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A submission to the Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee inquiry into the Incident at the Manus Island Detention Centre from 16 February to 18 February 2014 by the Independent Member for Denison, Andrew Wilkie MP

This submission is a case study based on a first-hand account by an Australian G4S safety and security officer who was working at the Manus Island Detention Centre during the incident from 16 February to 18 February 2014. I am confident of the former guard's bona fides and that his motive is true. I was struck by the impact the incident has had on the former security officer who has a long military background.

The former guard related his account to me because he wants the truth known about the events over this period and the poor workplace Australians worked in. He and his recollections did not form a part of the ABC Four Corners program broadcast Monday night 28 April 2014.

The former guard wishes to remain anonymous because he has signed numerous confidentiality agreements with G4S and the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) about the release of information concerning the operation.

I have written permission from the former guard to include his account in this case study, which follows as an attachment.

Andrew Wilkie MP
Independent Member for Denison

Attachment

Attachment to the submission to the Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee inquiry into the Incident at the Manus Island Detention Centre from 16 February to 18 February 2014 by the Independent Member for Denison, Andrew Wilkie MP

The following is the former safety and security officer's own words and recollection.

My background

I'm an Australian who served in the Australian Army for more than 20 years including overseas in Iraq, Afghanistan and Timor. I was a safety and security officer on Manus Island working for G4S from October 2013 until the completion of the G4S contract. I thoroughly enjoyed working on Manus Island.

This is my account of the Incident at the Manus Island Detention Centre from 16 February to 18 February 2014 followed by some general comments about the workplace.

I am telling this story because the truth hasn't been revealed. I have been approached by various media in Australia but I will not accept money for my account of events. The Australian public has the right to know the truth as it is our money, not the Government's, paying for this centre to operate. I want to remain confidential because of possible legal ramifications against me.

Explanations

Staff

G4S employed two types of safety and security officers that I will refer to as expat staff and Papua New Guinea staff.

Expat Staff

The expat staff consisted of Australian, New Zealand and other expat staff living outside Australia. G4S had several operating areas including safety and security officers, logistical, finance, human resources, client property, emergency management (fire), workplace, health and safety, welfare, intelligence and risk analyst, and accommodation. These departments all had operational staff, supervisors and managers. The senior management consisted of operations manager Dinesh Perera, regional operation manager Carl Webb, general manager John

McCafferty and regional general manager Kevin Pye. A majority of G4S staff had military, state and federal police and prison backgrounds. The talent pool and experience that G4S and the DIBP ultimately had at their disposal was the best workforce I had seen. There were approximately 800 to 1200 clients on Manus Island when I was employed.

www.g4s.com.au

Papua New Guinea staff

PNG staff, under the local contractor Loda Security, were employed by G4S as security officers. PNG officers were employed in a majority of the areas mentioned above and mentored by expat staff. PNG security officers had their own supervisors and duty managers, but ultimately fell under command of the expat staff.

IHMS International Health and Medical Services

IHMS manages health systems on behalf of governments and international organisations.

www.ihms.com.au

IRT (Initial Response Team)

The team responds to incidents if a higher presence of security staff is required. It has the capacity to conduct crowd control with hard body armour and inter-lockable shields. This initially was mostly PNG staff mentored by expats. During the Incident of the 16th to the 18th this grew in size and more expats were used.

TSA – The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army consisted of Papua New Guinea and expat staff who provided client management in the following areas: welfare case management, counselling, clothing, housing, education, canteen and internal and external activities.

hms.salvos.org.au

Accommodation - The Bibby

This is floating coastal accommodation with 159 rooms and a capacity of 310 people. This capacity was well exceeded with up to 600 people on The Bibby and up to five people a room.

www.bibbymaritime.com/our-fleet/bibby-progress.aspx

Recollections of the Incident

February 16

On the 16th I was employed as a safety and security officer for G4S on Manus Island. I was on a day shift, working the normal 12-hour shift from 7am to 7pm. During the day the clients had received news from Australian and PNG immigration services stipulating their processing was going to take quite some time. This I believe ultimately led to the events over the next 48 hours.

