

Opening Submission Plan to Senate Inquiry into the events on Manus Island on 16 to 18 February 2014

Introduction

1. Good afternoon Senators.
2. I am Darren Boyd, G4S's Regional Managing Director for the Southern Pacific Region, which covers Australia, New Zealand and PNG. With me here today are:
 - a. Chris Manning, who heads up our Immigration Services in Australia. Chris was responsible for setting up and had overall responsibility for overseeing our Manus Island operations.
 - b. Kevin Pye, who was the G4S Regional General Manager at the Manus Island Centre when the events of 16-18 February occurred. Kevin had overall responsibility for our day to day operations at the Centre. Crucially he was in the charge of the Emergency Control Organisation operating from inside the Manus Centre during the period in question.
 - c. Finally, John McCaffery, who was the G4S Deputy General Manager at the Manus Island Centre over the relevant period. John spent much of this period on the ground managing events.
3. I would like to thank the Senate Committee for inviting us to participate in these hearings.

4. I would like to make a brief opening statement. Mr Pye will then provide a brief overview of the events of 16 and 17 February. In total this will not take more than [15] minutes of your time.

Expression of Sadness

5. Please allow me to start by again expressing on behalf of G4S our deep sadness at the tragic death of Mr Reza Barati and also for the injuries sustained by many of the transferees during the period in question.
6. As Managing Director I want to assure you that G4S has fully co-operated with the PNG police investigation, all other relevant investigations and has complied with all requests for assistance into this matter.
7. We are here today as a senior management team to answer your questions honestly and fully and to provide you with our insights into what occurred.

Allegations of G4S wrongdoing

8. Firstly it is important to recognise that violent riots took place and there were also injuries caused to G4S and other staff at the Centre. In this respect I would also like to acknowledge all of the staff who worked at the Centre, in very demanding circumstances, particularly the courageous acts of the staff who acted to protect transferees on the nights of 16 and 17 February.

9. I am of course aware of the allegations which have been made in Senate submissions and in the media that G4S staff may have been involved in unlawful acts of violence during the riots.

10. Let me assure you that we take these allegations very seriously.

11. Our own inquiries have shown that some G4S staff entered Mike compound without authority and were likely involved in the fighting which took place there. Our inquiries have also shown they entered into Mike compound with the police, local villagers and also Centre staff from other service providers.

12. What has been very difficult to establish is the identities of these individuals and of who did what to whom. That is a task that is beyond the

scope and capability of G4S. Therefore we are fully cooperating with the PNG Police as they have proper jurisdictional authority to investigate and prosecute the crimes that were committed at the Manus Island Regional Processing Centre on those nights. Their investigation is ongoing and we continue to cooperate with them.

13. If it is found from these investigations that any G4S staff, whether expatriates or locals, were involved in any wrongdoing this will not be tolerated. Accordingly we will continue to provide whatever assistance we can to try and ascertain the facts of precisely what happened.

About G4S and our role at Manus

14. G4S's role at the Centre was to provide day to day guarding duties, gather intelligence and make ongoing recommendations to the Department regarding safety and security, as well as other logistical and maintenance functions.

15. We have reflected carefully on the events of 16 and 17 February and believe there have been a number of lessons learned that can help to reduce the likelihood of these tragic events recurring.

16. In our submission we identify several factors which contributed to the events of 16 and 17 February, which I do not propose to repeat. However I wish to emphasise 2 key factors today.

- a. **Firstly, the key factor contributing to the riots taking place was the lack of processing of the transferees' refugee claims.**

Following the changes in Australian government policy in July 2013 the processing of refugee claims slowed down to the point where essentially no processing was taking place.

It is imperative that in these circumstances transferees are given some hope, and this means processing their refugee claims.

Lessons from recent events in immigration facilities in Australia point to the lack of status resolution as being the key catalyst for violent unrest.

This was the case on Manus Island and it was a concern that we raised repeatedly in the weeks leading up to the events. The riots were then triggered when the PNG Immigration officials presented to the transferees but failed to confirm a timeline for processing of refugee applications, suggesting the transferees may need to wait in the Centre for several years before receiving determinations.

- b. **Secondly, the severity of the violence on 17 February resulted from a lack of suitable infrastructure. Specifically a lack of security fencing at the Centre that was fit for purpose.**

In a facility housing over 1300 single adult males and tensions rising, proper security infrastructure is essential.

Fencing in particular is critical as it provides the first line of defence during any riotous behaviour. It prevents transferees from exiting the Centre in an uncontrolled manner; it protects transferees from external threats; and, where there is large-scale unrest, internal fencing prevents the congregation of large groups of transferees into unmanageable numbers.

The Manus Centre was originally a temporary facility to accommodate up to 500 transferees and they were originally a mix of families and single adult males.

In June 2013 a policy decision was made and all families (who in security terms are much lower risk) were removed from the Manus Centre and replaced with only Single Adults Males (or SAMs) (who in security terms are much higher risk). As a result of this change we produced a risk assessment to the Department recommending that improved security infrastructure, specifically fit for purpose fencing, was needed and the lack of this was designated to be a High Security Risk.

Then in July 2013 the PNG solution was announced.

Consequently, there was an immediate large scale ramp up of the number of transferees being sent to the Manus Centre.

By the time of the riots on 16 and 17 February 2014 there were in excess of 1300 transferees. But none of the security and infrastructure improvements necessary had yet been implemented at the Centre.

May I hand to the Committee several photographs to better illustrate this issue around how important the fencing is.

- Photo 1 – fence at Mike compound prior to the riots. This type of fencing was used for both the perimeter and internally to separate the different compounds;
- Photo's 2 and 3 – again the fence at Mike compound, but taken immediately after the riots on 17th February. Photo 2 is the external fence clearly pushed down from the outside; Photo 3, the internal fence pushed down by transferee seeking to exit the compound; and finally
- Photo 4 – this is the fence at Christmas Island IDC and gives an indication of the type of security fencing which we were recommending needed to be in place on Manus.

In our view, had proper security infrastructure been in place, including appropriate fencing along the lines we had recommended, then the severe injuries and the fatality would probably not have occurred.

What happened?

17. Before handing over to Mr Pye, I wish to make a few key observations about the events of 16 and 17 February.
18. The rioting was contained for several hours but the situation changed fundamentally when the PNG police broke into Mike compound, where they discharged their firearms. That is when the most serious injuries and one fatality occurred.
19. The reaction of the PNG police, locals and some staff seems to have been a response to racist and obscene taunts by transferees directed at PNG locals, as well as the barrage of rocks and other projectiles from within the Centre.
20. At no stage did G4S request or invite the PNG police to enter the Centre whilst the riots were taking place.

Thank you for listening to my opening statement.

I now ask Mr Pye to provide an overview of the events of 16 and 17 February.

We have brought a map of the Centre to help explain the multiple events that were occurring on those nights. Kevin