



## The Third Meeting of Signatories to Geneva Call's *Deeds of Commitment*



### SUMMARY REPORT

Geneva | 17– 20 November 2014

## SUMMARY

From 17 to 20 November 2014, 70 representatives from 36 armed non-State actors (ANSAs) gathered in Geneva, Switzerland, to attend the Third Meeting of Signatories (3MS) to Geneva Call's *Deeds of Commitment*. Two Meetings of Signatories to the *Deed of Commitment* banning anti-personnel mines had previously been organized by Geneva Call in 2004 and 2009. This third meeting brought together, for the first time, signatories to the *Deed of Commitment* protecting children in armed conflict and the *Deed of Commitment* prohibiting sexual violence and against gender discrimination. The meeting was to prove a unique opportunity for reviewing the implementation of the *Deeds of Commitment* that ANSAs have signed. In addition to the signatories, a number of ANSAs that have not yet agreed to sign *Deeds of Commitment*, but with which Geneva Call is in a dialogue, were also invited as observers.

Over three days, ANSA representatives attended sessions on International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and International Human Rights Law (IHRL), child protection, mine action, and gender issues. Presentations were given by renowned academics and experts from UN agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and NGOs. Signatory ANSAs reported on their progress in implementing the *Deeds of Commitment*, but also on the challenges they are facing. Non-signatories had the chance to share their views on the issues discussed.

In a final declaration, all the ANSAs present reaffirmed their willingness and duty to protect civilian populations and increase their efforts to implement international humanitarian norms. Signatories to the *Deeds of Commitment* adopted a specific declaration in which they committed to fully complying with their obligations and to promoting adherence to the *Deeds of Commitment* among non-signatory ANSAs.

*Note: The 3MS was held under the Chatham House Rule. This requires that information received in a meeting can be freely used by the participants, however, neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker may be revealed by them. Geneva Call will not, therefore, circulate the names of participating ANSAs. However, all the external speakers have agreed to share their expertise publicly, and a list of them is available in the annexes.*



## HIGHLIGHTS



**70** representatives of **36** armed non-State actors from **13** countries

**2** armed non-State actors signed a *Deed of Commitment* in Geneva



**The meeting was a major milestone** in monitoring signatories' commitments

**2** announcements were made about future signatures of *Deeds of Commitment*



**2** declarations were adopted

**Momentum** was built up among armed non-State actors for strengthening efforts to protect civilians



## GENEVA CALL AND THE *DEED OF COMMITMENT*

Geneva Call has 15 years experience of engaging with ANSAs on compliance with humanitarian norms in armed conflict and other situations of violence, particularly those related to the protection of civilians. The organization has focused its efforts on banning the use of anti-personnel mines, protecting children from the effects of armed conflict, prohibiting sexual violence in armed conflict and working towards the elimination of gender discrimination.

Geneva Call's key tool for engaging with armed groups is the *Deed of Commitment*. This innovative instrument allows them to publically undertake to respect specific humanitarian norms. Geneva Call has developed three such documents:

- ✓ the *Deed of Commitment for Adherence to a Total Ban on Anti-Personnel Mines and for Cooperation in Mine Action (Deed of Commitment banning AP mines)*, launched in 2000;
- ✓ the *Deed of Commitment for the Protection of Children from the Effects of Armed Conflict (Deed of Commitment protecting children in armed conflict)*, launched in 2010; and
- ✓ the *Deed of Commitment for the Prohibition of Sexual Violence in Situations of Armed Conflict and towards the Elimination of Gender Discrimination (Deed of Commitment prohibiting sexual violence and against gender discrimination)*, launched in 2012.

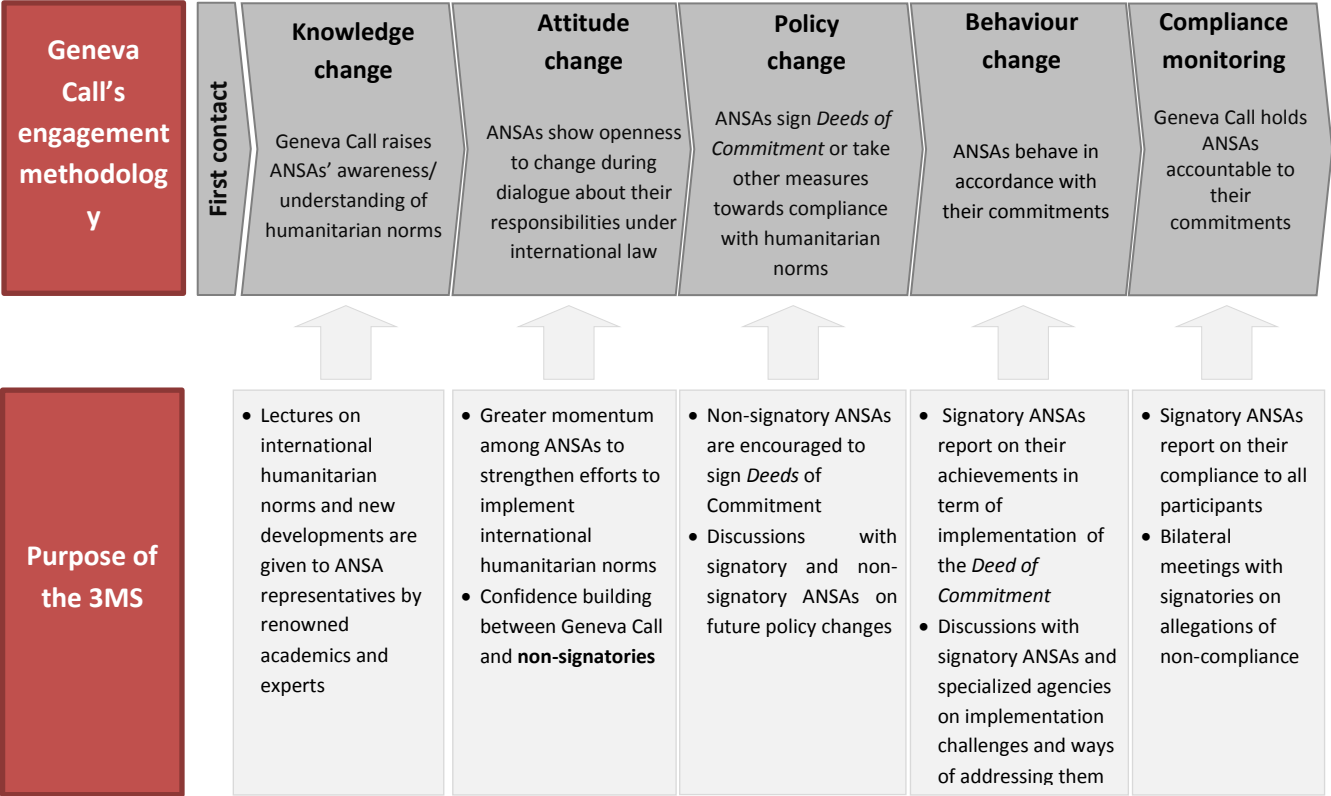
As of November 2014, 53 ANSAs have signed different *Deeds of Commitment*, and a number of other ANSAs have taken significant steps towards compliance with international norms.