Towards the evening at approximately 5 pm, I was in the eating area of the processing centre making a coffee. A Code Green was called from Oscar Compound. This signals an escape. Approximately 10 clients had jumped the fence behind the gym in Oscar Compound. I proceeded back to Oscar Compound via Route Charlie and entered the main pedestrian entrance. I could see the rear gates of Oscar Compound, which is a double gate you can drive vehicles through to drop meals off. It was wide open with clients running back into the compound from Route Pugwash. Following the clients were about 100 G4S PNG staff chasing the clients back into Oscar compound. The service providers, the Salvos, cleaners etc., were evacuated out through the pedestrian gate and removed from the compound.

I noticed one expat security officer physically holding up a client at the gate's entrance. The client had his throat slashed. I ran straight to the client. We tried to put him on the ground to give him medical treatment. He would not go on the ground so we had to kick his legs out. We ripped his shirt off and put it round his neck as he was starting to bleed out. He went white in the face and I believe that if we'd waited for medical staff we would have lost him so we carried him straight to IHMS. Once treating staff arrived I left the client at IHMS and went back to Oscar Compound, which is right next door. I noticed clients had started to arm themselves with weapons in the form of metal bed support bars. Anything that was a solid object they grabbed to defend themselves - metal, wood, bins, anything. PNG guards were trying to attack the clients. The PNG guards dragged out a metal bunk bed and started to pull it apart to make their own weapons. Most clients started to run back to their accommodation and barricade themselves in. Expat G4S guards were trying to keep the clients inside their accommodation and stop the PNG guards going in and beating the shit out of the clients. One expat G4S supervisor was hurt trying to stop clients leaving their accommodation and prevent PNG guards getting in. The entrance door was kicked into his front so hard it nearly knocked him out. I went to his aid. He had hurt his lower and upper arm and was displaying signs of concussion. For approximately two hours the PNG guards tried to attack the clients by entering the accommodation blocks.

The expat guards were like mediators in the middle. We were without weapons or protection and looking back I think we were quite lucky we did not suffer any serious injuries. At one point two clients snuck behind the PNG guards. When they were eventually seen, five to six PNG guards

dragged each client to the ground with head shots – as in head punches, knee thrusts. Once on the ground, the PNG guards started to kick the clients in the head, torso, legs and back. Another expat guard and I ran to assist the clients. We had to jump on the clients to stop the PNG guards kicking them. Initially the PNG guards didn't stop kicking. I remember being struck many times but my adrenalin level was quite high so I didn't feel pain until later that night. The client who I was on was falling in and out of consciousness. I remember checking his pulse, then looking at his eyes. They seemed to be rolling backwards. I knew this client was in a bad way so I called for a stretcher to evacuate him straight away. After the evacuation I returned to the middle of the compound. I could only see about six expat G4S guards inside the compound. Some stayed outside and refused to enter. We stood in between the PNG guards and clients. There were approximately 100 PNG guards and 30 clients. The two parties would not back down. This caused a Mexican standoff type situation. I raised my voice at the PNG guards and asked their supervisors to come forward and control their men. Only one gentleman came forward. They listened to him more than me. The problem on this day I believe was the lack of control and that the IRT wasn't activated to provide a show of force.

At approximately 8 pm, once the clients had returned to their accommodation, it all started to settle down. There was significant damage to the metal bunks they had started to pull apart to make weapons. Doors were smashed where PNG guards had tried to get in and clients had tried to stop their entrance. External lights were smashed too. Between 6pm and 8pm, I believe night shift had been called up as a reserve. At that stage it did not seem like there was any crisis management plan. Information was not getting to us so we made decisions as a team. The communication system which has always been poor on the island was not working effectively in this type of incident. During the incident it was hard to pass situation reports, there was no alternative means of communication to pass essential information up to managers. There was only one channel that was utilised on the multi-channel hand held UHF/VHF radios. During the incident a senior manager, John McCafferty, entered the compound and told us to withdraw. It would have been half-way through the incident. We, the expat G4S guards, stated "no, no we're not leaving". We were the only thing stopping the PNG guards and we believed that we were on the island to protect the safety and security of the clients. The problem with the PNG guards was they went into a tribal sort of mode. They were in a trance-like state of mind and nothing was going to get in their way. They wanted to drag all of the clients out and maybe not kill them, but show them that this is our country. They wanted to teach them a lesson.

