



# Friday 6th March 2020 / 2 pm Launch Private Security .network

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## Press release

Geneva, 6 March 2020

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## LAUNCH PRIVATE SECURITY NETWORK

**In the context of an adapted format of the 18<sup>th</sup> edition of the International Film Festival and Forum on Human Rights (FIFDH), filmmakers Femke and Ilse van Velzen, together with journalist Ruth Hopkins launch today the Private Security Network, a transnational network of 33 investigative journalists from 20 countries. This network is linked to and has emanated from the documentary film *Prison for Profit* and Ruth Hopkins' book *Misery Merchants*. For months, the journalists in this network have investigated G4S's operation in their countries.**

In a meeting with the press, Hopkins and van Velzen said: *"We have decided to launch the network in Geneva because of its standing as the 'human rights capital' of the world"*. They will also be presenting their documentary *Prison for Profit*, Hopkins' book *Misery Merchants* the private security network website <https://privatesecurity.network/> which will host the investigations published so far.

Agnès Callamard, a French Human Rights expert and the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), present at the event, recalled that her predecessor criticized the private security industry repeatedly, calling for "greater scrutiny and accountability of the use of force by private security providers in law enforcement activities".

Ruth Hopkins has investigated G4S's global prison operation. *"The company runs prisons in South Africa, the UK and Australia. In other countries, such as the Netherlands, it has contracts to provide services in semi-privatised prisons,"* Hopkins said. She wrote a story that compares G4S prisons in these four countries, scrutinising government contracts with the company, despite an objectively terrible track record", she added.

In their documentary *Prison for Profit*, the two filmmakers and Ruth Hopkins dive into South Africa's violent Mangaung private prison and expose the system of G4S's profit maximization works, how this multinational operates and what the consequences are for society.

The international network of investigative journalists launched in Geneva "aims to uncover G4S's patterns of dealing with liability and accountability for human rights violations and to shed light on how G4S makes a profit from their private security services while there is evidence of serious maltreatment of the people placed in their care or employed by them".

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