

Reckless Security Firm Hired to Protect Dakota Pipeline Company Has Dark Past in Palestine

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When the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe mobilized thousands to protect their land and water in Cannon Ball, North Dakota from a proposed \$3.8 billion crude-oil pipeline, they were met with national guard [deployments](#), police [crackdowns](#), an FBI [investigation](#) and private security forces that [attacked](#) them with dogs. A key firm hired during this time to provide security for the pipeline company, Dakota Access LLC, is the British multinational G4S—one of the largest private security corporations in the world targeted by a years-long global boycott campaign for profiting from the inhumane treatment of Palestinians in Israeli prisons, including the [torture](#) of children.

G4S [announced](#) in March that it plans to halt all of its business with Israel in the next 12 to 24 months, in what was hailed as a significant human rights victory, with international campaigners vowing to hold the company to its word. However, the corporation's role in protecting the Dakota access pipeline indicates that G4S is profiting from a different colonial context, this time in North Dakota's Indian country.

In an interview with AlterNet, G4S communications director Monica Lewman-Garcia confirmed that the company provided private security for the Dakota Access Pipeline for a two-week period, starting August 24. Lewman-Garcia claimed that the company "had no employees present during the incident on September 3" when protesters were attacked with dogs. However, she repeatedly declined to identify where the G4S employees were located during the contract, merely stating that they were dispatched to "remote locations" and "did not come into contact with protesters."

According to Lewman-Garcia, the security force consisted of "six to eight unarmed security personnel" who performed "patrol and response" duties. Asked to elaborate on what "patrol and response" entails, Lewman-Garcia suggested that AlterNet look up the term. She said she does not know what past contracts G4S has with the pipeline nor what deals it will enter into in the future. Her statements [follow](#) recent remarks she made to TeleSUR.

Attorneys representing the Standing Rock encampments [identified](#) the companies behind the Dakota Access company's brutal dog attacks, [captured](#) on video, as private security firm 10-Code Security, LLC and attack dog contractor Frost Kennels. While G4S claims it was not involved in the incident, it is difficult to verify this assertion, as Lewman-Garcia did not state where staffers were located, nor whether they were wearing uniforms. Participants in the mobilization told AlterNet that the attackers wore non-descript clothing and were difficult to identify.

The company 10-Code Security could not be reached for comment. Dakota Access LLC, and its parent company Energy Transfer Partners, did not respond to repeated requests for an interview. The state licensing board for private investigation and security [announced](#) Friday that it is launching an investigation into the attacks.

Whether or not G4S was involved in the dog attacks, the fact that they performed security for the pipeline during a time of mass protest indicates that they are profiting from the Dakota Access company's efforts to prevent indigenous communities from protecting their land and water.

The resistance campaign attracted support from the Palestine solidarity organization Samidoun: Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network. The group released a [statement](#) on August 30 to express its "strongest support for the Sioux nation and Native resistance," writing: "Settler colonialism and its theft of native land for the purpose of exploitation and the construction of colonial and imperialist power is a threat to indigenous peoples around the world and indeed, the future of the world itself."

"Today, the settler-colonial United States, built on the dispossession and genocide of indigenous people and nations—as well as the murderous and genocidal exploitation of Black labor through slavery—is the greatest threat to the environment and people of the world," the statement continued. "It is also the strongest and largest backer and strategic ally of the Zionist settler-colonial project in Palestine that has ravaged indigenous Palestinian land for nearly 100 years."

G4S has faced widespread allegations of human rights abuses far beyond Palestine—from [South Africa](#) to [the United Kingdom](#), including its operation of a Florida for-profit juvenile detention center where conditions were so abysmal that a grand jury [said](#) in 2015 that the facility should cease to exist.

Despite the heavy crackdown by law enforcement and private security companies, the Sioux-led mobilization won a significant victory Friday afternoon, when the Obama administration announced it is [stepping in](#) to temporarily halt construction of the stretch of the Dakota Access LLC's pipeline that is under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The joint announcement from the Department of Justice, the Department of the Army and the Department of the Interior came roughly one hour after a federal judge rejected the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's attempt to stop the pipeline's construction on the grounds that it threatens the water supply, environment, public health and sacred sites.

If approved, the pipeline would transport at least 470,000 barrels of crude oil daily from North Dakota's Bakken fields to Illinois, crossing beneath the Standing Rock Sioux reservation's main drinking water source and cutting through the community's burial grounds.

While the long-term impact of the Obama administration's temporary reprieve is not yet known, and the order does not apply to all areas under construction, the announcement was embraced by organizers, who have waged a [long-term effort](#) to halt the pipeline.

"I want to take a moment and reflect on this historic moment in Indian Country," said Dave Archambault II, chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, in a press statement released Friday. "But I know that our work is not done. We need to permanently protect our sacred sites and our water. There are areas on the construction route that do not fall within federal

jurisdiction, so we will continue to fight.”

Sarah Lazare is a staff writer for AlterNet. A former staff writer for Common Dreams, she coedited the book About Face: Military Resisters Turn Against War. Follow her on Twitter at [@sarahlazare](#).

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