



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA

**State Secretariat STS**  
International Security Division ISD

Bern, 13 May 2026

---

# **2025 Annual Report on the Implementation of the Federal Act on Private Security Services Provided Abroad (1 January–31 December 2025)**

---

# 1. Introduction

The year 2025 was characterised by increasing international tensions and profound changes to the global security architecture. Competition between major powers intensified in military, technological and economic areas, while the rules-based international order came under further pressure. Hybrid influence operations, particularly in cyberspace, as well as regional conflicts and the use of private military and security companies (PMSCs) shaped the security policy environment.

The authority responsible for the Federal Act on Private Security Services Provided Abroad (PSSA<sup>1</sup>) monitors these developments on an ongoing basis. Based on the statutory declaration requirement and the review procedure, it ensures that Swiss companies only provide such services if they are compatible with Switzerland's core interests – in particular with internal and external security, foreign policy objectives, the preservation of neutrality and compliance with international law, in particular human rights and international humanitarian law (Art. 1 PSSA).

The FDFA's State Secretariat is responsible for implementing the PSSA; the Export Controls and Private Security Services Section (ECPS), within the International Security Division (ISD), is responsible for the operational implementation of the PSSA. In addition to the ongoing implementation of the PSSA, the focus in 2025 was on expanding the dialogue with the cantons and on international cooperation to create a more coherent control architecture for PMSCs. The tenth anniversary of the PSSA provided a suitable occasion to take stock, expand existing networks and provide new impetus for the further development of the framework.

## 2. Activities in 2025

### 2.1 National activities

**Strengthening cooperation with the cantons:** In the reporting year, the competent authority intensified its contacts with the cantons in order to increase the visibility of the PSSA and strengthen cooperation. The focus was on the appointment of clear contact persons at cantonal offices for private security companies and weapons supervision. This bilateral exchange made it possible to link information on security-relevant activities abroad with cantonal findings and increase awareness of the PSSA. Increased cooperation is key to the effective implementation of the PSSA at federal level.

**Ten years of the PSSA – anniversary event in Bern:** A key event in the reporting year was the tenth anniversary of the PSSA in Bern at the end of September 2025. The event brought together representatives from the judiciary, police, Federal Administration, politics and associations. The focus was on the development of the security market, the role of private security service providers in the geopolitical context and the implementation of the PSSA and cantonal regulations. The topics discussed were Switzerland's federal approach, its internationally pioneering role in regulation and a critical interim assessment of progress and challenges after ten years of applying the law. The event also strengthened existing networks and emphasised the importance of a coherent regulatory approach.

**Training and outreach activities:** The authority also continued its training and outreach work in 2025. Employees were trained internally on PSSA procedures. It gave external lectures, including at the CAS on Internal Security Law at the ZHAW, on international operations of private security actors and regulatory issues. It also published a specialist article in *Stratos* which sheds light on the existing regulations on PMSCs at national and international level as well as on global standards.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> SR 935.41

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.vtg.admin.ch/dam/de/sd-web/U07tM5gKCKC9/80\\_244\\_stratos\\_2-25\\_2.pdf](https://www.vtg.admin.ch/dam/de/sd-web/U07tM5gKCKC9/80_244_stratos_2-25_2.pdf)

## 2.2 International activities

### **Involvement in the Intergovernmental Working Group of the UN Human Rights Council (IGWG):**

In 2025, the competent authority closely monitored the work of the IGWG of the UN Human Rights Council on PMSCs, in particular the fifth formal meeting in April and the informal meeting in December. The aim of the IGWG is to establish an international framework for regulating private military and security companies to protect human rights and international humanitarian law. In addition, the authority held bilateral talks with states to discuss common interests and proposals for a future international instrument.

### **Strengthening the network within the framework of the Montreux Document Forum (MDF):**

Founded in 2014 by Switzerland and the ICRC, the MDF promotes exchange between the participating states of the Montreux Document and supports the national implementation of its principles. In 2025, the focus was on the further development of the community of practice, practical discussions on regulatory approaches and the monitoring of PMSCs. To this end, a list of the regulatory authorities of the participating states was drawn up to facilitate transparency and cooperation. Further thematic work was carried out using different formats for exchange, including a side event co-organised by Switzerland on the cyberactivities of PMSCs in conflicts. The IGWG and the MDF provided platforms for technical discussions on national regulatory models and their implementation. From 2026, the competent authority will take over the substantive management of the MDF within the FDFA from the Directorate of International Law, a sign of the growing importance of practical regulatory issues.

