**The 2st session of the Working Group to elaborate the content of an international regulatory framework without prejudging the nature thereof relating to the activities of private military and security companies**

**Geneva, 26-29 April 2021**

**Mr Chair-rapporteur**

1. Let me begin by congratulating to you for your election as the Chair-Rapporteur of this important Intergovernmental Working Group and for guiding the deliberations during the session.
2. This Working Group and its mandate are very important in ensuring the accountability for violations and abuses of human rights committed by private military and security companies.
3. My delegation is of the view that the initiatives like Montreux Document and the International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers could provide a useful input for our deliberations. They couldn’t however, be regarded as inclusive of all the necessary elements required for a legally binding and multilaterally negotiated instrument.
4. My delegation emphasizes the need to address this issue within an international legal instrument that private military and security companies to respect to national law, including criminal law, human rights law, and applicable international humanitarian law.
5. Our world today is facing a huge proliferation of private military and security companies in the West Asia region, and many of these companies feel unbridled and unrestrained in their activities, particularly when they are deployed by states during armed conflicts.
6. We need to take lessons from past horrible cases of massive violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere where innocent civilians were massacred torture and abused in cold blood by personnel of military companies. Unfortunately, these atrocities were almost never prosecuted by any court of law or by any human rights mechanism.
7. The Geneva Conventions oblige states to hold war criminals accountable for their crimes, even when they act as private security contractors. Granting reprieve or pardon to the private military and security companies that committed serious crimes and atrocities violate respective States obligations under international law and specifically undermine humanitarian law and human rights at a global level.
8. As raised by the Chair of the U.N.Working Group on the use of mercenaries, “Ensuring accountability for such crimes is fundamental to humanity and to the community of nations.  Pardons, amnesties, or any other forms of exculpation for war crimes, open doors to future abuses when States contract private military and security companies for inherent state functions.”
9. We need to work together to develop an international legal framework to regulate the activities of private military companies, to fill the existing accountability gaps in international law, to ensure the responsibility of relevant states for misconduct and crime by members of those companies and rights of victims to access to an effective remedy, redress and compensation. The international humanitarian law and human rights law are two basic sources for developing the international legal framework.

**I thank you**