

2024

Annual Reports Highlights

Voluntary Principles Initiative

Membership Implementation of the Voluntary Principles on
Security and Human Rights — VPSHR

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Preface

This Annual Reports Highlights provides an overview of the efforts by the Members of the Voluntary Principles Initiative (VPI) to implement the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (VPSHR) during the 2024 calendar year. In doing so, the report compiles key insights and themes from NGO, Government, and Corporate Reports to highlight good practices, key lessons learned and continuous improvement in Members' implementation of the VPSHR. In accordance with the Governance Rules, Members are not named in the Highlights.

As in previous years, the sharing of implementation and outreach activities undertaken by Members throughout 2024 provides an opportunity to observe the contribution of the VPSHR at the local, regional, and international levels. This Annual Reports Highlights reflects the submission of 36 reports from VPI Members as of August 2025: 26 companies, 7 NGOs, and 3 Governments.

Executive Summary

In 2024, many Members of the Voluntary Principles Initiative noted challenges operating in complex and volatile environments, such as illegal mining, organized crime, political instability, social unrest, combined with pressures from the global energy transition, climate change, and fragile governance. To address these and other challenges, Members demonstrated continuous improvement in embedding the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (VPSHR) into their core systems and practices, demonstrating a deepening maturity, innovation, and collaboration.

Throughout the year, companies delivered risk management by integrating community perspectives, independent expertise, and grievance data into early-warning systems. Members reported training to be more immersive and inclusive, using scenario-based exercises and digital tools while extending beyond private guards to employees, contractors, and public security forces. Oversight took place through independent audits of VPSHR implementation, stronger contractor requirements, and the use of community feedback to monitor performance.

Community engagement and grievance handling remain central to solving problems early and preventing conflict. Members reported that dialogue forums, perception surveys, and gender-sensitive consultations deepened trust, while grievance mechanisms aimed to become more accessible and transparent through mobile platforms, SMS hotlines, and community-led processes. Lessons from grievances increasingly informed broader policy and training improvements.

In 2024, Members piloted new technologies, tested participatory training methods, introduced independent oversight of security providers, and disclosed performance data to communities, with the aim of building accountability and credibility. Governments reinforced their role by embedding the VPSHR into policy frameworks, trade dialogues, and security sector training, while NGOs remained indispensable as monitors, advocates, and partners working closely with both communities and companies. Innovative and leading practices are highlighted in Annex 1.

Looking ahead, Members are committed to scaling up training, technology integration, digital tools, and independent audits to further enhance accountability, credibility, and collective impact.

Corporate Risk Assessments

Risk assessments in 2024 underscored the complex operating environments faced by Members. Across Africa, Latin America, and Asia-Pacific, companies identified security threats and risks associated with organized crime, illegal mining, the energy transition and fragile governance.

In Africa, illegal artisanal and small-scale mining continued to pose one of the most significant challenges. In several Members' mining projects, artisanal miners entered concession areas, resulting in clashes with industrial operators and creating risks of violent confrontation when public or private security intervened. To mitigate these risks, some Members carried out joint risk mapping exercises with community leaders, identifying hotspots for potential clashes and designing early-warning systems. Members reported that these measures helped in reducing tensions and avoiding escalation.

In Latin America, certain risk assessments revealed deep-seated community distrust, often linked to legacies of environmental harm and unresolved grievances from earlier decades. One Member commissioned independent researchers to conduct household-level surveys, discovering widespread concerns about environmental safety and skepticism about corporate grievance mechanisms. In response, the company redesigned its grievance system and invited community representatives to observe monitoring of tailings water quality. Elsewhere, assessments identified the infiltration of organized criminal groups into supply chains, particularly in logistics and transportation. This prompted stricter contractor vetting and collaboration with law enforcement to ensure supply chain integrity.

In Asia-Pacific, Members reported that land acquisition and resettlement emerged as critical risk factors. Communities protested against displacement linked to infrastructure and energy projects, including LNG and hydrogen facilities. In one case, fishing communities opposed restrictions on access to traditional fishing areas created by offshore LNG installations. Companies responded by designing alternative livelihood programs and creating dialogue forums with fishermen's associations to help alleviate the grievance.