## THE PURPOSE OF THE THIRD MEETING OF SIGNATORIES

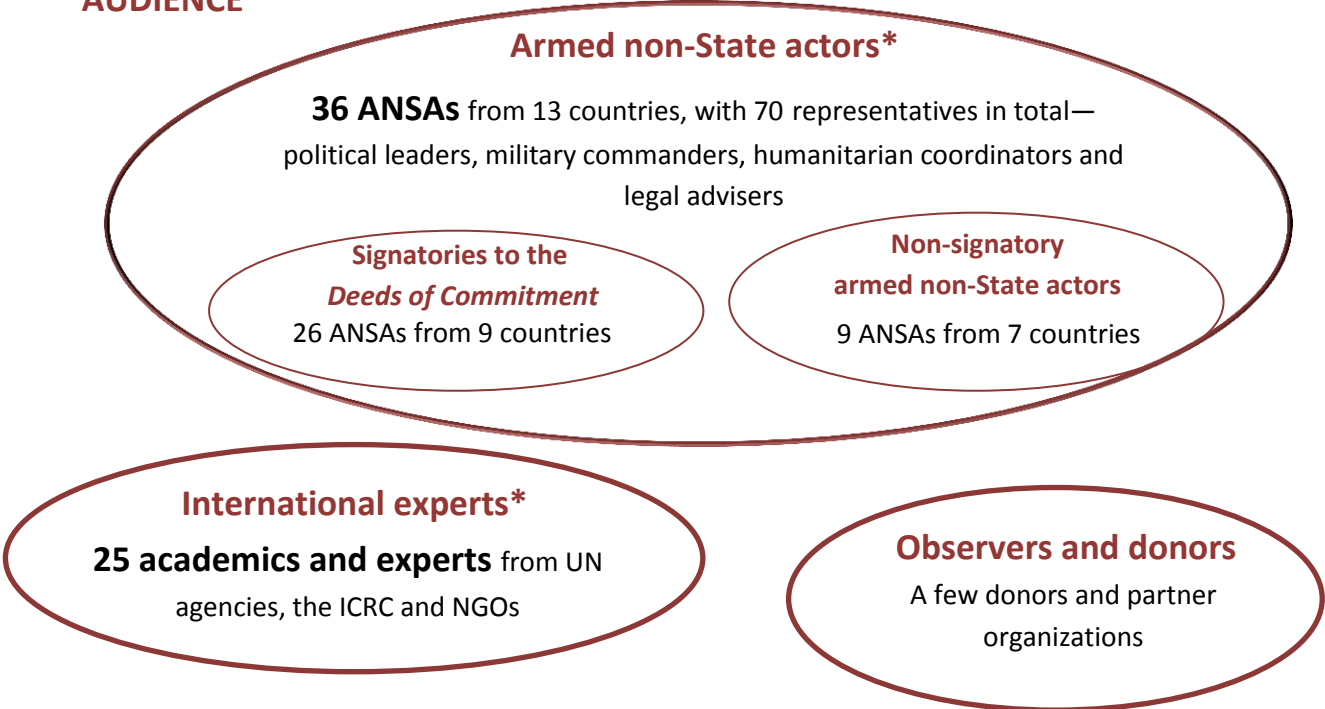
Geneva Call believes that signatories to the *Deeds of Commitment* need regular meetings at which to review the implementation of the obligations that they have pledged to abide by—just like States that are parties to international treaties. Such meetings allow Geneva Call to measure progress, identify issues that require its support—and that of specialized agencies—evaluate where greater efforts at engagement with ANSAs are required and discuss ways of moving forward. In Geneva Call's view, these meetings are key events in the process of monitoring *Deeds of Commitment*. They contribute to strengthening a sense of accountability for and ownership of humanitarian norms, and they create momentum and emulation among ANSAs that reinforces their efforts to protect civilians. They also offer an opportunity to encourage non-signatories to sign one or several *Deeds of Commitment*.

**Meetings of Signatories to Geneva Call's *Deeds of Commitment* support Geneva Call's methodology for engagement with ANSAs.**

It must be stressed that changes are not always linear; they vary dependent on the context and the existing levels of ANSAs compliance with international law. Interventions by Geneva Call do indeed contribute to promoting change in policy and behaviour among ANSAs, however, many other factors may influence their decisions and actions.



