

Blackwatergate

Blackwatergate is the designation of what occurred on September 16, when security guards from the American security-firm Blackwater killed at least 17 civilians in Baghdad. According to the videotape from a surveillance camera, the guards opened fire without provocation [1]. In an immediate reaction, the Iraqi Prime Minister, al-Maliki, ordered the firm and all its employees [2]. That, however, soon proved impossible. Blackwater is the biggest of several security firms, acting in Iraq, and the security firms occupies 180,000 mercenaries, more than there are American soldiers there (165,000) [3]. Moreover, Blackwater guards enjoy a special juridical protection, assured by the American governor Paul Bremer before the civilian government was inserted.

The New York Times reported that Blackwater in two years had been involved 195 shooting incidents, of which they had started shooting in 163 of the cases. In a similar case, the murderous firm accepted paying the family of a killed Iraqi 15,000 \$. They could have offered more but feared that then people would come to be killed by Blackwater just so that the family could be offered a compensation [4]. In the meantime, Iraq's gov. is asking American security firm Blackwater USA to pay \$136 million to the families [5]. As the chief of Blackwater appeared for the American Congress, there was no remorse to be heard over the fatal incidents – after all, there is a war going on.

Since Blackwater has no responsibility towards Iraqi justice and remains protected by American authorities, there is hardly any chance that the current event, open murder as al-Maliki described it, will ever be pursued by any court.

On Oct. 14, a Danish daily reported that policemen and soldiers – stimulated by the high monthly tax-free salaries – were crowding for hire in security firms in Baghdad [6]. What was acting compulsive for normal people's ethic has thus been an advertising for less scrupulous ones.

1 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/worldlatest/story/0,-6941512,00.html>

2 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Iraq/Story/0,,2175662,00.html>

3 http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20070919/ap_on_go_ca_st_pe/us_iraq_outsourcing_the_war_1

4 <http://www.berlingske.dk/article/20071002/verden/71002098/>

5 <http://www.voanews.com/english/2007-10-09-voa14.cfm>

6 <http://www.berlingske.dk/article/20071013/danmark/110131287/>