

GENEVA CALL NEWSLETTER



GENEVA CALL
APPEL DE GENÈVE
LLAMAMIENTO DE GINEBRA

This Newsletter highlights Geneva Call's main activities since the latest one published at the end of September 2006. It describes principally its engagement in the field and outlines a recent publication. As Geneva Call is growing and broadening its work, this Newsletter also introduces new staff members.

I. Geneva Call Activities

1. *Progress in Burundi*

In Burundi, Geneva Call has maintained its contacts with the *Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie-Forces de Défense de la Démocratie* (CNDD-FDD), a former Deed of Commitment signatory, in order to ensure that the party, in power since the 2005 elections, follows through on its commitment to address the landmine issue. As a result of these efforts, the Burundian Senate debated progress on mine action with the Interior Minister on 19 December 2006. Geneva Call is also making progress on its engagement of the rebel *Parti pour la Libération du Peuple Hutu - Forces Nationales de Libération* (Palipehutu-FNL). During a meeting with Geneva Call in mid-October 2006 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, the President of the movement, Mr. Agathon Rwaso, confirmed the Palipehutu-FNL's commitment to fully collaborate towards the fight against antipersonnel mines.

2. *Geneva Call engages Casamance rebels in Southern Senegal*

Landmines laid during the Casamance conflict have had a significant humanitarian and socio-economic impact, particularly since 1997. Handicap International has registered more than six hundred mine victims while landmines prevent the exploitation of otherwise fertile land and impede the delivery of basic services and humanitarian aid. In 2005 and 2006, the government laid the legal foundations for comprehensive mine action to take place, but due to recurrent clashes involving the separatist Movement of the Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC), only limited mine clearance operations have taken place to date. Senegal is a State Party to the Mine Ban Treaty (MBT) and as such has the obligation to clear all landmines on its territory by March 2009.

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With renewed fighting in 2006 - including new mine laying activity - engaging the MFDC appears critical for the full implementation of the MBT. Geneva Call undertook two missions to Senegal's Casamance region and neighbouring Guinea-Bissau in October and November 2006 to begin engaging the MFDC's political and military leadership on the landmine ban and, more generally, mine action. Geneva Call's delegations also met with the government of Senegal and other mine action stakeholders. While the MFDC generally shares Geneva Call's humanitarian concerns, military leaders do not appear ready as yet to renounce the use of antipersonnel mines nor are they willing to have the areas under their influence cleared of mines given the recent redeployment of the army. The MFDC also stressed the importance of entrusting a neutral agency with humanitarian mine clearance operations so as to avoid security incidents.



Photo: Geneva Call mission members and Boubine Touré of ICBL/LM meet late MFDC leader Abbé Augustin Diamacoune Senghor (center), Ziguinchor, 7 October 2006.

In 2007, Geneva Call will continue engaging the movement's leadership as well as local communities, displaced people, community leaders, and women, all of whom can play a crucial role in convincing combatants to renounce using antipersonnel mines.

3. Northeast India Workshop Series

Geneva Call in partnership with the Indian Campaign to Ban Landmines organised four mine ban advocacy workshops in India's troubled northeast region during 2006. The workshops were held in Guwahati, Assam in February, Imphal, Manipur in October, Itonagar, Arunachal Pradesh in November and Agartala, Tripura in December.

Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) are commonly used by armed Non-State Actors (NSAs) in India's northeast. Some groups, including the United Liberation Front of Assam, the National Democratic Front of Bodoland, the National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Khaplan and some Manipuri groups have been known to use anti-personnel mines.

The workshops helped to sensitise and inform civil society, tribal leaders, media and local authorities on the indiscriminate nature and negative impact of anti-personnel mines and Geneva Call's mechanism for NSA participation in the mine ban. They also helped to build a broad base of support and to mobilise possible intermediaries that could assist in NSA engagement as well as to establish a network that could monitor any eventual mine ban commitments.

4. UNPO Resolution on Landmines

The Underrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation (UNPO) unanimously adopted a resolution supporting the anti-personnel mine ban during their VIII General Assembly Meeting in Taipei, Taiwan, 27-29 October 2006. This was the first time that the assembly has passed a resolution on the issue.

