



SERCO

Profiting from Abuse

Serco Group

Serco Group presents itself as a respectable British outsourcing company providing essential public services, while being committed to Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity. In reality, this £4.9 billion multinational [1] operates as a corporate predator, profiting from human suffering across prisons, detention centres, and war zones. With operations in 35 countries and 45,000 employees [2], Serco has perfected the art of monetising state violence, enabling the surveillance and detention of racialised communities.



Profiteering from Abuse and Exploitation of Migrants

At the heart of Serco's operations lies its “Justice and Immigration” operations in the UK, Australia, Switzerland, Austria, Italy, and Germany. In the UK, Serco runs five prisons and four “immigration removal centres”, including the infamous Yarl's Wood [3]. Despite regular reports of abuse and maltreatment of migrants and asylum seekers subject to Serco services, the company continues to be awarded contracts worth £ billions from the UK government.

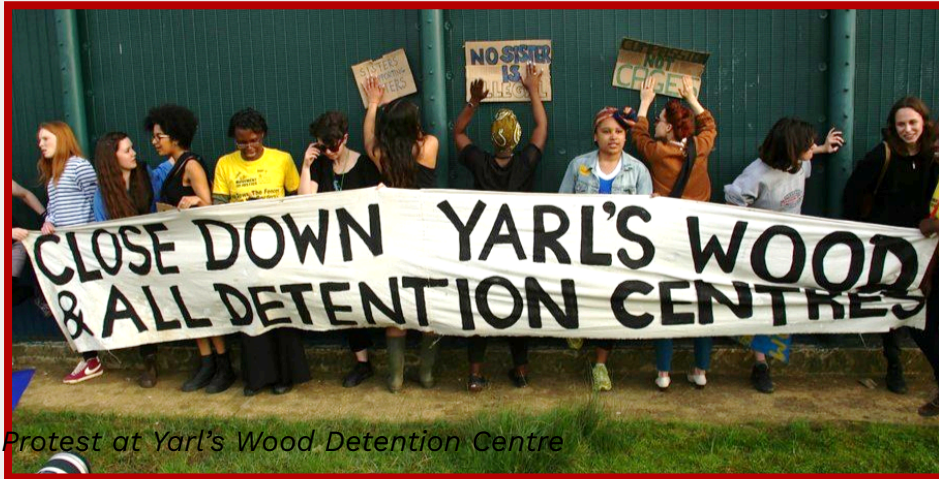
Immigration Detention

Serco currently operates four out of seven “immigration removal centres” in the UK.

Serco's management of Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre since 2007 has been marked by persistent allegations of abuse. Multiple investigations have revealed a culture of sexual violence, with detainees reporting coercion by guards. “If you have to open your legs you will,” one survivor testified, “You think that is the only way you are able to speak to your family” [4]. Between 2013-2015 alone, six formal sexual assault allegations were filed against staff [5].

The 2015 Channel 4 undercover investigation exposed guards referring to detainees as “animals” while systematically denying medical care, resulting in at least one preventable miscarriage [6]. That same year, 74 incidents of self-harm were recorded [6]. A decade later, HM Inspectorate's 2024 report found nearly half of detainees experienced suicidal thoughts, demonstrating how Serco's mismanagement perpetuates psychological torture [7].

Tragically, some turn these thoughts into reality. In 2023, a man detained at Serco-run Brook House died in hospital after attempting suicide [8]. Just a year later, a 26-year old man was found dead in the same facility, with cause of death still unknown. The coroner in the case stated “I have reason to believe circumstances of his death are unnatural” [9].



Protest at Yarl's Wood Detention Centre

Serco continues to profit from the detention of migrants, earning £ millions from its UK immigration contracts [10]. Yet the facilities it operates, like Yarl's Wood, remain plagued by systemic failures and appalling conditions. In 2023, HM Inspectorate of Prisons reported a “worrying decline in safety for detainees held in prison-like conditions [at Yarl's Wood]” [11], while the Independent Monitoring Board in 2024 questioned the centre's “fitness” to hold people in detention [12].

Surveillance & Tagging

Beyond Yarl's Wood, Serco's UK justice operations reveal consistent disregard for human dignity. Serco runs the UK's GPS tagging program for migrants and asylum seekers, subjecting them to 24/7 surveillance. Electronic monitoring of asylum seekers has been found unlawful by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) [13], and causes severe psychological and physical harm - all without the Home Office

providing any evidence that tagging is either necessary or cost-effective [14].”