I finished work at about 10pm. We were told to go back to The Bibby. Get some rest, get a feed, but you are on call, if it kicks off again you are coming straight back up.

It's important to note that the Indian, Sri Lankan, Rohingya and Asian minority groups did not take part in the violence on the 16th. It was mainly the Iranian, Iraqi and Middle-Eastern based groups. On return to The Bibby, I couldn't believe what happened. I felt quite annoyed at the PNG guards for clearly over-stepping the boundary. The thing that absolutely pissed me off the

most was officers had previously warned duty operation managers of the problems at the centre, but this had fallen on deaf ears. Some of the problems that other officers and I had been trying to get solved, maybe might not of prevented this, but surely would have made the situation a lot easier to deal with and work through. An example was writing up a communication strategy for the centre. It was all there, all they had to do is adopt it and train people. I knew this plan would work as I used to run command posts in the military.

We received no debrief after the incident.

17th February

On the 17th I was employed as a safety and security officer. I started at 7am for my normal 12-hour shift. I was sent back to Oscar Compound. During the shift it was quite clear that it was pretty tense. The clients were asking about the injured. I told them they were getting medical treatment and I'd try and find out what was going on with them. There were no PNG guards inside any compounds on the 17th. We heard from the intelligence side of G4S that there was a possibility that Mike and Foxtrot compounds would try and link up and push through the centre. All medical, TSA, Spic and Span cleaning staff, Delta FM (the maintenance provider) and any other staff not involved with security were moved to The Bibby.

Mike Compound started to riot. This occurred in the evening again. I heard this all over the radio as I was not in Mike Compound. Radio reports were coming in that PNG locals and on/off-duty PNG G4S guards were outside the Mike Compound on the main road. They were agitated by the clients. Basically the types of slurs the clients were using were: "we are going to rape your daughters and mothers" and telling the locals to "fuck off". The locals were trying to entice them to "come out here and have a go". A barrage of missile-type weapons started to get thrown. The clients for days had been collecting empty water bottles and filling them with rocks. They had green storage trunks filled with their missiles and once it kicked off they bought these green trunks down so they had more missiles. This was only evident after the riot had ceased. It was an all-in, but they did not breach the fence at this stage. The PNG police would have seen this all go on from their position outside the Mike Compound.

Mike and Foxtrot compounds were basically side by side. The clients from Mike quickly followed by Foxtrot Compound both kicked off. They were trying to push the fence down and get into Foxtrot compound so the clients had more numbers. This had clearly been orchestrated by the clients before the incident. From what I heard on the radio, Mike pushed the fences down into Foxtrot Compound through a dual gate. They pushed through and created a fair bit of damage destroying one of the control points and the clients' welfare telephone room located in between Mike and Foxtrot compounds. From where I was in Oscar Compound you could hear all the noise from the riot. It was quite loud and was getting closer and closer. I initially thought we would have lost the centre but the IRT, from radio reports, had pushed back the clients into

Mike Compound. This took some time to achieve. We heard two gunshots. I looked at a couple of other G4S expat guards and stated "this is not good". Approximately 20 to 40 shots were fired from different locations in the vicinity of Mike Compound.

I believe it would have been the PNG police shooting but I did not actually see. I'm not sure who made the call for the PNG police to take over the situation or to start shooting but I have been told John McCafferty may have made the decision to hand over control. I was under the belief that the clients were still inside the compound and that PNG police only had primacy of power if the clients were outside the compound. At no point where we told that PNG police would start firing weapons which was quite concerning.

The following is deduced from what others have told me and what I saw when I walked up and through Foxtrot and Mike compounds after the riot had finished.