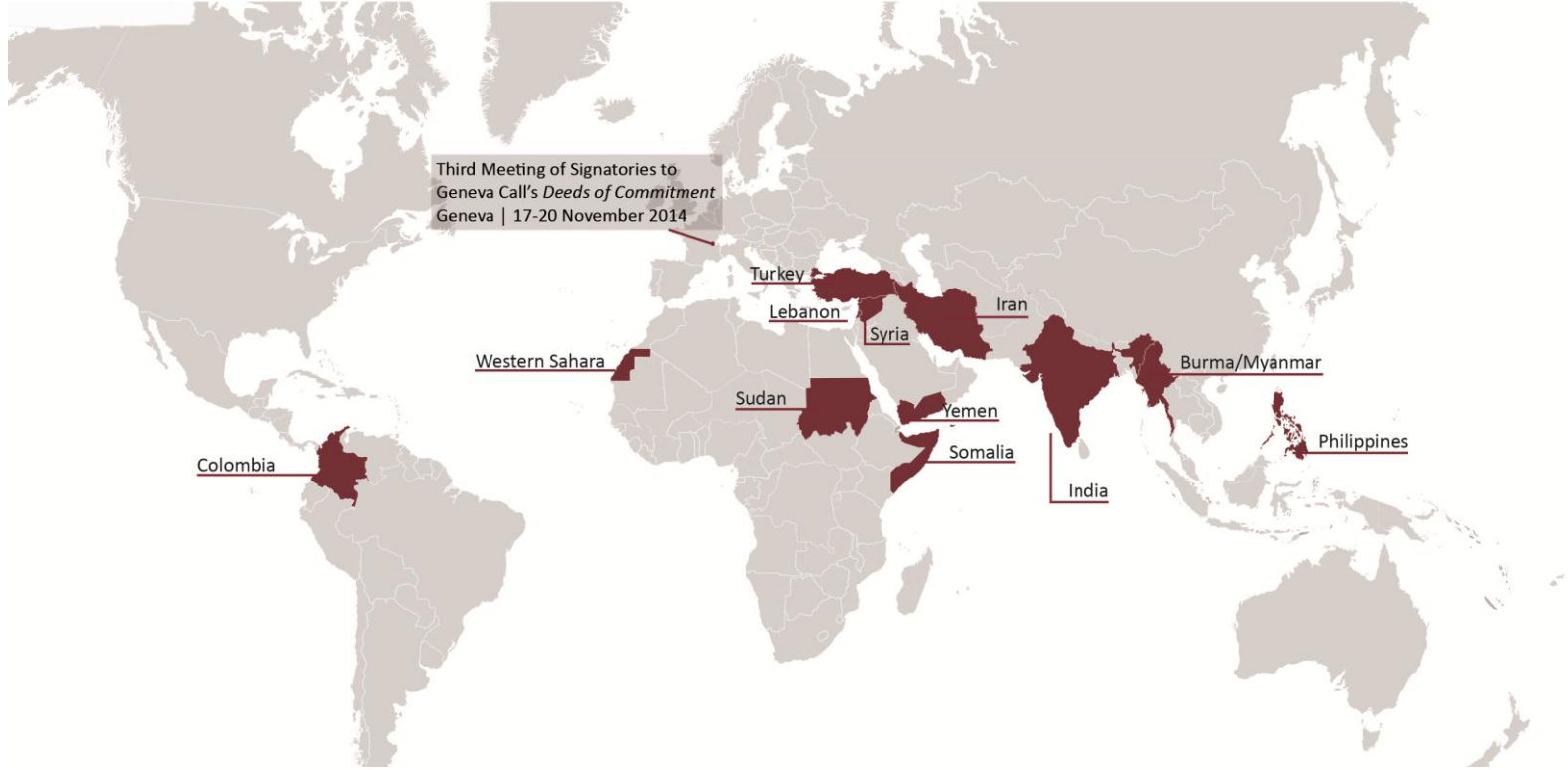
**AUDIENCE**



\*Full list is available in annex

Representatives of 36 ANSAs from 13 countries and territories attended 3MS: Burma/Myanmar, Colombia, India, Iran, Lebanon, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, the Philippines, Turkey, Western Sahara and Yemen\*. Most of the ANSAs had signed one or more of Geneva Call's *Deeds of Commitment*. Two ANSAs that were unable to be present sent contributions by video.

**Countries\* of origin of attending armed non-State actors**



\*activities in one additional country are confidential

In addition, selected experts in IHL, explosive weapons and mine action, child protection and the protection of schools, as well as in the prohibition of sexual violence and gender discrimination, participated in the meeting and made themselves available for in-depth discussions with ANSA representatives.

**FORMAT**

The Third Meeting of Signatories began on 17 November with an opening ceremony. The ceremony featured speeches by: Elisabeth Decrey Warner, Executive President of Geneva Call; Christine Beerli, Vice-President of the ICRC; Henrike Trautmann, Head of Unit, Specific thematic Policies, at the European Commission’s Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO); Ambassador Claude Wild, Head of the Human Security Division of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs; François Longchamp, President of the Republic and Canton of Geneva; and Mohammad Ameen, Secretary to the Chairman of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, an ANSA from the Philippines, who delivered the keynote address.



Over the following three days, the meeting continued with plenary sessions and discussions in parallel fora. Each plenary session had the same format, namely a brief presentation by Geneva Call, followed by statements from ANSAs and then an open discussion. The first plenary session started with an introduction to IHL and the IHRL standards relevant to ANSAs. This provided the participants with the necessary frame of reference for the ensuing discussions. The following sessions focused on humanitarian norms, the implementation of the *Deeds of Commitment* and compliance mechanisms. Priority was given to reports from signatory ANSAs, but non-signatories also had the chance to speak about their situation. In the last plenary session, Geneva Call consulted the ANSAs present about potential new themes deserving of engagement, before concluding with the adoption of the meeting’s declarations.

