Private military security companies are private business entities that provide military and/or security services, irrespective of how they describe themselves. Military and security services include, in particular, armed guarding and protection of persons and objects, such as convoys, buildings and other places; maintenance and operation of weapons systems; prisoner detention; and advice to or training of local forces and security personnel.
The Issue of Mercenaries (Part D.)

ICRC, The Challenges of Contemporary Armed Conflicts (Part B.)

Private Military Security Companies

ICRC, International Humanitarian Law and the challenges of contemporary armed conflicts in 2015 (Paras. 121, 303, 309-310)

Switzerland, The End of Private Armies

USA, Al-Shimari v. CACI Premier Technology, Inc.

UN, Working Group on the use of Mercenaries: Preliminary Findings of Mission to Ukraine

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Suggested readings:


MACDONALD Avril, “The Legal Status of Military and Security Subcontractors”,


“Symposium: Private Military Contractors and International Law” (with


University Centre for International Humanitarian Law, Expert Meeting on Private Military Contractors: Status and State Responsibility for their Actions, Report, Geneva, 2005, online:

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