Once the shooting had begun the initial engagement of gunshots was more of a diversion, distraction. This is a military tactic commonly used to draw attention away from another attack, making your enemy quite vulnerable. The PNG police engaged with weapons from I believe three different locations, the front, side and rear of Mike Compound. An expat G4S officer found shell casings in these locations. The PNG police made an attempt to collect these shell casings I believe to cover up their actions that evening. The calibres were predominately .223/5.56 indicating military style weapons were used. After the initial engagement the clients returned to their accommodation and barricaded themselves in their rooms. The smart ones snapped the door handles off externally, preventing anyone from entering the rooms. At this stage, an external gate to Mike Compound was breached and PNG G4S guards, civilians, PNG TSA, and PNG Spic and Span, came into the compound. The TSA and Spic and Span guys removed their shirts to try and avoid identification, but we knew they were TSA and Spic and Span. They entered the accommodation area of Mike Compound. Again they went into tribal mode. Although this time it was quite different. The PNG were more brutal and savage. I'm under the belief they wanted to kill every single one of the clients. At the rear of Mike accommodation, an Australian G4S guard was shot at, as the PNG police yelled out 'traitor' because he was trying to help wounded clients from being attacked further.

G4S expat guards were trying to evacuate clients for medical assistance. Carrying the injured out to avoid the PNG inflicting further injury. Reza Berati was knocked to the floor and two PNG G4S officers kicked him in the head. As Reza was trying to get up a PNG Spic and Span cleaner hit Reza over the head with a lump of wood (this was witnessed by an expat G4S officer). I was told later that Reza had died. IHMS staff at The Bibby got him breathing again but his injuries were quite severe and he died.

PNG staff looted the rooms of clients. This was witnessed by expat G4S staff and on visual inspection later it was evident that they had taken anything of value, cigarettes, MP3 players and headsets, items that would have been quite dear to the clients.

Approximately 60 injured clients were evacuated to The Bibby. The previous day IHMS had set up a casualty management area near the wharf directly opposite The Bibby. I've seen footage in the media where one of the interpreters was giving a running commentary saying "look they don't know what they are doing there is chaos etc.". They stated they could see what was going on in the centre from the top of The Bibby. I have seen that footage. That is definitely incorrect. We went on top of The Bibby and you can't see the centre. Any of the service providers who states they saw the riot or think they knew what happened during that riot would be incorrect as they were nowhere near the processing centre.

During the riot on the 17th, the clients in Oscar Compound started to get agitated and you could see they wanted to get out and join in. Nearby in Delta Compound they started to become vocal as well. I was concerned that once all the clients from Mike Compound were in Foxtrot Compound they could come down a shute-way down the back of Delta Compound then link up with Delta and then push across into Oscar compound. This would have ensured the centre was in full control of the clients. To this day I can't believe the clients didn't at least try this. We would have had to evacuate if this occurred, essentially handing the centre to them. The IRT was heavily involved trying to push back Mike and Foxtrot compounds and prevent the clients pushing through to the command centre in the middle of the processing centre. By this stage G4S had all available staff, they had called up everyone. They had extra IRT – expat and PNG staff. I remember seeing logistical, workplace, health and safety and property staff join in. Some of these guys were not trained to be safety and security officers. It was quite clear we had all hands on deck. During the riot, Oscar Compound was trying to stir up Delta to get clients to join in. At the same time the Asian and Indian minorities in Oscar all moved into the Oscar mess for protection. They did not want to take part. The Iranian, Iraqi, Middle Eastern guys attacked the mess at one stage. The clients wanted numbers to help. We evacuated more than 50 clients who did not want to be involved to a safe area.

It seemed the IRT was stopping the clients and starting to push the clients back up to Mike Compound. Oscar Compound looked like it was going to riot again. The extra IRT team came down and made a blocking force in between Delta and Oscar compounds. This was to ensure clients could not gain access to the command centre from the opposite direction of Mike and Foxtrot compounds. Not long after the blocking line was set, Oscar Compound kicked off. One of the clients said to me: "we don't want you involved. If you get in our way we don't know what is going to happen". The clients moved towards the fence facing Delta Compound and pushed the fence over. The clients all moved out to the middle of Route Charlie to the internal road and confronted the IRT blocking force. All of the G4S officers from Oscar and Delta stood with the clients and tried to calm them on Route Charlie. A few of the clients were quite distressed and