**Six plenaries**

- Lectures on humanitarian norms
- Presentations by Geneva Call
- Statements by ANSAs
- Discussions on challenges and lessons learnt

**Nine fora**

- Presentations by international experts on specific issues and new developments
- Discussions on new potential engagement issues
- Debates and questions

**Bilateral meetings**

- Discussions on implementation challenges and allegations of non-compliance
- Discussions on future policy changes

In addition to the plenary sessions, parallel fora were organized in order to offer ANSA participants an opportunity to address specific issues in more detail. These included new developments on regulations about explosive weapons, the protection of education from attacks, and gender equality and women’s participation in peace processes. Leading experts in the relevant fields opened the fora with presentations before launching the discussion with the participants.

By bringing external expertise to these events, Geneva Call wished to give ANSAs a deeper understanding of the relevant issues, as well as access to other important international stakeholders. ANSAs took the opportunity to interact with these experts between sessions, during social events and possibly beyond the meeting too. Additionally, these exchanges with ANSAs enable humanitarian organizations to acquire a better understanding of the challenges faced by ANSAs. They are then more predisposed to intervening in ANSA-controlled areas and cooperating with Geneva Call.

One afternoon was given over to regional and bilateral meetings. The Asian ANSAs used this opportunity to explore, together with Geneva Call, issues relating to the protection of children and educational facilities. They also discussed gender discrimination, particularly how to increase women’s participation in peace processes. All the other ANSAs present had bilateral meetings with Geneva Call.

Overall, the ANSA representatives participated actively in the various discussions and spoke openly about the difficulties they have experienced in implementing the *Deeds of Commitment* or other measures taken for the protection of civilians.

***“Geneva Call and the ICRC have different missions and aims, but what bonds us together, is the determination to engage with non-state armed groups to ensure that victims of armed conflicts and other situations of violence are protected and respected. We do so through different ways, and it is precisely this complementarity which makes us strong.”***

**Christine Beerli, Vice-President of the ICRC**





# PROGRAMME AND ACTIVITIES

## Agenda

Monday 17.11.2014	Tuesday 18.11.2014	Wednesday 19.11.2014	Thursday 20.11.2014
	08:00 - 09:00 Registration	08:00 - 09:00 Registration	08:00 - 09:00 Registration
	09:00 - 10:00 Plenary 1 - Towards an improved protection of civilians Implementation of international humanitarian norms	09:00 - 10:30 Plenary 3 Implementing the Deed of Commitment protecting children in armed conflicts. Achievements and challenges	09:00 - 10:30 Plenary 5 Implementing the Deed of Commitment prohibiting sexual violence and gender discrimination. Achievements and challenges
	Coffee break   10:00 - 10:30	Coffee break   10:30 - 11:00	Coffee break   10:30 - 11:00
	10:30 - 12:30 Plenary 1 continued	11:00 - 12:00 Plenary 3 continued	11:00 - 11:45 Plenary 5 continued
	Lunch break   12:30 - 14:00	Lunch break   12:00 - 13:00	Lunch break   13:00 - 14:00
11:00 - 17:00 Registration	14:00 - 16:30 Plenary 2 Implementing the Deed of Commitment banning anti-personnel mines Achievements and challenges	13:00 - 14:00 Forum 3 Enhancing protection of children affected by armed conflicts	12:00 - 13:00 Forum 5 Promoting gender equality in peace processes
	Coffee break   16:30 - 17:00	14:15 - 15:45 Plenary 4 - Compliance with the Deeds of Commitment Monitoring and sanction mechanisms	13:00 - 13:00 Forum 6 Helping victims of gender based violence
	17:00 - 18:00 Forum 1 New developments on regulation of explosive weapons	16:15 - 17:30 Regional or Bilateral Meetings	14:00 - 14:30 Plenary 6 - Ways forward in engaging armed non-State actors Geneva Call's perspectives
17:00 - 18:00 OPENING CEREMONY	18:00 - 19:30 Forum 2 Overcoming challenges in mine action	18:00 - 22:00 Social Event By invitation only	14:45 - 15:45 Forum 7 - New issues   Forum 8 - New issues   Forum 9 - New issues
18:00 - 19:30 Reception	Distribution of Declaration		Coffee break   15:45 - 16:15
			16:15 - 16:45 Reporting from Forum Sessions
			16:45 - 17:45 Adoption of Declaration
			18:00 - 18:45 CLOSING CEREMONY
			18:45 - 20:00 Reception



## Improving the protection of civilians

Geneva Call engages with ANSAs to protect civilians in armed conflict by promoting respect for humanitarian norms and building their capacity to implement those norms.

Professor Marco Sassoli delivered a lecture on the importance and relevance of humanitarian norms for ANSAs. The lecture was followed by a presentation of Geneva Call's efforts to engage with ANSAs, including its innovative training and dissemination tools (video clips, booklets and mobile phone applications). In the second part of the session, the ANSAs (both signatories and non-signatories to the *Deeds of Commitment*) reported on the measures they had taken and the challenges faced in implementing humanitarian norms in practice.

### ✓ Achievements

- Measures taken by ANSAs include making public declarations of their adherence to the norms of the Geneva Conventions, training their members in IHL and IHRL, creating internal units or commissions to promote IHL and IHRL, handing over detainees to the ICRC, rescuing civilians fleeing enemy attacks, etc.
- The ANSAs present reaffirmed their commitment to respect and protect civilian populations and persons not, or no longer, taking part in hostilities, and to increase efforts to implement humanitarian norms in practice



### Challenges

- Lack of capacity to abide by the requirements of certain rules (such as conducting fair trials) and to ensure basic rights (such as education)
- Labelling of some ANSAs as terrorists, without regard to their level of compliance with IHL and IHRL
- Difficulties of enforcing compliance and addressing violations internally
- Who should be considered “civilians”?
- How to avoid detainees released by ANSAs returning to combat
- How to increase respect for international humanitarian norms by States



### Responses

- Geneva Call should convene meetings with ANSAs to discuss these challenges
- Geneva Call and other relevant organizations should further support ANSAs in integrating IHL and IHRL into their internal regulations and training programmes
- The importance of promoting ownership of humanitarian norms should be disseminated among ANSAs



### Banning anti-personnel mines

Geneva Call engages with ANSAs to reduce the impact of AP mines on civilian populations by promoting the ban and encouraging cooperation on mine action. This session focused on the implementation of the *Deed of Commitment* banning AP mines, launched in 2000 and signed by 46 ANSAs as of November 2014.

