The National Gallery of Victoria has ended its contract with Wilson Security following a series of protests by artists over the firm’s offshore detention links.

An NGV spokesperson confirmed the decision on Wednesday, announcing SecureCorp as the gallery’s new security services provider.

“Wilson Security was the NGV’s interim security service provider while we were in a Victorian Government procurement process to secure a long-term security services provider,” the spokesperson said.

“We have commenced the short transition to our new provider.”

While the gallery has not acknowledged a link between the protests and the decision to cancel its contract with Wilson Security, artist Gabrielle de Vietri said the artists committee behind the protests welcomed the move.

“I honestly don’t think the NGV would’ve changed it unless it was for their community speaking up,” she said.

Wilson Security is the former provider of security services at Australia’s offshore detention centres on Manus.
Island and Nauru, where several asylum seekers have died.

NGV appointed Wilson Security as its interim security services provider in July 2017 following allegations of illegal payment practices by subcontractors to its former security services provider, Building Risks International Pty Ltd (BRI Security).

In August, hundreds of local and international artists signed an open letter urging the gallery to end the contract with Wilson Security on the basis it sent “a message endorsing the systematic abuse of vulnerable people”.

And in December, three artists participating in the NGV’s summer blockbuster exhibition, the inaugural NGV Triennial, altered the content of their works or changed the titles of their works to Wilson Must Go in protest at the contract.

Irish artist Richard Mosse included in his artwork a message from former Manus Island detainee Behrouz Boochani, recorded the day before the exhibition opened: “It is not acceptable that an art organisation like NGV has signed a contract with a company whose hands are so bloody.”

Other protests included covering up Picasso’s Weeping Woman painting inside the gallery with a cloth bearing Wilson Security’s logo; and dyeing the NGV’s fountain and moat red.
Richard Mosse’s Incoming was updated to include commentary from former Manus Island detainee Behrouz Boochani about NGV’s contract with Wilson Security.

Photo: Hannah Francis