Justice Committee

Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Bill

Written submission from Mel Kelly

Criminal Justice Supply Chain links into Security Cartel

Because of successive government reforms, G4S are now in the position where they are moving towards cartel control of every stage of the criminal justice system across England Wales which has been reformed to be the new highly profitable criminal justice supply chain.

On 29th December 2011, Lincolnshire Police handed control of all police “services” to G4S for 10 years awarding them a £200m contract (immediately indicating a further 15 year extension is already on the cards).

This contract gives G4S control of their police cells and police control rooms (with only 2 police officers supervising) but also the crime management bureau, ticket office, collisions units, criminal justice units, firearms licencing, hiring and firing of police officers, and police computers as well as fleets of police cars, police procurement and police finances.

Then on the 2nd March 2012 it was reported in the Guardian “West Midlands and Surrey have invited bids from G4S and other major security companies on behalf of all forces across England and Wales to take over the delivery of a wide range of services previously carried out by the police.”

The contract is the largest on police privatisation so far, with a potential value of £1.5bn over seven years, rising to a possible £3.5bn depending on how many other English and Welsh constabularies get involved.

The breathtaking list of policing activities up for grabs includes investigating crimes, detaining suspects, developing cases, responding to and investigating incidents, supporting victims and witnesses, managing high-risk individuals, patrolling neighbourhoods, managing intelligence, managing engagement with the public, as well as more traditional back-office functions, such as managing forensics, providing legal services, managing the vehicle fleet, finance and human resources.”
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http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2012/mar/02/police-privatisation-security-firms-crime

This English/Welsh contract, in effect, reduces our police officers to serve the only purpose of being arresting officers on behalf of G4S and other private security companies - effectively reducing every police officer to being nothing more, and having no place in policing other than to be glorified G4S Bounty Hunters.

In Scotland the SNP government have just introduced a bill to create a single Scottish police force to save money.


Is it the intention of the SNP government and Scottish police leaders to make the financial savings by privatising the entire Single Scottish police force?

It has already been reported John Shaw, the managing director of G4S has already held “exploratory” talks with leaders of two Scottish police forces.


While in February 2011 the SNP Justice Secretary, Kenny MacAskill shared a platform with John Shaw (managing director at G4S) at the Policing Scotland summit.

http://www.scotsman.com/news/scottish_police_in_talks_to_sell_off_the_cells_1_1501273

Since then G4S has been awarded a 7 year, contract to transport every prisoner in Scotland for the next seven years.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-12739411
As more and more police “services” are being fast-tracked for outsourcing the combination of contracts awarded piecemeal, with no Monopolies Commission oversight, this is resulting in G4S grabbing contracts and policing power across the country.

Combine all these contracts with the Ministry of Justice awarding G4S a £300 million contract, starting on the 1st February 2012, to provide “services” to over 340 court, tribunal and administrating buildings across the Midlands, Wales and the North of England.

http://www.g4s.com/en/Media%20Centre/News/2011/09/28/MOJ%20contract/

G4S already have a 25 year contract, awarded in 2004 transferring the court facilities and employees from the court service to G4S for the entire Manchester Magistrates Court building which houses 18 courtrooms, a coroners court and 48 custody cells is managed by G4S, where they provide security and I.T. and mailroom functions alongside many other “services”!

http://www.g4s.uk.com/en-gb/Media%20Centre/Case%20Studies/Facilities%20management/MMC/

G4S are even involved in training magistrates for their “customer journey” for the Bedfordshire, Essex and Hertfordshire courts Board (with 1,600 judicial office holders, judges and magistrates) covering the lives of 3.5 million people!


G4S are not only involved in policing, prisoner transport courts and magistrates training but have now extended their tentacles to take control of more and more forensics when they were awarded a contract for 5 police forces in England in South East of England for Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire constabularies.


Combine this with the contracts they already have for the South West of England with Devon and Cornwall, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Constabularies and their control of forensics in the South of England is growing fast.

http://www.g4swelfaretowork.com/in-your-region/south-west/default.php

So G4S now have the power, through contracts, to police us, to control and examine forensic evidence, detain us and take us to courts they manage with some magistrates sitting in judgement who have received training from G4S.

But our G4S journey along the new criminal justice supply chain does not end there!

