

Text of letter sent to RT Board from SacRideHuman on January 4, 2016

We look forward to addressing you again at the January 11, 2016 Sacramento Regional Transit (RT) Board meeting and we appreciate your attention to our requests that you: 1) announce now that you will not extend the G4S contract after its June 30, 2016 expiration; and 2) review and revise RT's contractor selection criteria so that RT will not contract in the future with companies that profit from violations of human rights, labor rights, and international law. We also urge you to exclude companies that profit from or are involved in private prisons, environmental destruction, or racial profiling.

Several important issues were raised in the [Sacramento Bee's January 3, 2016, article, page 2B](#) about the [SacRideHuman campaign](#). We have addressed these issues below and would appreciate it if you could reflect the information below in the staff report for the January 11 meeting. Please let us know if you have other questions or concerns.

Extent of G4S involvement in human rights violations

G4S is involved in [human rights violations around the world](#), including Africa, Asia, Australia, and the United Kingdom, not only in Israel/Palestine. G4S is also involved in [violating the rights of children](#) in privatized prisons it runs in the United States.

G4S' attempts to defend itself

G4S' assertion that allegations about its human rights violations "are categorically false" is completely contradicted by all the evidence against it, including reports from [Amnesty International](#), the [American Friends Service Committee](#), [War on Want](#), and [many others](#).

In reality, G4S has effectively acknowledged that it is complicit in and profiting from violations of human rights and international law. In March 2011, G4S responded to mounting criticism of its business practices in Israel/Palestine, announcing that "to ensure that our business practices remain in line with our own Business Ethics Policy, we will aim to exit a number of contracts which involve the servicing of security equipment at the barrier checkpoints, prisons and police stations in the West Bank." ([The Case of G4S](#), page 33). G4S made a similar announcement at its [June 2014 shareholders](#) meeting in London. (It has yet to follow up its words with action, however.)

The fact that so [many prominent institutions](#), including the Gates Foundation, United Methodist Church, and several others, have divested or refused to do business with G4S further belies G4S' claims.

RT's selection criteria

Sac RT does indeed "have the authority to expand its contract bid process to include analysis of larger social questions." Recipients of funds from the Federal Transit Administration, like RT, which use those funds for third party contracts, are required to follow FTA's "Third Party Contracts Guidance". The most recent edition of this Guidance provides "Before selecting a contractor for award, the recipient must consider matters as contractor integrity, compliance with public policy, record of past performance, and financial and technical resources." (FTA C 4220.1F, Rev. 4, March 18, 2013). The issues we have raised are ones directly related to contractor integrity, compliance with public policy and issues of overall corporate performance.

The elected Commissioners of Durham County, North Carolina did not renew their one million dollar contract with G4S after weighing complaints about G4S perpetrating human rights abuses and providing equipment and services to governments around the world that abuse human rights.

In addition to the concerns we have raised, Sac RT needs to address how it is treating “local” businesses. When RT awarded the current contract to G4S, it used selection criteria that gave extra points to G4S for being a “Local Business.” RT defined “Local Business” as one with offices in Sacramento or surrounding counties. (RT Issue paper 4/8/13, agenda item 8) Ownership was not a factor. This criteria needs to be modified to reflect the common understanding “local” business, which is that the business is locally owned.

RT and international relations

Chair Schenirer is quoted in the January 3 Bee article as saying: “I don’t know that RT should be involved international relations.” We submit that in fact, by choosing to hire an international, non-U.S.-owned firm, RT has already made the decision to be involved internationally.

As noted above, G4S’ international abuses are not its only problem. As mentioned in the Bee article, the [University of California just divested from private prison companies, including G4S](#). Concerns raised about private prisons, including their contribution to mass incarceration that disproportionately affect people of color and poor people, are serious enough to warrant the exclusion of these companies from getting RT contracts.

The essence of this statement from Yoel Haile of the Afrikan Black Coalition, applies as much to RT as it does to UC: “It is an ethical embarrassment and a clear disregard for black and immigrant lives for the UC to be investing hundreds of millions of dollars in private prisons and their financiers.”

G4S is operating privatized [U.S. juvenile detention facilities](#) where inmates have been abused, in [Florida](#) and [Arkansas](#), among other states.

Whom RT hires is important

Chair Schenirer is also quoted as saying: “Going down this road becomes time off task. We have a lot of work to do at RT.” We speak for many in our community who disagree that it is “time off task” to go “down the road” of making sure RT hires companies business practices are consistent with the values of our community, including protecting human rights and not contributing to mass incarceration as for-profit prison companies have done.

Chair Schenirer is quite correct that RT does have a lot of work to do. Because of that, it is even more critical that you contract only with companies that have good human rights records and don’t pose risks to either RT’s reputation or its finances should something go wrong with G4S locally.

[More organizations](#) have signed onto the letter to you and more individuals have [signed the petition](#).

Again, we urge you to announce now that you will not extend RT’s contract with G4S and revise your selection criteria to promote truly local business and exclude corporations engaged in practices that do not respect human rights, human dignity, or international law.