Appallingly, the company was caught defrauding taxpayers by charging the government for electronic monitoring of deceased individuals and incarcerated persons - ultimately being forced to return £70 million in wrongful gains [15]. Despite this record, Serco continues to win government contracts, including a 2024 extension of its tagging services [16].

Serco has also illegally surveilled its own workforce, with the Information Commissioner's Office ordering the company in 2024 to cease collecting employees' biometric data through facial recognition and fingerprint scanning [17].

Asylum Accommodation

Many asylum seekers awaiting decisions on their UK refugee status are entitled to accommodation, a service the Home Office outsources to private contractors. Serco—one of three primary providers, alongside Clearsprings and Mears—manages housing in the North West, Midlands, and East of England. The company oversees a portfolio of over 7,000 properties leased from private landlords, accommodating more than 30,000 asylum seekers [18]. This model is highly profitable: Serco's 10-year asylum accommodation contract, which runs until 2029, is projected to generate £1.9 billion in total revenue [19].

A government spending review from 2025 conceded that, “private sector suppliers of short-term residential accommodation have made record profits in recent years,

leading to accusations of profiteering” [20]. Yet these financial gains stand in stark contrast to persistent reports of appalling conditions. Numerous reports have revealed overcrowded housing plagued by rat and insect infestations, along with allegations of staff mistreatment [21]. For instance, workers at Serco-managed hotels in Liverpool have described an environment of "institutional abuse" fostered by management practices [22]. Additionally, protests by asylum seekers and advocacy groups continue to spotlight what they describe as "inhumane" living conditions, with some residents reporting experiences that undermine their dignity and safety [23].

Military Complicity: From UK Bases to Israeli War Crimes

Serco's operations actively sustain militarised violence.

Domestically, the company maintains UK military infrastructure including RAF Brize Norton and recently secured the armed forces recruitment contract [24][25].

Internationally, Serco plays a sinister role in sustaining Israel's genocidal regime by providing critical military support. The company boasts of its work in "modernising and sustaining core weapons systems," including naval and aerial platforms used by allied forces—among them, Israel's genocidal military [26].

Serco Australia has a contract to maintain Rafael's Typhoon and Mini-Typhoon remote weapon stations—the same systems used by Israeli forces to slaughter Palestinians [27][28]. By partnering

with Rafael, a notorious Israeli arms manufacturer complicit in apartheid and occupation, Serco directly fuels the machinery of ethnic cleansing.

Adding to its bloodstained portfolio, Serco has secured a contract to support the F-35 Joint Program Office (JPO), ensuring the operational readiness of the world's most advanced—and deadly—stealth fighter. The F-35, flown by Israel in its relentless bombing campaigns over Gaza, turns residential blocks into graveyards. Serco's involvement in sustaining these war crimes is nothing short of complicity in genocide [29][30].

Financial Enablers: Insurers and Investors

Serco has become emblematic of the UK government's hostile treatment of asylum seekers. While direct action and legal challenges against the company continue, a lesser-known but highly effective pressure point exists: the insurers underwriting Serco's operations.

Insurance

Aviva and QBE are the insurers that provide crucial coverage for Serco. By insuring the company, these firms are facilitating the abuse of refugees, enforcement of oppressive immigration policies, and support for Israel's military. Just as insurers have been successfully pressured to withdraw from fossil fuel projects, they can be compelled to sever ties with companies that profit from human rights violations.



Investment

Insurers are also backing Serco financially through investments. As Serco is profiting from suffering, its investors are profiting with it.

Latest investment data (February 2025)



While asylum seekers in Serco-run accommodation survive on just £9.10 per week [31], Serco's CEO pocketed £4.9 million in 2022 [32]. The company's 2023 financial report boasts of "strong demand for immigration services" driving profits [33], laying bare how Serco monetises human misery. Globally, Serco's profits rose by 21% (£37 million) in 2022 [31]. Serco is an excellent case in point that privatisation of public services leaves the door open for profiting from suffering and inadequate provision to cut costs.

Addressing Serco's abuses requires confronting not just the company itself, but the financial ecosystems that enable its operations.

Boycott Bloody Insurance urges organisations and institutions to withdraw support from the insurers backing Serco. If Aviva and QBE refuse to drop Serco, they should expect mounting public pressure, financial and reputational damage.

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