



Statement by Geneva Call

Geneva – 3 December 2010

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Geneva Call extends its highest congratulations to the organisers for the successful organisation of this conference, and to Albania for its election to the presidency.

A year has passed since the 2nd Review Conference in Cartagena. Geneva Call is happy to report the progress that has been made in advancing the anti-personnel mine ban among armed non-State actors (NSAs).

- According to the 2010 edition of the *Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor*, anti-personnel mine use by NSAs was confirmed in only six countries: Afghanistan, Colombia, India, Myanmar, Pakistan, and Yemen. This is the lowest level of recorded use since the Monitor began reporting in 1999. Collective efforts towards engaging NSAs start to pay off.
- Two new NSAs signed Geneva Call's *Deed of Commitment* banning anti-personnel mines—the Kurdistan Democratic Party – Iran (KDP) and the Free Life Party of Kurdistan/Liberation Forces of Eastern Kurdistan (PJAK), bringing the total number of signatories to 41. These new Iranian signatories confirmed that they have no stockpiles. They widely publicized their commitment through their own media, advocating also for the mine ban among other NSAs and raising awareness about the mine problem in their region.
- Geneva Call's engagement in Senegal and Niger has contributed to a situation where there has been no new anti-personnel mine use by NSAs in these countries. Moreover, the *Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques du Casamance* agreed with progressive humanitarian clearance operations, whereas previously it had categorically refused demining as long as the conflict was not settled. In Western Sahara mine action activities with the facilitation of the Polisario Front—especially mine risk education (MRE)—have been expanded.

Ensuring compliance with the *Deed of Commitment* is crucial and allegations of non-compliance should be investigated and appropriate measures taken to ensure any violations do not persist. Geneva Call is pleased to report that nearly all signatories to the

Deed of Commitment banning anti-personnel mines have provided information and reports to Geneva Call on measures they have taken to implement their commitments, and all of the NSAs visited have facilitated Geneva Call's routine or verification missions—even following allegations of non-compliance. Last year it proved possible to conduct a field verification mission in the Philippines with good collaboration by the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in one instance, though in another instance permission was not forthcoming from the State where the allegations emanated.

And yet, many challenges remain. Civilians living in mine affected areas under the control or influence of NSAs are still not receiving assistance. Mine action programmes, such as MRE in Western Sahara and victim assistance in the Caucasus and northeast India lack the resources necessary to be well done or to even commence. Other programmes, such as those in Burma/Myanmar, are operating with severely limited funds when the needs of the victims are considered. Geneva Call would therefore like to remind all participants of the importance of Action 43 of the Cartagena Action Plan. Civilians in situations where armed conflict is ongoing should not have to wait until that conflict has ceased to benefit from necessary- and often imperative -mine action.