

## Measure Would Impose Accountability for Criminal Behavior

Washington, D.C. - The House Judiciary Committee today approved a bill authored by Congressman David Price (D-NC) to require greater accountability among the tens of thousands of armed private security contractors working in Iraq and other conflict zones around the world.

Both contractors and critics have complained that these individuals are operating in a legal vacuum with no clear mechanism to hold contractors accountable for criminal acts. Price's bill ([H.R. 2740](#)) would bring all contractors operating in a war zone under the jurisdiction of U.S. criminal code, and stand up FBI field units in conflict areas to investigate allegations of criminal misconduct.

"The lack of a legal framework for battlefield contracting has allowed certain rogue contractor employees to commit violent criminal acts in Iraq and Afghanistan without the threat of prosecution. With no accountability for these violations, such acts have undermined our U.S. military efforts and tarnished the reputations of thousands of contractors working legitimately in support of our missions," Price said.

Numerous accounts of criminal misconduct by private contractors have been documented by the media, including the involvement of contractors in detainee abuse at Abu Ghraib prison and several incidents in which contractors have fired upon Iraqi civilians without justification. Despite these allegations, only one contractor has been brought to trial in U.S. courts under existing laws.

"There is no excuse for the de facto legal immunity that our government has permitted for tens of thousands of armed private individuals working on our country's behalf in Iraq in Afghanistan," Price said. "The U.S. government has a responsibility to hold the individuals carrying out its work to the highest standards of conduct, and to ensure that these individuals protect human rights and uphold the law. This responsibility does not disappear simply because such individuals are contractors instead of government employees."

## Judiciary Committee Sends Price Contractor Bill to House Floor

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The Judiciary Committee's approval of the Price bill represents the latest in a series of advances for the congressman's contractor measures in the House. Earlier this year, the House passed the Defense Authorization bill that included language proposed by Price and Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), which would facilitate identifying and reporting cases of contractor misconduct, and establish clear regulations and strong oversight for battlefield contracting. And just last week, the House approved a funding bill for the Justice Department which included a Price provision requiring the Administration to explain its failure to investigate and prosecute alleged abuses by private security contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Defense Authorization bill and Justice funding bill await Senate action. The bill passed today in the Judiciary Committee will now be referred to the House floor for full consideration.

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