Corporate Security and Human Rights Policies and Procedures

Members in 2024 reported ways in which they were embedding VPSHR into their corporate policies, governance systems, code of conduct, and operational procedures.

Many organizations revised their global security policies to explicitly reference the VPSHR. Some companies introduced corporate-wide requirements that merger and acquisition (M&A) processes include VPSHR-aligned due diligence. This ensured that new assets were screened for security-related human rights risks before acquisition.

Security and Human Rights Training by Corporate Members

Training remained a cornerstone of VPSHR implementation in 2024, with Members expanding the numbers and functions eligible for training, experimenting with new methodologies, and embedding training more deeply into organizational culture.

Reports emphasized that effective training builds awareness and reduces the risk of violent escalation during security incidents.

For private security providers, training focused heavily on de-escalation techniques and lawful use of force. Many companies introduced scenario-based exercises in which guards roleplayed how to handle community protests, theft attempts, or road blockades. In one case, a company used video-recorded simulations to provide feedback to guards, enabling them to improve their decision-making skills in real time.

Employees across the entire project were included in training programs. Contractors and suppliers were also brought into the training system. Some companies made VPSHR induction training a contractual requirement for contractors working in sensitive areas.

Innovative delivery methods were reported as well. Members localized training materials into multiple languages and tailored content to specific cultural contexts. Online training platforms were deployed to reach remote sites where in-person sessions were impractical. One company developed interactive e-learning modules featuring case studies and quizzes, ensuring that employees at all levels could engage with the material.

Companies' Community Engagement

Community engagement was highlighted as a critical part of VPSHR implementation. Regular dialogue platforms were a common feature. Many Members held monthly or quarterly meetings with traditional leaders, village committees, and civil society groups to address security concerns. In one case, a company established a “community liaison forum” that included elders, youth representatives, and women’s associations, enabling a diverse range of voices to shape security arrangements. Members reported that these meetings allowed grievances to be raised before they escalated and gave communities a sense of ownership in decision-making.

These efforts underscored that sustained, inclusive, and transparent engagement not only built trust but also served as an early-warning mechanism for emerging risks. Members consistently reported that communities that were regularly consulted were more likely to raise issues through dialogue rather than protest, reducing the risk of violent escalation.

Engagement with Public Security

Engagement with public security forces remained a critical aspect of VPSHR implementation in 2024. Several Members signed memorandum of understanding (MOUs) with ministries of defense or interior, explicitly referencing the VPSHR. These

agreements established protocols for deployments, rules of engagement, and procedures for responding to incidents.

Several reports emphasized regular dialogue with public authorities to address recurring community concerns and to reinforce human rights obligations. In regions affected by political instability, Members closely monitored public security deployments to ensure alignment with the VPSHR.

Engagement with Private Security

Private security providers continued to play a central role in protecting operations in 2024, but their presence also carry risks of misconduct and community mistrust. Members responded by strengthening oversight, improving contractual requirements, and investing in training and monitoring systems to ensure alignment with the VPSHR.

Members reported implementation of VPSHR through detailed provisions in contracts with private security providers. Many included explicit VPSHR clauses requiring guards to undergo human rights training, submit to background checks, and comply with incident reporting protocols. In some cases, performance reviews incorporated VPSHR-specific indicators, such as the number of complaints received or the timeliness of incident reporting. One company linked contract renewals to these performance metrics, signaling that compliance with the VPSHR was not optional but central to ongoing business relationships.

Auditing and monitoring mechanisms with contracts were also reported by Members. Several Members required independent audits of private security contractors, which included site visits, document reviews, and interviews with both guards and community Members. In one instance, an audit revealed significant training gaps among subcontracted guards, prompting immediate refresher sessions and a revision of subcontracting arrangements. Another company established quarterly review meetings with contractors, during which human rights performance and grievance data were analyzed jointly.

Incident management was another area of focus. Reports highlighted cases where private security guards were implicated in excessive use of force. In one example, a guard's misconduct during a confrontation with artisanal miners triggered a full investigation, disclosure to stakeholders, and corrective measures that included disciplinary action and enhanced training. In another, a company worked with local NGOs to mediate between guards and community Members after a confrontation, using the lessons learned to improve guard conduct guidelines.

