



International
Code of Conduct
Association

**Fourth session of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working
Group**

**General Statement of the International Code of Conduct
Association**

17 April 2023

1. The International Code of Conduct Association (“ICoCA” or “the Association”) appreciates the opportunity to contribute to the activities of Open-ended intergovernmental 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. In particular, ICoCA would like to recognize the constructive and substantive dialogue on critical issues which the current Chairperson of the Working Group has enabled through his leadership.

2. The International Code of Conduct for Security providers was adopted in 2010, the result of a multi-stakeholder initiative launched by Switzerland. It was amended in 2021 to broaden its scope of application and the range of security services covered by the Code, to

better reflect the evolution of the security industry and related human rights concerns. The Code articulates responsibilities of private security companies under human rights and international humanitarian law to ensure the responsible provision of private security, including when operating in complex and otherwise high risk, unstable or fragile environments where there is a risk of human rights abuses and/or violations of international humanitarian law and/or civilian harm.

3. The International Code of Conduct Association is a non-profit multi-stakeholder initiative, based in Geneva, Switzerland. It has the status of other international organization and has been granted immunities and privileges in Switzerland. The Association members currently include 7 Governments, 50 civil society organizations and 120 security providers globally, the majority of which are local security providers, operating into more than 50 countries.

4. ICoCA was established in 2013 to support States to ensure that providers of private security services respect human rights and international humanitarian law through implementation of the International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers (“the Code”). ICoCA is the only international mechanism working towards raising human rights standards within the private security industry globally. 2023 marks the 10th Anniversary of ICoCA.

5. ICoCA, working with Civil Society Organizations and Governments, ensures that its Member and Affiliate security companies act in accordance with the Code. The Association conducts due diligence through monitoring and certification. It provides capacity building and handles complaints against security providers with the objectives of raising standards, and increasing oversight and accountability of the private security industry.

6. ICoCA has been recognized as an important sector specific mechanism that can be of assistance to States to enable implementation of certain international human rights and humanitarian law obligations, and best practices and principles contained in the Montreux Document and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Indeed, as ICoCA marks its tenth anniversary, it has demonstrated its added value as a critical organization which can contribute effectively to the raising of standards in the private security industry.

7. As part of the process of elaborating a regulatory framework, ICoCA is therefore encouraged to note the increasing recognition by States and relevant stakeholders of the important role of ICoCA in enabling the effective implementation of internal human rights and

international humanitarian law within the security industry, and in the development of guidance and best practices to build the capacity of security providers to integrate these legal frameworks into the operations, policies and culture.

8. ICoCA fully supports national and international efforts to improve accountability and the provision of remedies. Addressing violations of international humanitarian law and abuses of human rights by private security companies and private military contractors, and of their clients where relevant, is critical to close the impunity gap. Under international law, the responsibility for prosecuting and punishing perpetrators of human rights abuses and humanitarian law violations lies first and foremost with States. ICoCA welcomes greater engagement with States in this regard.

9. ICoCA looks forward to continued cooperation with the Open-ended intergovernmental working group and with States to ensure the respect of human rights and humanitarian law by security companies and military contractors.

Thank You

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