

# MSS GLOBAL

## Consideration of the implications posed by the introduction of ISO 18788 - Security Operations Management....



***"What does the introduction of ISO 18788 (Management system for private security operations) mean for those 'conducting' or 'contracting' security operations?"***

The release of PSC 1 in 2012 marked a step change in the standards and delivery of security services in emergent markets and complex environments. Placing a holistic, risk management approach at its heart, it helps companies both delivering, and contracting security services to put together a coherent, effective set of management controls. Boards have the ability to assure themselves that they are delivering what they promise to their clients, and independent certification of security service providers gives the clients of those services impartial assurance that their supplier's systems actually work.

So now we see the next step; the introduction of ISO 18788 at the back end of 2015. Taking PSC 1 and 'internationalising' it through the ISO development programme lies at the heart of this maturing; it was refined, drew on lessons identified through the rollout of PSC 1, and encompassed the views of a broader international collective.

ISO 18788 offers greater resonance for international commercial clients who operate in these challenging environments, NGOs who seek a non-partisan solution, and governments across the spectrum who either host, or support through contracting the services of private security companies – be that local or international. Unlike PSC 1, ISO 18788 is applicable for any type of organization conducting or contracting security operations.

ISO 18788 sets a benchmark of internationally accepted 'best practice' for the delivery of security services in emergent markets and complex environments.

To now contract for security services from companies who do not meet these standards puts the client of those services at significant risk – both physically in terms of undefined training and operational capability, and at Board level through risk to company reputation. As an example, the Voluntary Principles for Security and Human Rights (VPSHR), a mainstay of the extractive industry, recognizes the need for private security to observe, amongst other aspects, emerging best practices developed by industry. The introduction of ISO 18788 sets that benchmark.

So here's the conundrum that only a client of a PSC can truly manage, for without the demand for this benchmark, PSCs will continue to observe their own parochial "we're the best, we're unlike any other PSC" mantra:

*'Now that best practice has been codified internationally through the release of ISO 18788, and governments and some commercial companies are recognizing it, does the failure to require certification to ISO 18788 (or PSC 1) as part of any due diligence process risk undermining the credibility of company ethical commitments, and more importantly, risk the company's reputation and commercial viability should something go awry and they have consciously ignored accepted 'best practice'?'*

(The thoughts here are merely echoes of the rambling mind of Tony Chattin, MD, MSS Global)