

## RESPONSE FROM CHRISTIAAN DURRANT, ATTRIBUTED TO CHRISTIAAN DURRANT

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Over the last number of years, I have been on the receiving end of significant misreporting and false accusations.

These have caused significant and untold damage to my business, family and reputation.

I have not responded to multiple publications because I have not seen a fair path to being able to deal with this in a way that would not cause even more harm and would result in even more false reporting and accusations.

However, as an Australian I have made the decision to appeal to and engage with the ABC as a balanced and fair institution to treat my side of the story properly and with due regard to my legal rights and reputation. I recognise that my story is a unique one and could be prone to exaggeration and embellishment. I am asking that you pay due regard to balance and fairness in your potential reporting. I am also urging you, as I will outline below, that the basis of some of your questions and previous reporting by others is built on dodgy investigations by the UN, influenced by a political agenda that goes way beyond me, and continues to be false and disappointing.

Given all the above, I think it is helpful to explain to you what my job is and who I am. I served Australia as a RAAF F-18 pilot from 1989-2004 where I reached the rank of Squadron Leader, since then I have worked around the world with Governments, NGOs and Businesses in developing countries that are trying to rebuild post conflict or devastation. This work has spanned the development of white papers and strategies for industry to rebuild operations and supply, identifying ways for economies to become self sufficient and less reliant on foreign aid post conflict, creating home grown policing, defence and security policies and capabilities to protect citizens, and developing ideas on managing the flow of refugees and immigration. The nature of this work has taken me around the world, and I have tended to specialise in the Middle East and Africa.

The client base for this has been varied, but in order to develop these strategies I have engaged across communities, government, civil society and business in these markets. The work has predominately been driven at a consulting level through Lancaster 6, of which I am the Managing Director.

Through this consulting work, opportunities have arisen where technical and project management services are needed by my clients to move forward on the ideas contained within the white papers and strategies. To deliver this work, I set up OPUS as a project management and technical services company. This work has never involved any military operations or armed conflict.

I appreciate that this is not a normal run of the mill job. It isn't. It requires working with countries that are failing states and dealing with the realities of those environments. We don't breach sanctions; we don't deliver military services, we don't carry guns, and we are not mercenaries.

I wanted to provide you with this context, so that I can then provide you with my view on the unjustified and false accusations that have been laid against me by the UN and unfortunately other media outlets.

The nature of many of your questions are consistent with what I have received from other media that have used leaked and false documents from the UN and its panel of so called 'experts' on Libya to publish accusations that are incorrect and subject to legal actions. I am also aware that certain documents are currently in circulation, and which may even be in your possession, which are being incorrectly attributed to me. Not having seen any UN reports or any purported evidence which underlies it, I cannot confirm that any documents are ours. The incorrect attribution of the ownership of such documentation to us would be highly defamatory.

Since the start of this in 2019, I have co-operated with the UN and provided multiple responses. I have repeatedly sought the opportunity to engage with the investigators and to date this has been denied to me. I am now scheduled to meet with them on 16 September.

Prior to this long awaited and often delayed opportunity, I sought assurances from the UN that this would remain a confidential process until the completion of the investigation. They provided those assurances, but, have repeatedly failed to uphold them.

The Committee/Panel is important as is the UN. Equally important is the UN's 1947 charter of human rights, namely Article 12, which states *'No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honor and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks'*. In my case, and for several my colleagues and friends, the UN has failed to live up to this fundamental right.

Sadly this behaviour and failure to uphold rights is an example of the erosion of the UN through weak global leadership to the point where one third of the 10 non-permanent UNSC members do not themselves meet the UN Human Rights charter and two thirds are not assessed as stable governments. Given these conditions, you can understand how it feels as a private citizen to be on the receiving end of these institutional failures.

It is important to remember that UN Resolution No 1973 authorized the destruction of the most developed country in Africa to what it is today – a 9 year civil war in Libya with countless lives lost. Additionally, the UN overruled the democratic will of the Libyan people (who voted for a secular state) by rejecting the democratically elected leaders of the House of Representatives and instead surreptitiously formed its own non-representative government. The second order effects of this hypocritical policy has seen an immeasurable loss of life at sea and the EU stressed to the point of Brexit from the uncontrolled flow of migrants through Libya. Most recently, members of NATO are now militarily facing off against each other over Libya related policies. All these points go toward establishing the credibility of the UN on all matters relating to Libya.

This politicisation of the UN has sadly affected the ill-conceived operations of the Committee/Panel for over a year now. Despite explicit warnings from our legal team concerning the sensitivities of the investigation and that confidentiality would be a requirement for any cooperation from our personnel, the UN leaked the details of this investigation to the media from the start – even prior to any of our parties being notified of an investigation being initiated. The leaks have continued including both corporate and personal information of our staff which has severely impacted our businesses and personnel alike including bank accounts being frozen, death threats and broken families. Our staff have been intimidated and threatened with the loss of their liberty by UN investigators including the denial of legal representation.