wanted to get through to Mike Compound. They'd armed themselves again with the bunk beds they'd pulled apart. Approximately five to 10 tried to push through the IRT barrier. Due to the lack of equipment available G4S officers utilised the tables from the eating area as a partial barrier, interlocking shields and dry chemical fire extinguishers, which were used to push back the clients. The clients and G4S officers were sprayed with dry chemical fire extinguishers respectively. That seemed to work as a good non-lethal approach apart from the fact we had to breathe the chemical in. I saw the medics after and they stated "you won't get cancer", but I'm not so sure. This went on for about 30 minutes to an hour and then the senior G4S manager, Kevin Pye, came down to try and talk with the leaders of the rioting clients in Oscar Compound. He negotiated with one client that if they returned to the compound he could come with him and see what was happening up the other end of the processing centre as the clients in Oscar were quite concerned for the wellbeing of their friends in Mike and Foxtrot compounds. That seemed to work.

The client returned. There was some arguing between clients. Then they moved back into Oscar Compound. I finished work that night at about 3am. A crisis management plan I think had been activated. G4S officers were to come back in six hours and continue working on a six-hour on, six-hour off roster. Still no debrief of the riot and incidents had been given.

18th February

On the 18th I returned to Oscar Compound for a six-hour shift. The centre was starting to be fortified with spare shipping containers blocking parts of the centre where fences were still pushed down making a physical barrier. There was a lot of talk between G4S staff. We were all quite tired and run down. We needed rest. The medical evacuations continued and a clean-up effort was started. Surprisingly the clients cleaned the internal compounds quite well themselves. They didn't want any local staff including cleaners inside the compounds.

An incident which was quite concerning to me was a G4S supervisor lining up star pickets and metal-type weapons just in case the clients tried to riot on the third day. He was questioned in front of his team by another member and he argued that he wasn't going to deal with the clients if they rioted again unless he had weapons. This discussion became quite heated and a duty operation manager came to mediate. The duty operations manager dragged the G4S officer away and let the supervisor go about his business with the remaining staff.

General comments

What led up to the riots

The clients in Oscar, Foxtrot, Delta and Mike were doing protests of one hour a night. (Please see appendix 9 &10). They were quite peaceful. The protesting consisted of chanting and singing

mainly expressing that they wanted freedom, and they wanted to be processed quicker and get to Australia. Before the riots there was a meeting involving immigration and border protection staff, PNG immigration and what you would call senior members of all ethnic groups within the processing centre. The clients were taken up to Mike Compound. The discussion topic was basically the clients were told their processing would take a very, very, long time. On their return to the individual compounds, the ethnic leaders gathered in groups with the other clients and informed them. The mood changed. This obviously led to the decision of all clients to riot.

The Bibby

The accommodation is unsuitable. It is a ship designed as a coastal floating hotel. Its capacity was well exceeded by hundreds. For example G4S guards were five to a single room. There was one fitted bed in the room and two bunk beds which were assembled and put in the rooms. Space was so tight that when one guard rolled out of the top bunk on to the floor injuring him as there were no safety rails, the IHMS staff had to pull him out by his arms before evacuating him on a stretcher.

IHMS

IHMS were the medical providers for both clients and contracted staff. It seemed there were competing interests. The clients had priority and it seemed we were more of an annoyance when we went for medical treatment. For example, after I attended the client in Oscar Compound who had his throat cut I had blood on my hands and uniform. I asked for my blood to be taken to test for blood-borne disease and I'm still to this day to be tested. I also sustained some other injuries and I was put to the back of the line as they were not life-threatening. The following day I went back, they took notes. These notes were lost as well as my medical file for a period of six weeks and was found the week I left the island. They did not have enough staff to cope with the events on the 16th and 17th let alone the actual running of the centre.

G4S procedures

There were little to no procedures up until January when we started to receive refresher training. We were informed by the G4S compliance manager that this was the worst project he'd ever seen. He had worked with a substantial number of companies worldwide but this was the worst. G4S had received operating requirements and procedures from immigration but until he arrived little had been done with the documentation to formulate G4S operating procedures. For example, two to three months prior to the incident there was a stand-off between police and navy personnel outside the centre. G4S guards were involved. A G4S senior manager made the call to evacuate the centre but there were no operating procedures that we were aware of, or been trained on. Half of the G4S staff evacuated and the other half remained. Complete confusion. The standard operating procedures at a safety and security

officer level were made available late December, early January. Two copies were in the command post. However you had to read them during working hours due to their sensitive nature. G4S did not want this information copied and taken back to our accommodation.

