



**National Statement, delivered by Mr. Danyal Hasnain, Second Secretary, during
Interactive Dialogue with the Working Group on the use of mercenaries
57th HRC Session
12 September 2024**

Mr. President,

Pakistan welcomes the Working Group and thanks the members for presenting their latest thematic report.

We appreciate the Working Group for speaking out against the catastrophic situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and lending their voice to calls to cease arms transfers to the occupying power.

As highlighted in the report, continued arms transfers can exacerbate the adverse human rights consequences of the involvement of mercenaries and private military companies in situations of armed conflict.

Reports of thousands of mercenaries serving alongside Israeli occupation forces in a situation where violations of international humanitarian law have become a daily norm also merit the Working Group's attention.

Mr. President,

We appreciate the Working Group for drawing attention in its report to the increasing role of mercenaries in deployment and usage of unmanned weapon systems. Coupled with the potential for misuse of digital and emerging technologies, the growing sophistication of weapons systems within reach of mercenaries heightens concerns.

Mercenaries and private military companies also operate extensively in third countries, many times covertly, and the lack of accountability and oversight results in impunity despite the existence of non-binding regulatory frameworks.

It, therefore, remains imperative to develop internationally legally binding instruments to ensure accountability and oversight, and address the human rights risks associated with the use of mercenaries and private military companies.

I thank you.