**Participation in the Pall Mall process:** In the reporting year, the authority actively participated in the Pall Mall Process, an initiative against the misuse of commercial cyberintrusion technologies. At the conference in Paris in April 2025, a Code of Practice for States supported by Switzerland and over 25 countries was adopted. The authority showcased practical experiences and benefited from access to an international cybersecurity network with links to private security services.

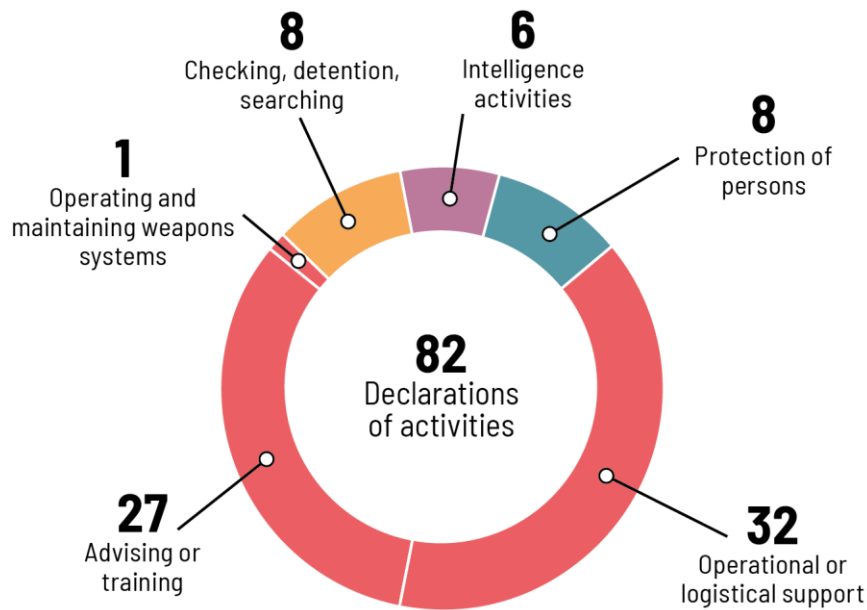
## 3. Statistics

### 3.1 Declaration procedure. Figures for different security services provided in 2025

Between 1 January and 31 December 2025, 21 companies submitted 82 declarations to the competent authority regarding activities (security services)<sup>3</sup>. As at 31 December 2025, the declarations submitted for 2025 to the competent authority for private security services, as defined in Article 4 letter a of the PSSA, break down as follows:

---

<sup>3</sup> See section 3.5 for a chart showing trends in the number of declarations submitted since the PSSA came into force.



