



## Press release

### The Kongra-Gel/HPG pledges to renounce the use of anti-personnel mines

Geneva, 18 July 2006 - The Kurdistan People's Congress (Kongra Gel)/People's Defence Forces (HPG), also known as the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), has committed to a total ban on anti-personnel (AP) mines in signing the Geneva Call's Deed of Commitment.

“Our organization has been discussing the issue of landmines for several years. We have now decided to stop using AP mines because we realized that this coward weapon is against our struggle and principles” said Zubeyir Aydar, President of the Kongra-Gel. “AP mines affect civilians and cause irreparable damage, often long after fighting is over” added Fehman Hüseyin, HPG Commander. “Our strategy is to employ discriminate weapons only. This is why we use command-detonated devices, no longer AP mines.”

Several thousands of people have been killed or injured by mines. The Kongra-Gel/HPG, (also known as the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) ) has been waging an armed struggle against the Turkish State since 1984. Both parties used mines, particularly in the predominantly Kurdish areas in the southeast of the country. In addition, borders with Syria, Iraq, Iran and Armenia have also been mined by the Turkish army. The Republic of Turkey acceded to the Ottawa Convention in 2003.

“Given the current situation of active fighting and no prospect of peace, this decision from the Kongra-Gel/HPG to renounce the use of AP mines is significant” said Geneva Call President, Elisabeth Reusse-Decrey. “It reflects the will of the Kongra-Gel/HPG to commit itself to respect certain rules of behaviour during warfare and to spare civilians from the effects of landmines. We will follow up the implementation of this humanitarian commitment and we call upon the Government of Turkey to facilitate our work on the ground.”

Geneva Call is an international humanitarian organisation dedicated to engaging non-state armed groups in mine action. It provides a mechanism, complementary to the Ottawa Convention, by which these groups can adhere to the ban on AP mines through their signature of the Deed of Commitment. Anti-vehicle mines are not banned under the Deed of Commitment, provided they are not victim-activated. To date, with the Kongra-Gel/HPG, 29 armed groups have signed the Deed of Commitment.

For further information, please contact  
Geneva Call +41 22 879 10 50 [info@genevacall.org](mailto:info@genevacall.org)

HEADQUARTERS  
P.O. BOX 334  
CH-1211 GENEVA 4  
SWITZERLAND  
TEL: + 41 22 879 1050  
FAX: + 41 22 879 1051

DEED OF COMMITMENT UNDER GENEVA CALL  
FOR ADHERENCE TO A TOTAL BAN ON ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES  
AND FOR COOPERATION IN MINE ACTION

WE, the (NAME OF THE SIGNATORY GROUP), through our duly authorized representative(s),

*Recognising* the global scourge of anti-personnel mines which indiscriminately and inhumanely kill and maim combatants and civilians, mostly innocent and defenceless people, especially women and children, even after the armed conflict is over;

*Realising* that the limited military utility of anti-personnel mines is far outweighed by their appalling humanitarian, socio-economic and environmental consequences, including on post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction;

*Rejecting* the notion that revolutionary ends or just causes justify inhumane means and methods of warfare of a nature to cause unnecessary suffering;

*Accepting* that international humanitarian law and human rights apply to and oblige all parties to armed conflicts;

*Reaffirming* our determination to protect the civilian population from the effects or dangers of military actions, and to respect their rights to life, to human dignity, and to development;

*Resolved* to play our role not only as actors in armed conflicts but also as participants in the practice and development of legal and normative standards for such conflicts, starting with a contribution to the overall humanitarian effort to solve the global landmine problem for the sake of its victims;

*Acknowledging* the norm of a total ban on anti-personnel mines established by the 1997 Ottawa Treaty, which is an important step toward the total eradication of landmines;

NOW, THEREFORE, hereby solemnly commit ourselves to the following terms:

1. TO ADHERE to a total ban on anti-personnel mines. By anti-personnel mines, we refer to those devices which effectively explode by the presence, proximity or contact of a person, including other victim-activated explosive devices and anti-vehicle mines with the same effect whether with or without anti-handling devices. By total ban, we refer to a complete prohibition on all use, development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, retention, and transfer of such mines, under any circumstances. This includes an undertaking on the destruction of all such mines.
2. TO COOPERATE IN AND UNDERTAKE stockpile destruction, mine clearance, victim assistance, mine awareness, and various other forms of mine action, especially where these programs are being implemented by independent international and national organisations.
3. TO ALLOW AND COOPERATE in the monitoring and verification of our commitment to a total ban on anti-personnel mines by Geneva Call and other independent international and national organisations associated for this purpose with Geneva Call. Such monitoring and verification include visits and inspections in all areas where anti-personnel mines may be present, and the provision of the necessary information and reports, as may be required for such purposes in the spirit of transparency and accountability.
4. TO ISSUE the necessary orders and directives to our commanders and fighters for the implementation and enforcement of our commitment under the foregoing paragraphs, including measures for information dissemination and training, as well as disciplinary sanctions in case of non-compliance.
5. TO TREAT this commitment as one step or part of a broader commitment in principle to the ideal of humanitarian norms, particularly of international humanitarian law and human rights, and to contribute to their respect in field practice as well as to the further development of humanitarian norms for armed conflicts.
6. This Deed of Commitment shall not affect our legal status, pursuant to the relevant clause in common article 3 of the Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949.
7. We understand that Geneva Call may publicize our compliance or non-compliance with this Deed of Commitment.
8. We see the desirability of attracting the adherence of other armed groups to this Deed of Commitment and will do our part to promote it.
9. This Deed of Commitment complements or supersedes, as the case may be, any existing unilateral declaration of ours on anti-personnel mines.
10. This Deed of Commitment shall take effect immediately upon its signing and receipt by the Government of the Republic and Canton of Geneva which receives it as the custodian of such deeds and similar unilateral declarations.