Under the *Deed of Commitment*, signatories have agreed to:

- Prohibit, in all circumstances, the use, production, acquisition, stockpiling, and transfer of AP mines and similar victim-activated explosive devices
- Destroy any AP mines in their possession
- Undertake and cooperate in mine action (mine clearance, victim assistance, mine risk education, etc.) with specialized mine action agencies



### Achievements

- All signatories, with one exception, have abided by the *Deed of Commitment's* prohibition on AP mines
- Most signatories have carried out or facilitated mine action activities (mine clearance, victim assistance, mine risk education, etc.) in areas under their control
- Most signatories have completed the destruction of their stockpiles (more than 20,000 AP mines to date, along with thousands of improvised explosive devices, or IEDs)
- Most signatories have taken measures (command orders, integration of the ban on AP

mines into their codes of conduct, changes in military doctrine, disciplinary sanctions, information dissemination, training, etc.) to enforce the *Deed of Commitment*

- A number of ANSAs that have not signed the *Deed of Commitment* have, nonetheless, prohibited the use of AP mines through other means and/or have cooperated in mine action activities in areas under their control



### Challenges

- Allegations of new use or transfer of AP mines were raised against two signatories
- Lack of ANSA capacity and external support to undertake mine action (particularly mine clearance and victim assistance)
- Donor apprehension about supporting ANSAs' mine action efforts
- Continued use of AP mines and IEDs by some States and non-signatory ANSAs
- Local communities possessing AP mines
- Some concerned States restrict access to areas where ANSAs operate for specialized mine action agencies



### Responses

- Further investigation of allegations of violations and, if inconclusive, on-site verification by Geneva Call
- Increased liaison and cooperation with specialized mine action agencies and donors
- Further advocacy and pressure on States and non-signatory ANSAs to adhere to the AP mine ban
- If ANSAs have evidence of new AP mine use by States or other ANSAs, they should send it to Geneva Call, the ICBL and other relevant actors
- In areas under their control, ANSAs should adopt enforcement mechanisms for collecting AP mines retained by local communities
- The mine action community should lobby obstructive States for access to ANSA-controlled areas



### Ways forward




- What actions could ANSAs take to protect civilians from explosive weapons other than AP mines?



Geneva Call engages with ANSAs to reduce the effects of armed conflict on children by promoting respect for children’s rights, particularly the prohibition of the recruitment and use of children in hostilities. This session focused on the implementation of the *Deed of Commitment* protecting children in armed conflict, which was launched in 2010 and has been signed by 13 ANSAs to date.

Under the *Deed of Commitment*, signatories have agreed to:

- Prohibit the use of children in hostilities
- Ensure that children are not recruited into, or forcibly associated with, armed forces
- Safely and securely release or disassociate children from armed forces
- Protect children from the effects of military operations
- Do their best to provide children with the aid and care they need, in cooperation with specialized child protection agencies

<p> <b>Achievements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signatories have abided by the <i>Deed of Commitment’s</i> prohibition on the recruitment and use of children in hostilities</li> <li>• Most signatories have taken measures to protect children from the effects of military operations or enemy attacks (evacuations, moving military units away from villages, and relocating children away from combat zones)</li> <li>• All signatories have provided aid and care for children living in territories they control (notably access to food, shelter, healthcare and education)</li> <li>• Following its signature of the <i>Deed of Commitment</i>, one signatory ANSA demobilized 149 children from its ranks; a number of them returned to their families, whereas the majority joined educational centres run by local administrations</li> <li>• Another signatory ANSA has discharged 16–18-year olds from military service; they have been relocated to separate camps and receive a basic education</li> <li>• All signatories have taken measures (command orders, information dissemination, training, disciplinary sanctions, etc.) to enforce the <i>Deed of Commitment</i></li> <li>• Signatories have agreed to take into consideration the “Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict”</li> </ul>	
<p> <b>Challenges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allegations of new recruitment and continued use of children in hostilities were raised against two signatories</li> <li>• Difficulties faced by some signatories in enforcing and monitoring compliance by their own armed forces</li> <li>• Military use of and attacks on schools</li> <li>• Difficulties assessing the age of new recruits</li> </ul>	<p> <b>Responses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further investigation of allegations of violations and, if inconclusive, on-site verification by Geneva Call</li> <li>• Increased collaboration with specialized child protection agencies, particularly on prevention and reintegration</li> <li>• Provision of guidance on age assessment and verification to ANSAs</li> <li>• The principle of “best interest of the</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What should be done with children who have lost their parents and want to join ANSAs when specialized child protection agencies are not present?</li> <li>• Lack of ANSA capacity and external support for reintegrating demobilized children and caring for them (particularly healthcare and education) in areas under their control</li> <li>• Insufficient engagement with ANSAs by UN agencies and specialized child protection agencies</li> </ul>	<p>child” must always be followed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ANSAs need to be aware of the services and institutions that can help identify alternatives to enrollment in armed forces</li> </ul>
<p>»»» <b>Ways forward</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further disseminate and promote to ANSAs the implementation of the Guidelines Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict</li> </ul>	



*“We were one of the first ANSAs to sign the Deed of Commitment banning AP mines. [...] Geneva Call conducted two field verifications and in response to their recommendations we incorporated some provisions into our code of conduct [...] through approval of general order 3.”*

Mohammad Ameen, Secretary to the Chairman of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, an ANSA from the Philippines



## Prohibiting sexual violence and against gender discrimination

Geneva Call engages with ANSAs to prevent and prohibit sexual violence, and to encourage taking sanctions against perpetrators and providing assistance to victims. Geneva Call also promotes the elimination of gender discrimination and a greater participation of women in decision-making processes. This session focused on the implementation of the *Deed of Commitment* prohibiting sexual violence and gender discrimination, which was launched in 2012 and has been signed by 12 ANSAs to date.