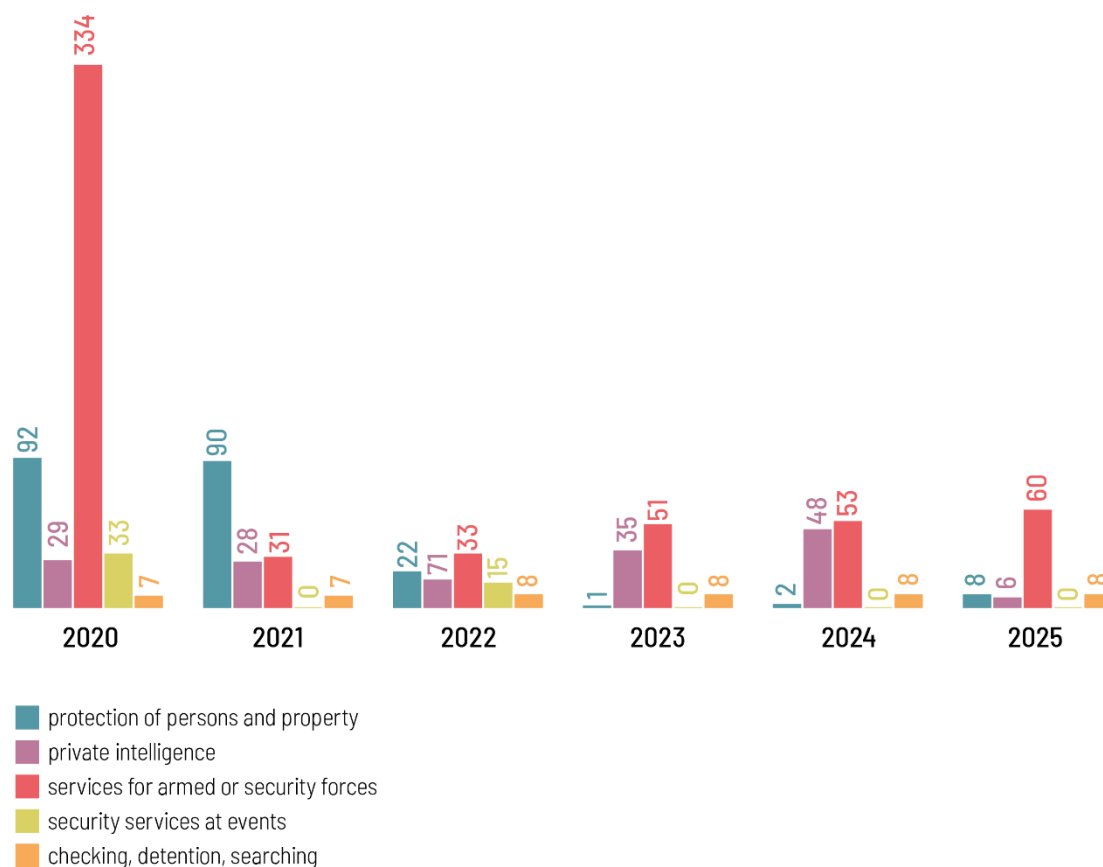
*No activities related to guarding goods and properties.*

*No activities related to guarding, caring for prisoners, or operating prison facilities.*

The declared security services mainly fall into four groups of private security service providers:

- Companies that provide operational or logistical support for armed or security forces, operate or maintain weapons systems, and advise or train members of armed or security forces (Art. 4 let. a paras 6–8 PSSA, red segments) are predominantly companies in the industry sector. Training also includes specialised consultants, for example in the training of police personnel. Some of the activities in these areas are no longer subject to the declaration requirement since the OPSA was amended (Art. 1a, 1b, 1c and Art. 8a OPSA) i.e. as of 1 January 2021.
- The field of intelligence activities (Art. 4 let. a para. 9 PSSA) mainly comprises investigation agencies that primarily provide private intelligence services in the economic sector.
- Services relating to the checking, detention, or searching of persons, searching of premises or containers, and seizure of objects (Art. 4 let. a para. 4 PSSA) are currently provided by a large company operating in the international aviation industry
- Companies carrying out activities related to the protection of persons and the guarding or surveillance of goods and properties (Art. 4 let. a paras 1–2 PSSA) are generally small private security companies.

## 3.2 Main groups of services: trends



The chart above illustrates trends in declarations in the main groups of services for the years 2020–25.

Due to the clarification of the definition in the Guidelines to the PSSA, the number of declarations relating to private intelligence activities (Art. 4 let. a para. 9 PSSA) decreased in the reporting year compared to 2024 (cf. 3.3).

The number of declarations relating to services for armed or security forces (Art. 4 let. a paras 6–8 PSSA) increased by seven in the reporting year.

In 2025, eight services in the area of personal protection (Art. 4 let. a para. 1 PSSA) were declared.

The number of declarations concerning the control, detention or searching of persons, searching of premises or containers, and seizure of objects (Art. 4 let. a para. 4 PSSA) remained at the same level as in the previous reporting year.