Another example involved the three sets of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) at the front entrance to the center (location Golf 1) all of which stipulated different procedures. It was confusing. I remember reading and seeing Chris Manning's name on two different sets. He was the managing director for G4S. I tried enforcing these SOPs on shift and even Australian immigration staff failed to abide by the rules. I remember a male immigration staff member stating "mate we run the centre, stand clear, we won't be getting out of the vehicle".

Training

On employment I arrived at the island and completed five days of training. This was conducted on board HMAS Choules and other locations on the island. A variety of training staff was used. I'd say it was the poorest form of instruction I've ever seen in my life. The staff always offered excuses as to where they were at on the training program and cut lessons short. The information provided seemed to be in close relation to one of their prison contracts in Australia. It was embarrassing for the officers trying to learn. Up to four staff were involved with the training. This was conducted in October. On most days towards 2pm we were informed we'd pick up the training later. This was not completed until the refresher training in January. This was definitely an eye opener and set the scene for the most unprofessional organisation I have ever dealt with.

A problem which may have contributed to the build-up of tension between the clients and PNG G4S was the treatment of PNG staff. Some clients referred to the PNG staff as sub human. The clients would use their rations of cigarettes to trade with the PNG G4S and other PNG staff to get MP3 players, sunglasses, hats and even sugar which they used to make alcohol. This was found on numerous occasions. The PNG G4S officers were paid so poorly that it took them about five hours of work to earn enough money to buy their own cigarettes hence a good trading system was developed. I was informed by one client that he had even traded cigarettes for sex through the fence with young PNG girls and on occasion blow jobs (having his penis sucked). This was reported to the duty operation managers.

Overview

I don't actually know what to write here. I am still in shock at how unprofessionally the operation was run. I can't believe we still haven't had a debrief and consolidated our thoughts to ensure this will not happen again. G4S has made me feel like I can't trust an employer in the future. The Department of Immigration and Border Protection must have known the unprofessional activities of G4S. What was its contract compliance officer doing to resolve these

issues? The workplace was unsafe under Australian standards. Personnel protection equipment was insufficient or unavailable. The accommodation was unsatisfactory and an overloaded ship is a disaster waiting to happen. The food provided by Eurest was inadequate and I thought food in the Army was bad. Welfare communication back to Australia was insignificant until Internet coverage was provided but due to the amount of people on the Bibby this was problematic causing welfare issues.

I am left wondering why I should submit this report, is it going to make a difference. As an Australian who has fought for his country and deployed many times, I hold up the values of our nation in the highest regard and for me to sit back and do nothing is not in my nature. I have sat back for too long. All people are responsible for their actions. The clients have been held to account for their actions and we as Australians are not above the law when it comes to gross negligence. No more lives need to be lost, this should not have happened. In the future I hope that other G4S staff come forward and give their record of events.

Appendices

Appendix 1 & 2

Photos of broken glass white-frame doors in Oscar Compound. Photos taken on the 17th February after the initial rioting in Oscar Compound on the 16th. The damage was created by PNG G4S officers trying to get in and clients trying to stop their entry.

Appendix 3

Photo of blood stains on the floor in Mike Compound. Photo taken on the 18th February showing where PNG G4S officers and other PNG initially assaulted clients before pulling them out of their rooms and giving them a good old touch up. This occurred on the 17th.

Appendix 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8

Photos of gunshot through pole and top of doorway in Mike Compound taken on the 23rd of February. This was around the rear of the accommodation (Mike Alpha 1). This is where one of the police engagement points were on the 17th.

Appendix 9 & 10

Video footage taken on the 15th of February, the day before the riot. The clients had been protesting rallying like this for at least five days prior. In Appendix 10 clients are yelling "Tony shame on you" in reference to Prime Minister Tony Abbott.