If you are found guilty of a crime and a tagging order is imposed, G4S once again take control with their dominance in control of Tagging and Control Orders (a
“market” with new contracts currently up for grabs, worth over £1 billion as control orders have exploded from the initial 3,500 in the first year to 70,000 per year and growing).

http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2011/sep/30/electronic-tags-offenders

Despite G4S already controlling four prisons in England, the government handed G4S even greater power with the awarding of two 15 year contracts for £750 million to run HMP Birmingham (the first publicly run prison to be transferred to the private sector as well as the new prison, Feathersone 2, which is currently under construction).

http://www.g4s.com/en/Media%20Centre/News/2011/03/31/HMP%20Birmingham%20and%20Featherstone%202/

On Thursday 1st March the Guardian reported G4S new, more sinister methods, to increase their power and control within the criminal justice system when a prison governor had to throw out G4S “probation” staff from three prisons in South Yorkshire after discovering that the local probation trust had formed an alliance with the private security company G4S to take over the running of his jails.

http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2012/mar/01/prison-governor-locks-out-probation-staff

G4S links with this probation “trust” demonstrate not only are G4S hoping to grab control of 3 more prisons, they also hope to take control of prisoners’ probation using the government’s planned “reform” of probation and community sentencing services.

http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2011/jul/12/probation-services-put-out-tender

G4S are preparing their way now, having appointing David Griffiths as their new Director of Probation and Community Services on 8 December 2011 “David joins G4S with more than 25 years’ experience within the criminal justice system and in probation services, most recently as Deputy Director (justice policy) at the Ministry of Justice.”

http://www.g4s.uk.com/EN-GB/Media%20Centre/News/2011/12/08/New%20Director%20of%20Probation%20and%20Community%20Services/

And just to complete their control of the newly created “criminal justice supply chain” G4S have also been awarded three contracts for the government’s new welfare to work programme.

http://www.g4s.uk.com/en-gb/What%20we%20do/Sectors/Government/Welfare%20to%20work/

with Nick Clegg ensuring “they” will be meeting prisoners at the gates of the prisons on their release.
Still, at least the lawyers are independent of G4S – or are they?

The “reform” of British Legal Services (otherwise known as the Tesco Law) has opened up British Legal Services to ownership to those out with the legal system. In theory, this means G4S could buy a 49% stake in every legal practice in Britain (and we would never know).

Already at least one firm of Barristers quotes proudly on their website “.. has been instructed in a variety of criminal cases, both for the prosecution and defence, regularly appearing in the Magistrates and Crown Court. As well as being regularly instructed by defence solicitors, …has undertaken cases for the probation service, G4S and the CPS in the Crown Court. … has appeared in several sentence hearings. xxx is regularly instructed to appear in Magistrates trials both for the CPS, G4S and Defendants and is looking to develop her Crown Court practice.”

which only demonstrates the new power G4S wields when they have barristers quoting they are serving G4S needs alongside the Crown Prosecution service and the Crown Court in Britain’s criminal justice system.

Even our politicians are not independent of G4S, as, after giving up his MP role in 2010, New Labour’s Cabinet Minister John Reid joined the board of G4S Regional Management Services

Combined with his appointment to the House of Lords John Reid is in a position to vote for greater public sector reforms (without being elected) which may just further benefit G4S (and John Reid’s) interests and profits, especially when this member of the House of Lords’ interest in G4S Regional Management Services had to be declared when he wrote an article for the Guardian on new security strategies being required for the MOD on cybercrime.

And what about the independence of our judiciary – would we know if they had shares in the G4S criminal justice supply chain?

Giving any one company so much power across our entire criminal justice system – to the extent it has been converted into a criminal justice supply chain which may be controlled by a cartel is criminal in itself.

But G4S contracts do not end there.
G4S are still gaining contracts for asylum seeking housing and borders despite a Guardian report in January 2012 indicating “A Commons home affairs select committee inquiry into the treatment of people being deported also found evidence of a racist culture among private security escort staff and a “too cosy relationship” between UKBA and its private contractors.

The MPs' inquiry followed the death of Jimmy Mubenga while he was being deported from Heathrow to Angola in 2010. Three G4S security guards escorting him were arrested and are still under police investigation.