## 3.3 Clarification of the definition of intelligence activities

The updated 2025 Guidelines to the PSSA contain, among other things, a more precise definition of services subject to the declaration requirement in the area of intelligence activities. They clarify that 'intelligence service' within the meaning of Article 4 let. a para. 9 PSSA is to be understood as the targeted and systematic collection, analysis and/or transfer of non-public information of a political, economic, scientific and/or military nature. In particular, it clarifies the distinction from publicly available information/publicly available sources (OSINT), research activities based on which are not subject to the declaration requirement. In addition, the concepts of the international nexus and the involvement of specific actors are defined more precisely. Overall, this leads to a clearer and in practice more workable

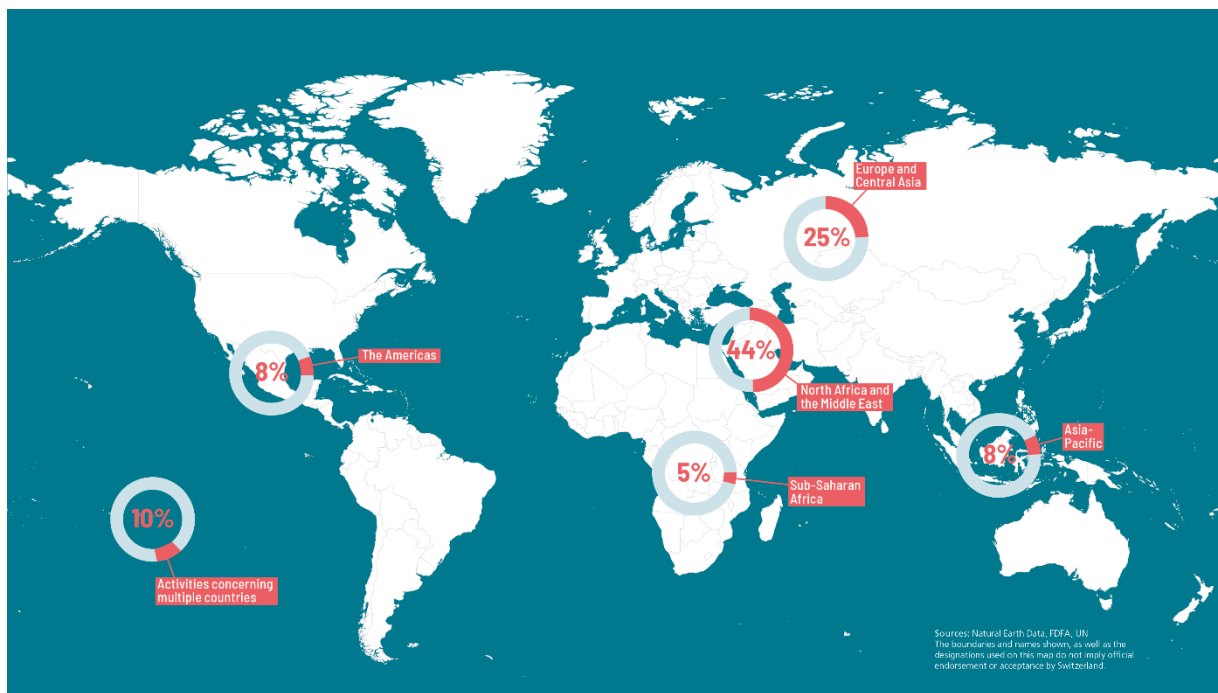
distinction from research activities based on publicly available information and thus to a focusing of resources on activities that require more detailed examination due to the means used.

### 3.4 Enquiries regarding activities which do not need to be declared

In the year under review, 68 activities were submitted for assessment to the competent authority, which concluded that the reported activities did not need to be declared under the PSSA. Some of these activities did not correspond to the more precise definition of "operational and logistical support for armed or security forces" (Art. 1a OPSA), "operating and servicing weapons systems" (Art. 1b OPSA) or "advising or training members of armed or security forces" (Art. 1c OPSA) as set out in the Ordinance amended in 2021. The other cases qualified for the exemption from the declaration requirement under Article 8a OPSA. In addition, some activities were newly categorised as not (or no longer) subject to the declaration requirement due to the revised definition of intelligence activities in 2025.

### 3.5 Geographical distribution of the declared activities (01.09.2015–31.12.2025)

In terms of geographical distribution, the activities subject to the PSSA continue to be mainly concentrated in North Africa and the Middle East, where approximately half of the activities declared since the Act came into force were carried out, followed by Europe and Central Asia.