I make this assertion based on the fact that the panel has chosen to use its limited resources to pursue 20 unarmed personnel entering Libya for a 48 hour period yet thousands of armed mercenaries and seemingly limitless weapons are continually flowing into the country – this politically motivated smear campaign may go some way to explain why the UN deputy special envoy for Libya would say the UN sanctions are a joke.

The proposition, including that against our team, that successful law-abiding citizens would suddenly risk everything to become mercenaries is wrong.

I have provided you with this context to inform your reporting in the hope that it will be relevant and truthful. I assume as a responsible news organisation that you would correct and even retract a story or any part of it that was subsequently shown to be false or defamatory.

Clearly to publish without taking this information and the responses below into account could result in the wilful publication of false and/or defamatory allegations. In the event this should happen we would not hesitate to immediately commence proceedings against the ABC and you to seek lawful correction and to recover damages in respect of losses suffered.

I have also addressed your questions below where relevant.

#### **Questions regarding my business operations**

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**Answer:** For avoidance of any doubt, I am not, never have or will be a mercenary. Or a leader of such. No company that I run holds the licenses or the desire to be private military contractors.

I have clearly outlined what I do and the services I provide in my statement above.

## Libya

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**Answer:** There are several issues to clear up. I have not breached, and have never breached, any sanction anywhere. I have also not been contacted by any of the Governments you mentioned or any other Government regarding Libya.

I have never met or presented anything to Khalifa Belqasim Haftar.

The PowerPoint you referred to has nothing to do with me or any company I am associated with. I became aware of this document when a screen grab was shared with me by a journalist that was sent to him by the UN. Apparently, the PowerPoint was being shared by the UN Committee/Panel and was incorrectly attributed to me/L6/etc.

This incorrectly attributed document has done significant damage to me and has been the false basis of multiple reports and allegations against me. I have no knowledge of who created this document and had nothing to do with it.

The reality of what happened in Libya is that we followed a well-trodden path for companies operating in challenging markets. You have conversations with companies that are on the ground about their needs and they say to you if you

can get here and help us keep our people and assets operating and safe than we will work with you. I had spoken to

several oil & gas and other companies already operating in Libya and they expressed their needs for support. The same applies to the United Nations and other NGOs operating in these environments, they turn up and look for the support and services of consultants and service providers.

We sent a team of 20 people to setup a logistics centre in Libya. Within 48 hours they left due to security concerns. They were not armed, they were experienced in determining risk and danger, and they made a call and evacuated safely to Malta. The way they managed their safety and the risk reflects the type of men and women that operate in these environments.

They evacuated on rib boats which were chartered through Sovereign Charters. Nothing happened and in no way were any sanctions breached.

## Afghanistan

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**Answer:** Lancaster 6 was involved over a 6-month period in producing a study on an affordable aviation training and mentoring program that the Afghanistan Government could implement to deliver as part of their drive towards self-sufficiency and reduce the reliance on foreign aid and support. We developed this proposal as an early stage scoping document to present to the Afghanistan Government in the hope of potential work in supporting them across broader reconstruction efforts. We were not paid for this work and undertook it as a potential business development opportunity for future consulting projects. This project was never implemented by the Afghanistan Government and no consulting or technical services were delivered by Lancaster 6.

Throughout the conflict in Afghanistan, there have been multiple public discussions on how the USA and other allies, including Australia, can evolve their operations and reduce their involvement. Multiple competing ideas and approaches have been reported on and discussed at length. To date, none of them have been implemented and Afghanistan continues to be a failed state in desperate need of a reset.

Outside of all of this, I reiterate and repeat that neither I nor Lancaster 6 delivered any services in Afghanistan.

## Jordan

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**Answer:** Through OPUS we provided engineering inspections and recommendations on the viability and value of several different aircraft. We were not involved in the sale of these aircraft beyond the inspection and viability recommendations.

I was in Jordan as part of this project and held meetings with numerous Government officials.

In regard to your other questions regarding aircraft in Jordan, I need to reiterate that the pursuits we were involved in Libya did not have any aircraft attached to it. 20 employees were in Libya for no more than 48 hours before they evacuated due to unsafe conditions as civil contractors. They evacuated by boat to Malta.

The aircraft you referenced were in Jordan for an energy services project and their departure was not significantly delayed.

**Frontier Group**

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**Answer:** I worked at FSG in 2014-2015 and then left to establish my own business. My role was Aviation Director and I resigned from that position.

**Erik Prince**

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**ANSWER:** I remain friends with Erik Prince and have no business or financial relationship with him.