barati was killed, one man lost his eye, another had his throat slit, and 77 others were treated for serious injuries including broken bones and lacerations. G4S was directly involved in this violence through its role in arbitrary detention and poor conditions that led to the unrest, and through the direct participation of its employees in the violence.”⁵⁸ Soon after the riot, the Australian government announced that G4S would lose its contract to provide security at the detention center.

3. G4S Immigration Contracts in the UK

Similar to its business in the U.S, G4S has a contract with UK immigration authorities to transport deportees back to their home countries. In one such case in October 2010, three G4S security guards escorted Jimmy Mubenga, a 46 year-old Angolan asylum to Heathrow Airport to be sent back to Angola. On the aircraft, the G4S guards restrained Mubenga in his seat in such a way as to cause death. The guards were arrested and an initial inquiry by prosecutors resulted in a determination not to press charges against the guards.

An inquest jury was convened to give further consideration to the case. “The inquest heard that Mr. Mubenga had been calling out for help after he was restrained by the guards, Terence Hughes, Stuart Tribelnig and Colin Kaler, for more than half an hour. Other passengers said they

⁵⁷ <http://www.perthnow.com.au/news/security-guard-exposes-horrendous-conditions-at-manus-island-detention-centre/story-fnhnv0wb-1226881874398>

⁵⁸ <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/23/manus-security-firm-g4s-responsible-for-february-violence-says-law-centre>

heard him shouting that he could not breathe, with one of the guards apparently replying: "Yes, you can." He was also heard to cry out: "They're going to kill me". As the plane began to taxi on to the runway, the guards said Mr Mubenga became tired and stopped shouting. They said they realized something was wrong and the plane returned to the stand so paramedics could be called. Mr. Mubenga was pronounced dead a short time later."⁵⁹

The determination by the inquiry jury caused prosecutors to reconsider bringing charges against the guards. In the course of the investigation, it was also revealed that brutally racist text messages were found on the guards' cell phones. The judge in charge of the case ruled that the racist text messages would be inadmissible.

In December 2014, four years after Mubenga's death, the guards were found not guilty of manslaughter. In response to the verdict, protesters blocked streets in London and occupied G4S offices. A delegation of activists from Ferguson, Missouri joined in these actions to show solidarity.

D. G4S For-Profit Prisons

In recent years, G4S has lost contracts to operate for-profit prisons. Some of this loss of business is due to persistent problems of mismanagement and violations of human rights at G4S facilities. In other cases, countries are adopting policies to reduce their use of for-profit prisons.

1. G4S Managed Prisons in South Africa

In 2013, the BBC reported that G4S guards were engaging in widespread abuses at the Mangaung Prison in South Africa. Amnesty International investigated conditions at the prison and reported that inmates alleged that G4S guards subjected them to electric shocks, forced injections, beatings, amongst other abuses."⁶⁰

According to Ruth Hopkins, an investigator with the Wits Justice Project, "Inmates complained about broken limbs, blood in their urine and other serious injuries - some said they would pass out when the shocks became too intense."⁶¹

The BBC obtained a video recording leaked from the prison that documented inmates screaming as electric shocks are used against them.⁶² A video posted on the Mail & Guardian newspaper website shows G4S guards administering a forced injection on a prisoner. The prisoner is clearly cooperating with guards, but when he's told he will be injected, he protests loudly. The video is posted on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/FkQufbnM6Q8>

⁵⁹ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/law-and-order/10169513/Jimmy-Mubenga-unlawfully-killed-inquest-jury-finds.html>

⁶⁰ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/articles/news/2013/10/reports-prison-abuse-south-africa-must-lead-urgent-investigation/>

⁶¹ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-24699725>

⁶² <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-24694214>

The BBC interviewed a former guard from the prison who blamed the abuse on understaffing. He said inadequate staffing left guards vulnerable and there were times when prisoners overpowered guards, taking them hostage and even raping them. Attempting to justify the use of violence against prisoners, the former guard told the BBC, “We want them to be afraid of us, because we are few.”⁶³

In September 2013, following a strike, G4S dismissed 330 of the unionized guards and continued to operate the facility with limited staff. With the reduced staff, a riot broke out. At this time, the South African government announced that it would take control of the prison because G4S had “lost effective control of the facility.” In August 2014, the South African government allowed G4S to retake control of the prison and 326 of the dismissed guards were rehired.⁶⁴

2. G4S Managed Prisons in the UK

In 2012, G4S lost its contract to operate the Wolds Prison in East Yorkshire. It also failed to win new contracts when the government made the decision to privatize 5 additional prison facilities. That has left G4S operating five prisons in the UK. They are Altcourse, in Liverpool; Parc in Bridgend; Rye Hill, near Rugby; Birmingham Prison; and Oakwood, near Wolverhampton. Several of these facilities have been in the news over the past year.

