



## CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL AND DEFENCE POLICY

### BRIEFING NOTE

**SUBJECT:** Practical Recommendations on Conflict Preventions and Responses

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There are four focal resources that provide feasible actions that can be adopted by companies to mitigate company-community conflicts: (1) the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (VPSHR), (2) the International Council on Mining & Metals (ICMM), (3) the UN's Toolkit and Guidance for Preventing and Managing Land and Natural Resources Conflict (UN Extractive Industries and Conflict), and (4) The Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Toolkit.

A few caveats should be noted before interpreting any recommendations. A VPSHR-based Toolkit prepared by the World Bank Group and Anvil Mining (2008)<sup>1</sup> outlines three challenges faced by companies and security providers when attempting to implement activities: (1) addressing focal objectives and standards, the recommendations may not translate to the local community, (2) without effective and efficient follow-up there is no viable way of measuring the practicality of these recommendations, (3) clear communication must be made to the respective stakeholders that play a role in the security environment, or else there is no way to ensure activities are coordinated.

Under the VPSHR's *Roles and Responsibilities of Companies* (2014)<sup>2</sup>, it is suggested that companies should record and report allegations of security-related incidents with human rights implications and investigate them to prevent any recurrence. This is a way to not only respond to conflict by acknowledging its existence, but also preventing similar situations. It is recommended that companies ensure that their employees are aware of the VPSHR to better implement them, through training and workshops. This equips personnel with the appropriate information to prevent conflict. Through this knowledge, it will encourage appropriate use of force when necessary that is proportional to the threat. Establishing a defensive atmosphere, instead of an offensive one, can deter use of violence that leads to human rights abuses.

Under the ICMM's 10 principles (2003)<sup>3</sup>, there are two values that can translate into conflict prevention and response. Principle 3 discusses upholding fundamental human rights by respecting the context of the communities they are working in. This means companies should ensure their staff, including security personnel, are provided with appropriate cultural and human rights training. By doing so, this prevents misunderstandings between the community and companies, avoiding conflicts related to cultural tensions. Principle 9 discusses contributing to the social, economic, and institutional development of communities that companies are operating in. This means that companies take precautionary measures to evaluate issue areas that impact the community and have an ongoing system to communicate with those parties.

The UN Extractive Industries and Conflict (2012)<sup>4</sup> has six guidelines to prevent conflict, with a few that could be beneficial for companies responding to issues. First, by engaging with communities and stakeholders. This can prevent conflict by ensuring all parties are provided with information and training. Second, strengthening institutional and legal frameworks to govern development and management to administer the rights and demands of stakeholders. Third, incorporating high-value natural resources into peace processes forming an arrangement to address structural issues that can address the causes of the conflict.

The DCAF and ICRC's *Addressing Security and Human Rights Challenges in Complex Environments Toolkit* (2015)<sup>5</sup> guides through complex environments, managing security that is effective while respecting human rights. This Toolkit addresses challenges faced by three main actors to deal with the in-depth and complex issues faced and is constantly updated to maintain its practicality. The first section focuses on host governments and their challenges of: engagement and coordination, governance and transparency, and human rights concerns. The second section deals with public security forces that are challenged with: security arrangements, privatization of public security, Memorandum of Understanding, vetting, training, and human rights violations. The third section looks at private security providers challenged with risk and impact assessment, bids and contracts, labour standards, local procurement, vetting, training, relationship between public and private security, security equipment and use of force, oversight and accountability, and human rights abuses.

A common approach used by all four toolkits is instilling a preliminary mechanism that attempts to understand the pre-existing issues of the areas, which then tailors the specific actions of the companies to accommodate to community needs. Furthermore, there are four principles that can guide prevention and responses. (1) Recording and tracking past and ongoing conflicts to understand situations, which provides knowledge of existing tensions that can be attended to, to prevent escalation. (2) VPSHR instilled in training and workshops to all staff, which will uphold a certain standard staff-wide. (3) Cultural training to understand and respect the context to reduce cultural and social tensions between the company and community building a sense of trust. (4) Ensuring all workshops, trainings, and policies are constantly updates to maintain its practical use and reflect situations, experiences, and learned lessons.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.miga.org/Documents/VPSHR\\_Toolkit\\_v3.pdf](https://www.miga.org/Documents/VPSHR_Toolkit_v3.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.voluntaryprinciples.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/VPs\\_-\\_Roles\\_and\\_Responsibilities\\_-\\_Corporate\\_Pillar1.pdf](http://www.voluntaryprinciples.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/VPs_-_Roles_and_Responsibilities_-_Corporate_Pillar1.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.icmm.com/our-work/sustainable-development-framework/10-principles>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.un.org/en/land-natural-resources-conflict/pdfs/GN\\_Extractive.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/land-natural-resources-conflict/pdfs/GN_Extractive.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.securityhumanrightshub.org/sites/default/files/publications/ASHRC\\_Toolkit\\_V2.pdf](http://www.securityhumanrightshub.org/sites/default/files/publications/ASHRC_Toolkit_V2.pdf)