Finally, companies placed greater emphasis on community perceptions of private security providers. In one example, community perception surveys were conducted to

evaluate whether guards were viewed as respectful and approachable. Feedback revealed that communities valued guards who engaged in dialogue rather than intimidation, prompting the company to reinforce these behaviors through training and supervision.

Corporate Grievance Mechanisms

Reports revealed a recognition that grievance systems are not just tools for resolving disputes but also vital mechanisms for early warning, accountability, and community confidence.

Several Members piloted digital grievance tools to make reporting easier. One company introduced a WhatsApp hotline that allowed rural community Members to raise complaints directly, bypassing literacy barriers by enabling voice messages. Another rolled out an SMS-based platform in areas with poor internet coverage, providing residents with a unique case number to track the progress of their complaint. Members reported that these tools reduced delays, increased transparency, and made systems more responsive to real-time issues.

Others relied on community-based structures to advise or inform grievance mechanisms. In one example, companies created grievance committees composed of elected representatives from affected villages, which jointly reviewed complaints with company staff and monitored the implementation of solutions. By involving respected community figures, Members reported that the process gained credibility and helped reduce suspicions of lack of impartiality.

Gender-sensitive approaches were also reported on. In several cases, female grievance officers were appointed to handle sensitive cases confidentially, particularly those involving harassment or abuse by security personnel.

Members reported using data from grievances to improve policies and training. In one case, repeated complaints about aggressive nighttime patrols prompted a company to revise patrol procedures and retrain guards. Another member noted that grievance data revealed recurring disputes over land compensation, leading to the development of clearer communication materials and community workshops on compensation frameworks.

Transparency and responsiveness to complaints were emphasized. Some companies provided complainants with regular updates on case progress, while others published anonymized summaries of grievances and resolutions on community notice boards. According to Members reporting, this openness reassured communities that complaints were being taken seriously and helped to build trust.

The most common grievances in 2024 included disputes over land access, resettlement and compensation, environmental impacts, and allegations of misconduct by security forces.

Audit Process

Several Members reported integrating VPSHR indicators into internal audit frameworks, placing security and human rights on par with financial and operational performance. Internal audit teams reviewed site-level practices, checking whether incident reports were properly documented, whether grievance cases were resolved within agreed timelines, and whether training records demonstrated full coverage of relevant staff. In one example, a corporate audit identified inconsistencies in how guards recorded incidents across different sites, prompting the development of a standardized reporting template.

Independent third-party audits were also reported on by Members. Companies hired external experts to assess private security contractors, combining document reviews with on-the-ground interviews with guards, supervisors, and community Members. In one case, auditors uncovered gaps in the way subcontracted guards were trained, leading to immediate corrective measures, renegotiated contracts, and follow-up monitoring.

Key Insights from the Government Pillar

Government Members reported on various engagement and outreach activities with host-state governments, international meetings and workshops, public statements, clients of private security providers and activities to support VPs implementation across jurisdictions. Government Members stated that, throughout the year, they expressed commitment to the VPI through public statements, bilateral consultations, and policy dialogues. In 2024, they also continued to be actively engaged in the ICWGs, and some Governments supported in funding certain ICWGs.

A key focus remained international advocacy and promotion. Governments reported referencing the VPSHR in diplomatic engagements, trade dialogues, and bilateral cooperation frameworks with host countries where extractive and energy companies operate.

Government members also supported multi-stakeholder dialogue and field-level cooperation. Through diplomatic networks and local missions, they facilitated roundtables bringing together companies, NGOs, and local authorities to exchange lessons learned and address emerging security and human rights challenges. These engagements helped strengthen relationships between state security actors and local communities and encouraged more coordinated prevention and response strategies.

Additionally, governments continued to enhance transparency and accountability by publishing annual VPSHR reports detailing progress, challenges, and future priorities. Some acknowledged the need for stronger inter-agency coordination and more systematic monitoring of implementation results.

Key Insights from the NGO Pillar

A major area of NGO work was monitoring and accountability. Civil society organizations in several countries documented cases of excessive use of force by both public and private security actors around extractive projects. In one instance, NGOs collected testimonies from community Members who reported intimidation during protests. Their findings were shared with both companies and government officials, which the NGO reports leading to corrective measures and additional training for security forces. This type of monitoring helped ensure that local grievances were not dismissed and that systemic issues were addressed.