Oakwood Prison, had what was described as a full-scale riot in January 2014. G4S guards fled as they lost control of the facility. Prisoners used brooms as spears, threw TVs and even tried to tunnel out as the riot continued for nine hours. Prior to the riot in 2013, the UK’s Chief Inspector of Prisons found serious problems at Oakwood including a wide range of easily available illicit drugs, and high levels of violence and self-injury among the prisoners. According to the inspectors, some prisoners were self-harming, or threatening to, out of frustration because they believed they were receiving insufficient help from staff – it was the only way to get help with fairly basic requests or get protection from victimization.⁶⁵

At Altcourse Prison, G4S was described as slow to react to increasing levels of violence. According to a report issued by *Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Prisons in 2014*, “The prison had been slow to react to the increasing levels off violence which, to some extent, had become normalized. The security strategy did not make the necessary links between drugs, gangs, and violence and little had been done to address the disproportionate number of young adults involved in violent incidents.”⁶⁶

Birmingham Prison reported a steep rise in attacks on staff and prisoners, a 46 percent rise in assaults between 2010-2012. Commenting on the increase, Frances Crook, Executive Director of the Howard League for Penal Reform stated, “Private jails make their profits from having lower staffing levels, and paying staff lower wages. In effect, the taxpayer gets what the taxpayer pays for. My worry is that when these huge prisons go wrong, the effects can be catastrophic. Broken

⁶³ <http://www.news24.com/Archives/City-Press/G4S-retake-control-of-Mangaung-prison-after-complex-investigation-20150429>

⁶⁴ Ibid

⁶⁵ <http://iisonline.net/inspector-very-concerned-by-g4s-prison-praised-by-grayling/>

⁶⁶ <http://www.itv.com/news/granada/update/2014-10-15/altcourse-prison-slow-to-react-to-increasing-violence/>

bones and slashed faces are serious, but there could well be suicides and riots in private prisons like Birmingham.”

E. G4S Mismanagement and Corruption

In addition to its history of human rights violations, government officials who consider doing business with G4S may be concerned with the company’s track record of corruption and mismanagement. There are high profile cases involving fraud and overbilling that have been documented in the U.S. and UK.

1. G4S Overcharging UK Government - \$38 Million

In November 2013, G4S admitted it had overcharged the British Ministry of Justice approximately \$38 million for electronic monitoring services. G4S had a “tagging” contract to monitor offenders with electronic ankle bracelets. As a result of government investigations, it was determined that G4S was billing for monitors that didn’t exist. The company issued an apology to the British Ministry of Justice and was forced to reimburse the charges.⁶⁷

In December 2013, the British government initiated a second round of investigations into G4S invoicing for two contracts for security services provided to UK courts. It was reported, “The audit of G4S contracts has uncovered problems with two further contracts held by G4S facilities management in the courts. Specifically, the audit revealed serious issues relating to invoicing, delivering and performance reporting against both contracts.”⁶⁸

2. G4S/Wackenhut Overcharging Miami-Dade County - \$7.5 Million

In February 2010, G4S agreed to pay a \$7.5 million settlement as a result of charging taxpayers for work never done. The company was found to have billed the county for “phantom” workers who were supposedly providing security at the county Metrorail system and the County’s Juvenile Assessment Center.⁶⁹

An audit conducted by the city confirmed the overbilling and that it was intentional. As a result, the County Manager, George Burgess announced his intention to bar G4S/Wackenhut from future contracts with the county. In response, G4S filed a \$20 million lawsuit against the county saying the future damage to the company would be incalculable. G4S dropped its lawsuit when the county agreed not to use the facts of the case to prohibit the company from future contracts.

70

⁶⁷ <http://www.theguardian.com/business/2013/nov/19/g4s-admits-overcharging-ministry-of-justice-tagging>

⁶⁸ <http://www.thisismoney.co.uk/money/markets/article-2526673/G4S-braced-second-Serious-Fraud-Office-probe-shares-tank-firms-government-work.html>

⁶⁹ http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/2010-02-16/news/fl-miami-wackenhut-metrorail-20100216_1_wackenhut-metrorail-overbillings

⁷⁰ Ibid.

3. The G4S Olympics Fiasco

G4S signed a \$355 million contract with the British government to provide security for the 2012 Olympics in London. The contract called for G4S to provide 10,400 staff for security at Olympic events. Less than one month before the games began, G4S announced that it was unable to meet its commitment to provide the staff, falling short by more than 3,500 personnel. As a result, the government had to call in military troops to make up for the shortfall.

G4S blamed the problem on staff that failed to show up for work. However, according to the BBC, G4S staff contacted the news organization and accused the company of not providing them with the basic logistical information they needed for reporting to work. "Some told the BBC they had completed training but had yet to be told where or when they would be needed. Others said a lack of communication on accommodation and transport meant they could not make their shifts."⁷¹

After G4S announced it could not provide the needed personnel, Nick Buckles, the company's CEO appeared before a British Parliament panel to explain the Company's failure. Buckles told the panel that the company's performance had been a "humiliating shambles," but G4S would not forfeit its management fee of \$90 million on the contract because of work it was already doing.⁷²

⁷¹ <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-18877744>

⁷² http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/18/sports/olympics/british-parliament-investigates-olympics-chaos.html?_r=0