Under the *Deed of Commitment*, signatories have agreed to:

- Prohibit all forms of sexual violence
- Prevent and take sanctions against acts of sexual violence
- Protect detainees from sexual violence
- Provide victims with the assistance and support they need
- Endeavour to eliminate discriminatory policies and practices against women or men
- Promote greater participation of women in decision-making processes



### Achievements

- Signatories have abided by the *Deed of Commitment* prohibiting sexual violence
- Signatories have taken measures to prevent and respond to acts of sexual violence in areas where they have authority (information dissemination, training, disciplinary measures, non-discriminatory policies, etc.)
- Some signatories have provided medical treatment to victims of sexual violence and brought the perpetrators to justice
- Several signatories have taken measures to increase women's representation in decision-making structures and processes (including peace negotiations)
- A predominantly male group discussing women's issues can be considered an achievement in itself



### Challenges

- The limited capacity available for victim assistance (especially in remote areas), and the problematic access to victims by relevant agencies
- Women who cannot easily address their problems (especially domestic violence) out of fear of stigmatization and reprisals and because they have no trust in existing judicial systems
- Some signatories have faced internal resistance to passing measures to eliminate discriminatory policies



### Responses

- Quotas for women may be useful, but may not be necessary if the *Deed of Commitment* is effectively implemented
- ANSAs empower and promote women to positions of responsibility
- Male members of ANSAs need to be involved in discussions on women's rights
- Stigmatization needs to be fought in order for the victims of sexual violence to recover; stigma should be redirected from survivors to perpetrators

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaders from both ANSAs and governments think that decision making is only for leaders; thus, women can only be included if they are leaders, but victim participation is often not encouraged</li> <li>• Leaders need to be made aware of the importance of inclusivity</li> <li>• Women are not enough represented by women</li> <li>• Many signatories recognize that there are institutional causes that continue to contribute to women’s under-representation at higher levels</li> <li>• Lack of capacity and training of women to participate meaningfully in decision-making processes</li> <li>• Lack of gender awareness among mediators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spaces can be created where victims of sexual violence feel safe and confident to talk</li> <li>• Open, secure spaces can be reserved for female members of ANSAs and activists to experience exchange and create opinions</li> <li>• Gender issues should not be framed as “women’s issues”, but as questions of social justice</li> <li>• To advance gender equality, it is important to enhance strategic alliances with men</li> <li>• Female participation in peace processes requires strong women leaders within ANSAs; the peace process is just a continuation of the role played by women</li> <li>• Adequate punishments must be handed out to the perpetrators of sexual violence</li> </ul>
<p>»»» <b>Ways forward</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further address and discuss the sensitive topic of sexual violence with women AND with men</li> </ul>	






### **Enforcing compliance with the *Deeds of Commitment***

This session focused on the compliance mechanisms within the *Deeds of Commitment*. All *Deeds of Commitment* require signatories to allow and cooperate with the monitoring and verification of their obligations carried out by Geneva Call. This includes field visits and inspections in all relevant areas, and the provision of information and reports. In the event of confirmed violations by a signatory, the *Deeds of Commitment* provide for the possibility that Geneva Call publicizes the violations as a measure against non-compliance.

#### **✓ Achievements**

- Nearly all signatories have abided by their obligations to report on their implementation of the *Deeds of Commitment*
- All signatories have allowed Geneva Call to carry out monitoring and/or verification missions in areas under their control and have facilitated them

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <i>Deeds of Commitment's</i> compliance mechanisms have enabled Geneva Call to clarify and resolve most cases of allegations so far</li> <li>• In one case, Geneva Call has publicly reported confirmed violations of the <i>Deed of Commitment banning AP mines</i>, and the signatory concerned implemented remedial action to ensure compliance</li> </ul>	
<p> <b>Challenges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some signatories have not provided full information on certain issues (e.g. number of their stockpiled AP mines)</li> <li>• Some signatories have admitted challenges in enforcing and monitoring compliance by their own forces</li> <li>• It can be difficult to attribute responsibility for violations in situations where different armed actors operate</li> <li>• Monitoring can also be challenging for reasons related to the conflict and security situation</li> <li>• Some States have denied Geneva Call access to signatory ANSAs operating on their territory</li> <li>• Reports by international organizations on IHL/IHRL violations often rely more on state sources than on ANSA sources</li> </ul>	<p> <b>Responses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide signatory ANSAs with guidance and capacity-building for self-monitoring</li> <li>• Share good practices on taking internal sanctions with signatory ANSAs</li> <li>• Issue periodic reports on compliance status</li> <li>• Inform signatories about cases of violations and involve them in the response</li> <li>• As a last resort, only consider removal from the list of signatories to the <i>Deeds of Commitment</i> when engagement is no longer productive</li> <li>• Find ways to include ANSA sources in IHL/IHRL reporting</li> </ul>
<p> <b>Ways forward</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore other ways of taking sanctions against a signatory that is not carrying out any remedial action to address confirmed violations</li> </ul>	

***“You are signatories to the Deeds of Commitment that Geneva Call has established, and your signature or intention to sign can only be applauded. With your signature, you emphasise your willingness to contribute to taking civilians out of harm’s way and limit your choice of means and methods of warfare.”***

**Ambassador Claude Wild, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Switzerland**

## **NEW ISSUES**

Towards the end of the 3MS, Geneva Call consulted ANSAs (both signatories and non-signatories to the *Deeds of Commitment*) about potential new issues that it could help them with. An overall consensus emerged in support of Geneva Call expanding its engagement with ANSAs. The priority



themes recommended by the ANSAs themselves were the protection of displaced people, humanitarian access, hostage-taking and the protection of cultural heritage. However, the ANSAs also emphasized the importance of consolidating existing work and increasing support for the implementation of the current *Deeds of Commitment*. Resources should be allocated primarily to the three existing themes and developing new issues should not be to the detriment of these.