NGOs also reported advancing capacity building at the community level. Many facilitated workshops that educated communities about their rights under the VPSHR and how to use grievance mechanisms effectively. One NGO partnered with youth groups to deliver awareness campaigns through radio broadcasts and community theatre, making the Principles accessible to a wider audience.

Collaboration with companies was another important dimension. Several NGOs partnered with businesses to design more inclusive grievance mechanisms, ensuring that women, Indigenous Peoples, and other marginalized groups had access to complaint channels.

NGOs also contributed to early warning and conflict prevention. Their strong community ties enabled them to detect emerging tensions—such as land disputes, environmental concerns, or resentment. In several cases, NGOs relayed these concerns to companies and governments, which they reported prompted early interventions that prevented violence.

The major challenge that is being faced by the NGOs is the lack of financial resources to implement the VPs. They are all committed to the VPs and are documenting the human rights violations in communities by public security and private security forces of multinational corporations but cannot implement the activities that they desire to respond to these violations in the absence of financial support.

Future Plans

Looking ahead, Members outlined plans to further strengthen their VPSHR implementation in 2025 and beyond. These commitments reflected both lessons learned from past challenges and an awareness of emerging risks linked to geopolitical instability, climate change, and the global energy transition.

Strengthening training programs: Many companies intended to expand scenario-based learning modules. Plans included the development of e-learning platforms to standardize VPSHR training globally, while still allowing for local adaptation. One member committed to translating all training materials into multiple Indigenous languages to increase accessibility for both employees and communities.

Technology and data-driven approaches: Companies announced pilots of new digital tools for incident reporting and grievance management, including platforms that would allow real-time tracking of complaints by both companies and communities. Others intended to introduce data analytics systems to identify patterns in security-related incidents, enabling more proactive interventions.

Community engagement: Several Members committed to establishing permanent multi-stakeholder security committees, giving communities an ongoing voice in oversight. Others announced plans to expand gender-sensitive engagement, with particular focus on the participation of women and youth in dialogue processes. In some regions, companies planned to invest in livelihood projects linked to renewable energy and infrastructure, addressing not only security risks but also broader community concerns.

Auditing and assurance processes: A number of Members pledged to commission independent audits of private security providers annually, rather than on an ad hoc basis. Others planned to establish grievance mechanism reviews by external experts to ensure impartiality and transparency.

Finally, governments and NGOs within the Initiative announced intentions to **scale up collaboration**. Governments planned to integrate VPSHR into more national policies, including security sector reforms and export credit requirements. NGOs outlined plans to intensify monitoring in fragile states and to strengthen regional networks for information sharing and advocacy.

Annex 1: Innovative or Leading Practices

Trainings: Several companies moved beyond classroom sessions to introduce real-life scenario simulations where guards, employees, and even local officials roleplayed incidents such as protest management, road blockades, or theft attempts. In one case, guards were equipped with body cameras during training exercises, enabling facilitators to replay footage and provide targeted feedback on communication and restraint. Another company partnered with local community leaders to co-design training scenarios that reflected real grievances, ensuring the exercises were locally relevant and credible.

Digital tools for grievance mechanisms: One company introduced a mobile app where community Members could submit complaints, upload photographs, and receive case updates. Another deployed an SMS-based system that provided complainants with tracking codes, so they could check on the status of their cases. These platforms improved accountability and reduced perceptions of secrecy in complaint handling. In some rural contexts, low-tech adaptations like community “complaint kiosks” staffed by local facilitators ensured accessibility for people with limited literacy or mobile access.

Gender-sensitive approach: Several companies established women-only consultation groups to capture perspectives often excluded from community forums. In one project, female grievance officers were specifically trained to receive complaints confidentially, particularly regarding harassment by security personnel. Another member collaborated with local women’s associations to design grievance channels that accounted for cultural sensitivities, leading to a noticeable increase in women coming forward with concerns.

Multi-stakeholder collaboration: Several Members facilitated joint security committees that included government representatives, civil society, and community leaders. These bodies reviewed incidents, monitored grievances, and discussed preventive measures. In one case, the committee helped mediate a dispute between police and local youth following a protest, turning what could have been a violent confrontation into a platform for dialogue.