



National statement, delivered by Muhammad Hussain, Counsellor, during Interactive Dialogue with the Working Group on Mercenaries at the 48th session of Human Rights Council

21 September 2021

Madam President,

We concur with the Working Group that increasing involvement of private military and security companies (PMSCs) in the humanitarian sphere undermines the fundamental humanitarian principles of impartiality, neutrality and operational independence.

The lack of transparency surrounding contractual obligations, unclear hierarchy of command, and absence of oversight over PMSCs' operations exacerbates the risk of human rights violations and abuses, and violation of IHL. More disturbingly, as evident from pardon of contractors convicted of civilian killing in Iraq, impunity for such abuses and violations persists.

We, therefore, strongly echo the Working Group's call on all humanitarian actors to refrain from recruiting such companies, as it entails a huge reputational and operational damage to the noble mission of delivering humanitarian assistance to those in need.

In the wider context, outsourcing of security-related function-an exclusive prerogative of State-to private entities, whose business model thrives on instability and chaos, is an extremely worrying trend.

We agree with the Working Group's conclusion that the notion of self-regulation by PMSCs has failed to stand the test of time. The voluntary and non-binding frameworks, such as the Montreux Document and the International Code of Conduct, suffer from inherent gaps and deficiencies in terms of their applicability and scope.

Pakistan, therefore, calls for accelerated efforts to finalize the legally binding international regulatory framework on PMSCs at the HRC-mandated IGWG. I thank you.