## CONCLUSIONS

### Monitoring



In addition to reviewing progress of the implementation of the *Deeds of Commitment* during the sessions, Geneva Call was able to meet with all the ANSA representatives bilaterally and to assess the efforts they had undertaken to comply with their obligations. As such, 3MS represented a milestone in Geneva Call’s monitoring work.

### Adoption of Declarations

The participants in the 3MS adopted two declarations (available in the annex) to close the event. All the ANSAs present adopted a common declaration reaffirming their responsibility to protect civilians in armed conflict. Furthermore, the signatories to the *Deeds of Commitment* adopted a specific declaration in which they reiterated their commitment to respect and implement all of their obligations under those *Deeds*.



### New signatories

As a direct result of the discussions held during the 3MS, two ANSAs signed new *Deeds of Commitment*, and two further ANSAs announced their readiness to sign *Deeds of Commitment* soon.

### Improved knowledge and understanding

International experts raised ANSA representatives’ awareness of humanitarian norms by explaining new developments and trends such as the “Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict.”



### Interaction with humanitarian agencies

ANSAs interacted directly with experts from the largest international agencies, leading to a better mutual understanding.



### Confidence building

The 3MS contributed to strengthening the relationship of trust between Geneva Call and the ANSAs present, particularly with non-signatories.



### Interest in further meetings

The ANSAs unanimously commended Geneva Call for hosting the 3MS and providing a unique opportunity for exchange. Many of them expressed interest in continuing discussions, especially on the issues of child protection and the protection of schools.

## **THANKS**

Geneva Call would like to express its sincere thanks to all the donors who made this meeting possible:

**Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia**  
**European Commission (DG-ECHO)**  
**Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway**  
**Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden**  
**Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark**  
**Services Industriels de Genève**

Special thanks go to the **Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland** for its invaluable logistical and financial support.

## ANNEXES

### List of attending armed non-State actors

Name of the group	Acronyms	Country	Signatory
Al-Houthi Movement	Ansarullah	Yemen	no
Chin National Front	CNF	Burma/Myanmar	yes
Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan	PDKI	Iran	yes
Free Life Party of Kurdistan/ Liberation Forces of Eastern Kurdistan	PJAK	Iran	yes
Hazzm Movement	Hazzm	Syria	yes
Hmar Peoples Congress-Democracy	HPC-D	India	no
Justice and Equality Movement	JEM	Sudan	yes
National Liberation Army	ELN	Colombia	no
Kachin Independence organization	KIO	Burma/Myanmar	no
Karen National Union/Karen National Liberation Army	KNU /KNLA	Burma/Myanmar	yes
Komala Party of Iranian Kurdistan	KPIK	Iran	yes
Komala Party of Kurdistan	KPK	Iran	yes
Komalah-The Kurdistan Organization of the Communist Party for Iran	Komalah Communist	Iran	yes
Kuki National Front	KNF	India	yes
Kuki National Organization	KNO	India	yes
Moro Islamic Liberation Front	MILF	Philippines	yes
National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khole-Kitovi)	NSCN-KK	India	yes
National Socialist Council of Nagalim (Isaac Muivah)	NSCN-IM	India	yes
New Mon State Party/Mon National Liberation Army	NMSP	Burma/Myanmar	yes
Pa’O National Liberation Organization	PNLO	Burma/Myanmar	yes
People’s Defence Forces/Kurdistan Worker’s Party	HPG/PKK	Turkey	yes
People’s Protection Units	YPG	Syria	yes
Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el Hamra and Rio de Oro	Polisario Front	Western Sahara	yes
Restoration Council of Shan State / Shan State Army	SSA-N	Burma/Myanmar	no
Restoration Council of Shan State / Shan State Army (South)	SSA-S	Burma/Myanmar	no
Revolutionary Workers Party of Mindanao	RPM-M	Philippines	yes
Somali National Front	SNF	Somalia	yes
Somaliland Authorities	Somaliland	Somalia	no
Sudan Liberation Movement – Abdel Wahid al-Nur	SLM-AW	Sudan	yes
Sudan Liberation Movement – Minni Minnawi	SLM-MM	Sudan	yes
Sudan Peoples’ Liberation Movement – North	SPLM-N	Sudan	yes
The Kurdistan Democratic Party – Iran	KDP-Iran	Iran	yes
Zomi Re-unification organization	ZRO	India	yes
3 more armed non-State actors were represented confidentially.			

## List of attending International experts

Name	Organization
Audrey Palama	International Committee of the Red Cross
Bede Sheppard	Human Rights Watch
Charu Lata Hogg	Child Soldiers International
Christine McCormick	Save the Children
Cordula Reimann	core. consultancy & training in conflict transformation
Georgina Mendoza Solorio	United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
Guilhem Ravier	International Committee of the Red Cross
Ibrahim Sesay	UNICEF
Ingrid MacDonald	Norwegian Refugee Council
Jim Burke	Irish Defence Forces
Jonathan Somer	Persona Grata Consulting
Justin Brady	Norwegian People's Aid
Marco Sassòli	University of Geneva
Matt Wilson	Swiss Foundation for Mine Action
Maya Brehm	Article 36
Michel Veuthey	International Institute of Humanitarian Law
Nelly Staderini	Médecins sans Frontières
Richard MacCormac	DanChurchAid
Sabine Rakotomalala	Child Protection Working Group
Samuel Paunila	Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining
Steven Haines	University of Greenwich
Tamar Gabelnick	International Campaign to Ban Landmines
Tonderai W. Chikuhwa	United Nations Office of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict
Veronique Aubert	Save the Children

## **Declaration by Signatories to Geneva Call's *Deeds of Commitment***

*Concerned* that armed conflicts continue to cause enormous suffering to the civilian population worldwide, including among the most vulnerable, in particular children;