The resolution, which Geneva Call helped to prepare, was submitted by the Chin, Naga and Mon delegates. In addition to committing themselves to the ban on anti-personnel mines, the resolution called for States and Non-State Actors (NSAs) to cease immediately the use, production, transfer and stockpiling of anti-personnel mines and for them to accede to the Mine Ban Treaty or sign the Deed of Commitment of Geneva Call respectively. They also called on people everywhere to join in the common task to eradicate these weapons and meet the enormous challenges of mine action, including victim assistance, and to provide the technical and financial assistance required (the full resolution can be found at: www.unpo.org/downloads/Landmines.pdf).

There was also wording supporting the mine ban in the General Resolution adopted at the end of the meeting.

The ICBL made a presentation on the landmine issue during the General Assembly meeting. Several UNPO members are affected by anti-personnel mines laid in their areas, including Abkhazia, Ahwazi, Assyria, Batwa, Cabinda, Chin, Mon, Somaliland and Western Balochistan. Three members have already signed Geneva Call's Deed of Commitment banning anti-personnel mines: Iraqi Kurdistan (the two former autonomous regional governments), the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (North East India), and the Chin National Front/Army (Burma/Myanmar).

It is hoped that this resolution will lead to mine ban commitments by other member organisations as well as lead to greater collaboration in mine action for the benefit of populations living under the threat of these weapons.

5. News from Europe and Middle East

5.1. Directives of General Command of the Kurdish People's Defence Forces (HPG) armed wing of the KONGRA GEL/PKK

After the signature of the Geneva Call's Deed of Commitment by HPG in Iraqi Kurdistan, Mr. Zubeyir Aydar, President of KONGRA GEL, signed it in Geneva. In parallel to the signature, the General Command of the HPG, made a declaration for all HPG members banning antipersonnel landmines. In this declaration, the obligations of the Geneva Call's Deed of Commitment were summarised and all fighters were instructed to implement and respect them. They were required, through this engagement against antipersonnel landmine, to maintain and deepen the approach they have developed in recent years within the concept of "Legitimate Defence".

II. Geneva Call Publication

Armed Non-State Actors and Landmines Volume II: A Global Report of NSA Mine Action

On 16 November 2006 Geneva Call and its partners² launched a new report on mine action involving NSAs within the framework of the *Third Review Conference of the Convention on Conventional Weapons* in Geneva. The report, which highlights the need for mine action to help all affected populations, compiles and analyzes data on the involvement of NSAs in the five pillars of mine action (mine ban advocacy, stockpile destruction, mine clearance, mine risk education, and victim assistance) and includes stakeholders' views on the benefits, difficulties and lessons learned in this regard. The main conclusion of the research is that engaging NSAs in mine action has significant benefits, since their involvement supports efforts to reduce the humanitarian impact of anti-personnel mines and unexploded ordnance.

The report completes the 2005 report "Armed Non-State Actors and Landmines. Volume I: A Global Report Profiling NSAs and Their Use, Acquisition, Production, Transfer and Stockpiling of Landmines". Both reports are available online on Geneva Call's website: <http://www.genevacall.org/resources/publications.htm> Hardcopies can be obtained by writing to: info@genevacall.org

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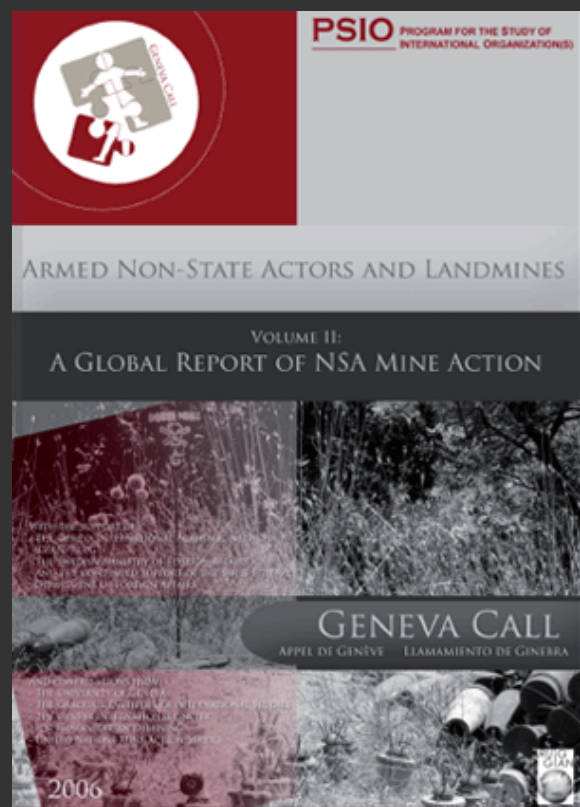
² The report is part of a joint project with the Program for the Study of International Organization(s) of the Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva. Institutions contributing to the project are the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, the University of Geneva and the Graduate Institute of International Studies. The project is supported by the Geneva International Academic Network (GIAN), the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Government of Italy, and enjoys the continued support of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs.

