

## **For Immediate Release**

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### **Human Rights Groups Action Culminates in Transit District no longer Contracting with G4S**

Sacramento Regional Transit's contract and relationship with G4S, the world largest private security company that has been complicit with human rights violations around the world, will end June 30, 2017.

Following a 20+ month-long campaign by human rights, civil rights and Palestinian rights advocates, labor organizations, churches, and other groups, Sacramento Regional Transit (RT) converted most of the \$3+ million dollars previously spent on G4S' three-year contract for private security services into in-house jobs. On May 22, 2017, the RT Board approved using the rest of the funds for a much-reduced private security contract with a local private security company.

"This intensive community-wide SacRideHuman campaign to get Sac RT to drop G4S and contract only with local and socially responsible companies was initiated by activists working for human rights and for the rights of the Palestinian people," said Maggie Coulter, one of the organizers. "We were quickly joined by church, labor, and other groups who oppose the use of their tax and transit dollars to enrich companies like G4S that profit from human rights abuses around the world."

"For the past dozen years, Sac RT's contracts for private security have only been awarded to G4S," explained Coulter. "Had the community not organized to bring attention to G4S' abuses, in all likelihood, nothing would have changed and RT would have entered into yet another contract with them."

Since September 2015, over five dozen organizations have signed letters and hundreds of individuals signed a petition asking Sacramento RT to drop G4S because of its egregious record of complicity with human rights violations. These violations included G4S profiting from Israel's military occupation of Palestine and associated human rights violations against adults and children; its profiting from privatized prisons and record of guard-related abuses in those prisons; and its participation in deporting immigrants. See [www.SacRideHuman.org](http://www.SacRideHuman.org).

"G4S profits from the exploitation of people of color around the world," explained labor-rights activist Estevan Hernandez. "Getting Sacramento Regional Transit to end its relationship with this company is a huge success not only for our community but for the protection of human rights. RT now needs to take the next step and stop contracting with any companies that profit from human rights abuses."

While thanking the RT board for their votes, Dr. Harry Wang, president of Physicians for Social Responsibility Sacramento, also urged them to consider human rights issues and ethical business practices for future contracting.

"The global effort to get companies like G4S, Hewlett Packard, and others to stop profiting from human rights abuses including by the Israeli government and others will continue," said Fran Eldredge with the Israel-Palestine Taskforce of the CalNevada Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. "We join with all struggles for human rights and dignity in demanding that everyone's rights be respected. We ask that RT stand with us by adopting a socially responsible contracting policy."

For its efforts in making positive changes to Sacramento Regional Transit policies, SacRideHuman is being publically acknowledged by the transit advocacy group, Ridership for the Masses, which is scheduled to present its "Top Banana Award" to the group on July 24.

"Getting RT to make constructive changes is hard work, as SacRideHuman activists know," said Barbara Stanton, founder of Ridership for the Masses. "We applaud their persistence and success."

Activists attended dozens of RT Board meetings and met with RT board members, management and staff. After several months, in March 2017, they were successful in getting RT to change its local business preference program to define "local" business as one headquartered in the Sacramento Region. Before this change, "local" was defined as having an office in the Sacramento region, a definition that allowed even internationally-owned G4S to get "local" preference points.

Sacramento RT first contracted with G4S in 2005 when it was still operating under the name Wackenhut/G4S; in 2010 "Wackenhut" was dropped so it became just G4S.