*Recognizing* the responsibility of all parties to armed conflict to both respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian norms;

*Stressing* that awareness and ownership of international humanitarian norms by all parties to armed conflict are critical in efforts to improve compliance;

*Noting* that humanitarian engagement with parties to armed conflict does not affect their legal status;

*Recalling* declarations adopted by Signatories to Geneva Call's *Deed of Commitment* at the First and Second Meeting of Signatories in 2004 and 2009;

We, the Signatories to the *Deed of Commitment for Adherence to a Total Ban on Anti-Personnel Mines and for Cooperation in Mine Action*, the *Deed of Commitment for the Protection of Children from the Effects of Armed Conflict* and the *Deed of Commitment for the Prohibition of Sexual Violence in Situations of Armed Conflict and Towards the Elimination of Gender Discrimination*,

- *Commend* the increased adherence to the *Deeds of Commitment*, as well as the progress in their implementation since the Second Meeting of Signatories;
- *Reaffirm* our commitment to effectively implement the *Deeds of Commitment* and to comply fully with their provisions;
- *Call on* States to respect and adhere to international humanitarian norms;
- *Express our appreciation* to Geneva Call for its efforts in monitoring and supporting the implementation of the *Deeds of Commitment* and *call upon* States, international organisations and other donors to support such efforts;
- *Call upon* specialized organizations to increase support for humanitarian mine action, child protection and assistance to victims of sexual violence, including in areas under our control or where we operate;
- *Raise* concerns over alleged violations of the *Deeds of Commitment* and *urge* signatories concerned to take appropriate measures to ensure compliance and to prevent violations;
- *Undertake* to increase efforts to protect civilians from the harm caused by explosive weapons, to promote greater gender equality and women participation in decision-making processes and to protect students, teachers, schools and other education facilities from attack and the effects of military operations;
- *Take into consideration* the "*Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict*" and *appreciate* that the Guidelines have recognised armed non-state actors as stakeholders;
- *Commit* to continue to actively promote Geneva Call's *Deeds of Commitment* among non-signatory armed non-State actors and *encourage* them to sign the different *Deeds of Commitment* or undertake similar commitments as soon as possible.

**Declaration of the Third Meeting of Signatories  
to Geneva Call's *Deeds of Commitment***

*Concerned* that armed conflicts continue to cause enormous suffering to civilian populations worldwide, including among the most vulnerable, in particular children;

*Recognizing* the responsibility of all parties to armed conflict to both respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian norms;

*Stressing* that awareness and ownership of international humanitarian norms by all parties to armed conflict are critical in efforts to improve compliance;

*Noting* that humanitarian engagement with parties to armed conflict does not affect their legal status;

*Recalling* declarations adopted by Signatories to Geneva Call's *Deeds of Commitment* at the First and Second Meeting of Signatories in 2004 and 2009;

We, the participants of the Third Meeting of Signatories to Geneva Call's *Deeds of Commitment*,

- *Reaffirm* our willingness and responsibility to respect and protect the civilian populations and persons not or no longer taking part in hostilities;
- *Call* on States to respect and adhere to international humanitarian norms;
- *Undertake* to increase efforts to implement international humanitarian norms in our policies and practice;
- *Welcome* Geneva Call and other humanitarian organizations' engagement and training on international humanitarian norms and call upon States, international organizations and donors to support such efforts;
- *Recognize* that instruments such as the *Deeds of Commitment* encourage ownership and compliance with international humanitarian norms;
- *Commend* the increased adherence to the *Deed of Commitment for Adherence to a Total Ban on Anti-Personnel Mines and for Cooperation in Mine Action*, the *Deed of Commitment for the Protection of Children from the Effects of Armed Conflict* and the *Deed of Commitment for the Prohibition of Sexual Violence in Situations of Armed Conflict and Towards the Elimination of Gender Discrimination*, as well as the progress in their implementation since the Second Meeting of Signatories;
- *Recognize* the importance of exploring ways of strengthening monitoring and compliance mechanisms with international humanitarian norms and *express* our readiness to contribute our views to such a process;
- *Encourage* Geneva Call to continue its efforts to promote respect for international humanitarian norms and to explore the development of new *Deeds of Commitment*.

This declaration was adopted by 35 armed non-State actors on 20 November 2014 in Geneva.

Ansarullah	Al-Houthi movement
CNF	Chin National Front
Hazzm	Hazzm Movement
HPC-D	Hmar Peoples Congress-Democracy
HPG/PKK	People's Defence Forces/Kurdistan Worker's Party
JEM	Justice and Equality Movement
KDP-Iran	The Kurdistan Democratic Party – Iran
KIO	Kachin Independence organization
KNF	Kuki National Front
KNO	Kuki National Organization
KNU /KNLA	Karen National Union/Karen National Liberation Army
Komalah Communist	Komalah-The Kurdistan Organization of the Communist Party for Iran
KPIK	Komala Party of Iranian Kurdistan
KPK	Komala Party of Kurdistan
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
NMSP	New Mon State Party/Mon National Liberation Army
NSCN-IM	National Socialist Council of Nagalim (Isaac Muivah)
NSCN-KK	National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khole-Kitovi)
PDKI	Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan
PJAK	Free Life Party of Kurdistan/ Liberation Forces of Eastern Kurdistan
PNLO	Pa'O National Liberation Organization
Polisario Front	Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el Hamra and Rio de Oro
RPM-M	Revolutionary Workers Party of Mindanao
SLM-AW	Sudan Liberation Movement – Abdel Wahid al-Nur
SLM-MM	Sudan Liberation Movement – Minni Minnawi
SNF	Somali National Front
Somaliland	Somaliland Authorities
SPLM-N	Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement – North
SSA-N	Restoration Council of Shan State / Shan State Army
SSA-S	Restoration Council of Shan State / Shan State Army (South)
YPG	People's Protection Units
ZRO	Zomi Re-unification organization

3 more armed non-State actors were represented confidentially.