5.2. HAW PAR¹

Haw Par is an organisation operating in the areas under the influence of HPG and KONGRA GEL in mountainous areas of Iraqi Kurdistan and has just published its 2005-2006 activities' report. A copy of the report was sent to Geneva Call for information. According to this report HAW PAR conducted mine clearance operations for 1226 Walmara, 69 anti-personnel landmines, 60 "antifoot" mines, 500 of different types of mines, and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) left behind by Iranian and former Iraqi armed forces during the 1980-1988 War. Eight Katyusha missiles made in Iran and 20 smog grenades were collected.

According to report of HAW PAR, 3500 square metres were cleared of mines and secured in 2006. Mine clearance activities have taken place from June to the end of August by a team of 15 persons. The report adds that HAW PAR conducted some sensitisation and prevention workshops for civilian living in the areas where it is working. A Geneva Call delegation has seen their base camp and their activities and could vouch for the veracity of this report.

¹ From the Kurdish, "Protection of Environment".



III. New staff members at Geneva Call since September 2006

Since September 2006, Geneva Call has increased its staff members:

Narine Berikashvili joined Geneva Call in September 2006 as Programme Consultant based in the South Caucasus. She has experience with the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and *Landmine Monitor*.

Nicolas Florquin was appointed full time at Geneva Call as Programme Officer for Africa in September 2006. With his experience with the Small Arms Survey, he is familiar with Non-State Actors.

Jean-Damascène Gasanabo was appointed in October 2006 as Head of Support to assist Operations in its different tasks. He is notably in charge of communication, research strategy, public advocacy, and special projects. Before that, he was working at UNESCO's Education Sector.

Markus Haake joined Geneva Call in February 2007 to reinforce the team on new projects in the Caucasus and Middle East. Previously he was Coordinator of both the German Action Group Landmine and the German Campaign to Ban Landmines.

Mohammed Noor Ali, based in Kenya, joined Geneva Call in November 2006 as Project Officer to assist Geneva Call in its activities in Somalia. Previously he worked as consultant for Geneva Call since 2004.

Chris Rush was appointed in January 2007 as Programme Officer for Asia. He worked many years in Thailand and Sri Lanka on refugee issues.

IV. Latest publications from Geneva Call

Non-State Actors and Landmines Volume II: A Global Report of NSA Mine Action.

<http://www.genevacall.org/resources/testi-publications/gc-ansal2-nov06.pdf>

By Anki Sjöberg - Geneva Call, November 2006.

Mine Action in the Midst of Internal Conflict Report of a workshop organized jointly with the ICBL Non-State Actors Working Group in November 2005, in Zagreb.

<http://www.genevacall.org/resources/testi-publications/gc-27nov05-zagreb.pdf>

By Geneva Call, September 2006.

The Impact of Armed Non-State Actors on the Mine Ban Treaty (This 11-page document is only available on Geneva Call's website).

<http://www.genevacall.org/resources/testi-publications/gc-sep06-art7.pdf>

By Geneva Call, September 2006.

Women in Armed Opposition Groups in Africa and the Promotion of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights.

<http://www.genevacall.org/resources/testi-publications/gc-23nov05-women.pdf>

Report of a workshop organized in November 2005 in Addis Ababa by Geneva Call and the Program for the Study of International Organization(s).

By Dyan Mazurana, Ph.D. - August 2006.

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