### 3.6 Review procedures under the PSSA

In 2025, the responsible authority initiated one review procedure in accordance with Article 13 of the PSSA (2024: 1; 2023: 1; 2022: 2; 2021: 3; 2020: 3; 2019: 26; 2018: 16; 2017: 18; 2015–16: 6). The review procedure was initiated to examine whether the planned activity could conflict with the objectives of the law as defined in Article 1 of the PSSA. The review procedure had yet to be completed by the end of 2025.

Accordingly, no activities were prohibited in 2025 following a review procedure.

### 3.7 Sanctions under the PSSA

In one case arising from a criminal complaint filed by the competent authority in 2023, the Office of the Attorney General of Switzerland (OAG) found a violation of the declaration requirement under Article 10 of the PSSA and imposed a sanction against an individual in accordance with Article 23 paragraph 2 of the PSSA; part of the same proceedings were abandoned in relation to two other individuals in accordance with Article 319 paragraph 1 letter e of the Swiss Criminal Procedure Code (CrimPC)<sup>4</sup> in conjunction with Article 53 of the Swiss Criminal Code (SCC)<sup>5</sup>.

In the reporting year, the competent authority's inspections led to a criminal complaint being filed with the OAG in two cases:

A criminal complaint was filed pursuant to Article 27 paragraph 2 of the PSSA for possible violations of the declaration requirement under Article 23 in conjunction with Article 10 of the PSSA and the prohibition of direct participation in hostilities under Article 8 of the PSSA. A second criminal complaint was filed under Article 27 paragraph 2 for possible violations of the declaration requirement under Article 23 in conjunction with Article 10 of the PSSA.

### 3.8 Applications consulted in the area of export controls

In addition to the PSSA, the ECPS is also responsible for processing applications in relation to export controls which are submitted for consultation by the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO). In 2025 a total of 276 cases were submitted involving the export of goods under the War Materiel Act (WMA)<sup>6</sup> and the Goods Control Act (GCA)<sup>7</sup>. In close cooperation with SECO, the ECPS also participates in national and multilateral dialogue in the area of export controls.

## 4. Use of security companies by federal authorities for protection tasks abroad

The PSSA stipulates that Swiss representations located in a region categorised as a complex environment may only contract security service providers that are members of the International Code of Conduct Association (ICoCA). The FDFA is keen to encourage private security service providers in regions with few or no members to join. Through clear communication by the representations that cooperation in a complex environment is only possible with companies that are members of ICoCA, a number of companies have been persuaded to join in recent years. Even in countries that are not considered complex, representations are advised to give preference to ICoCA members.

In conjunction with the Security Abroad Division (formerly the Security section of the Crisis Management Centre [KMZ]) and the Contracts, Procurement, Compliance Division (CPC), the ECPS supports and advises representations abroad and other federal offices on the procurement of security services abroad. To this end, various tools are made available and continuously enhanced, such as a special guide, model contracts and model performance specifications in several languages.

During its regular security missions abroad, the Security Abroad Division verifies that the companies contracted to provide security services are meeting their contractual obligations, particularly in terms of training and equipment. The FDFA digitalised its security and crisis management in 2023, rolling out a platform that was enhanced with a security guard services module in 2024 and will further promote the exchange of information and standardisation.

---

<sup>4</sup> SR 312.0

<sup>5</sup> SR 311.0

<sup>6</sup> SR 514.51

<sup>7</sup> SR 946.202

## 5. Conclusion and outlook

The competent authority reports a positive result for 2025. The number of declared activities has decreased slightly, which is mainly due to the more precise definition of intelligence activities.

Increased cooperation with the cantons was a particular focus: through clearly defined contact persons and a more in-depth exchange of information, the federal implementation of the PSSA was further strengthened. The tenth anniversary of the PSSA in September 2025 provided an opportunity for an assessment of the current situation and an exchange between authorities, politicians and specialists in the field. At the same time, the authority continued its training and outreach activities and raised awareness of regulatory issues among a wide audience through training courses, guest lectures and publications. Switzerland also remained active internationally, particularly in the IGWG on PMSCs, in the MDF and as part of the Pall Mall Process. In doing so, it contributed to the further development of international standards and the networking of relevant actors.

In view of the tense security policy situation, it can be assumed that the regulation of private security services will continue to grow in importance in 2026. Switzerland will closely monitor national and international developments, intensify cooperation with different partners and continue to advocate for clear and effective standards for PMSCs worldwide.