Keith Vaz, the chairman of the Commons home affairs committee, said serious questions remained over the use of contractors in removals and deportations since Reliance took over from G4S following the death of Mubenga!"

http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2012/jan/26/deportation-techniques-mps-warn

The G4S 2012 Olympics contracts got a massive boost when David Cameron kindly doubled the security budget from £271 million to £553 million by adjusting the number of security guards required) as well as doubling the security budget of the opening and closing ceremonies from £40 million to over £80 million.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-16030785

And the government’s love affair with G4S even extends beyond policing and security to the classification of the disabled within our welfare system. G4S, in conjunction with the Department Of Work and Pensions advertising on the British Deaf Association website for volunteers to come forward for their “Personal Independence Payment Testing” stating “It will involve a single, one hour, face-to-face appointment with a healthcare professional from G4S Medical Services, working on behalf of DWP”.


One Guardian blogger wrote of the G4S/DWP trial assessment scheme "Will I still get Personal Independence Payments if G4S can't talk to me? Liz Ball is a deafblind wheelchair user but when G4S invited her to take part in a trial interview they failed to arrange an interpreter”.


But let’s not forget the G4S jewel in the crown – GCHQ - believe it or not they even have contracts there

“Ex-Prime Minister, Tony Blair states: "Secret intelligence gives the Government a vital edge in tackling some of the most difficult problems we face….intelligence forewarns us of threats to our national security; helps the Government promote international stability; provides support and protection to our forces; contributes to our economic health and strengthens our efforts against terrorism and serious crime."
With this in mind, it is essential for a government organisation such as GCHQ to be kept highly secure at all times. An integrated security solution from G4S Technology offers the reliability, security and professionalism necessitated by a project such as this, and other integrated security projects throughout the UK.”


And don’t discount Theresa May’s decision to split border control in two. Is this to pave the way for contracts to be awarded to “G4S Homeland Security” where their website states “At G4S we understand the bigger picture”?

http://www.g4s.com/en/What%20we%20do/Sectors/Government/Homeland%20security/

When criminal justice services were in public control they were all kept completely independent to ensure vital freedoms and justice for the people of Britain.

It is amazing how quickly separate reforms have combined to transfer too much power into the hands of too few people.

And with government ministers leaving parliament to go straight on to the boards of the companies after they have “reformed” our laws and our criminal justice system, this surely demonstrates why all public services (and especially our criminal justice system) should be reverted back to complete public control.

We cannot put a price on justice and freedom (even if politicians can put a price on contracts and future board membership ensuring crime does pay for themselves and G4S).

G4S brag on their website “At G4S we understand the bigger picture” - sadly our politicians do not – because even the KGB will read this and weep.

There is surely a case for all police privatisation and criminal justice reforms to be put on hold and a public sector cartel commission be formed and investigation undertaken to ensure criminal justice is not controlled by private sector cartels across the whole of the UK.

If this is not put on hold the following scenario is what English and Welsh (and possibly Scottish) residents will face.

**Could this be the future experience of victims under our criminal justice system which is being privatised faster than any reform before.** (Hypothetical scenario below)

I cannot explain my distress when my house was burgled. As I waited for the police I was shaking from head to toe. The doorbell rang, they were here at last!

To my surprise it was not the police at the door but instead a burly man with a skinhead wearing a private security guard's uniform. Was he here to sell me an
alarm system – how sick is that – how did he find out so fast I might want to consider a home security system after today’s events?

He proceeded to walk straight in to my home. What the hell was he doing? Flashing a badge he mumbled something about him being the scenes of crime “officer”.

I was gobsmacked! Since when was a private security guard in charge of a crime scene?

I immediately called the local police station to speak to a police officer – but I was told the police could no longer take my call and a representative of G4S would call me back!

Was I dreaming?

When I called my husband at work, he wouldn’t believe me, said I must have misunderstood. By this time I was confused and frightened and the return call from G4S just made it worse.

A brusque woman explained G4S now controlled all police services in my area, including crime scenes and after they had gathered the evidence they would send all evidence away for examination – to G4S forensics.

She also informed me if the suspects were caught G4S police transport would take them to the G4S controlled court to be placed in front of the magistrates who had just completed their G4S training in “customer experience” and not to worry, should the suspects be found guilty they will be tagged by G4S or transferred to a G4S prison, depending on the sentence.

This G4S representative then went on to say rest assured G4S Probation Services would take control of offenders when their probation began and put them on one of their G4S controlled work programmes.

I was also informed she would be happy to supply a list of legal practices in which G4S had a financial interest (apparently thanks to “reform” legislation introduced last year) and a brochure detailing G4S security products for my home which I may wish to consider (with a discount on offer if I provided my crime reference number).

As I looked around my devastated home the crime did not seem so bad when compared to the sense of danger this conversation and the G4S security guard’s presence in my home had created.

Could this really be happening?

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