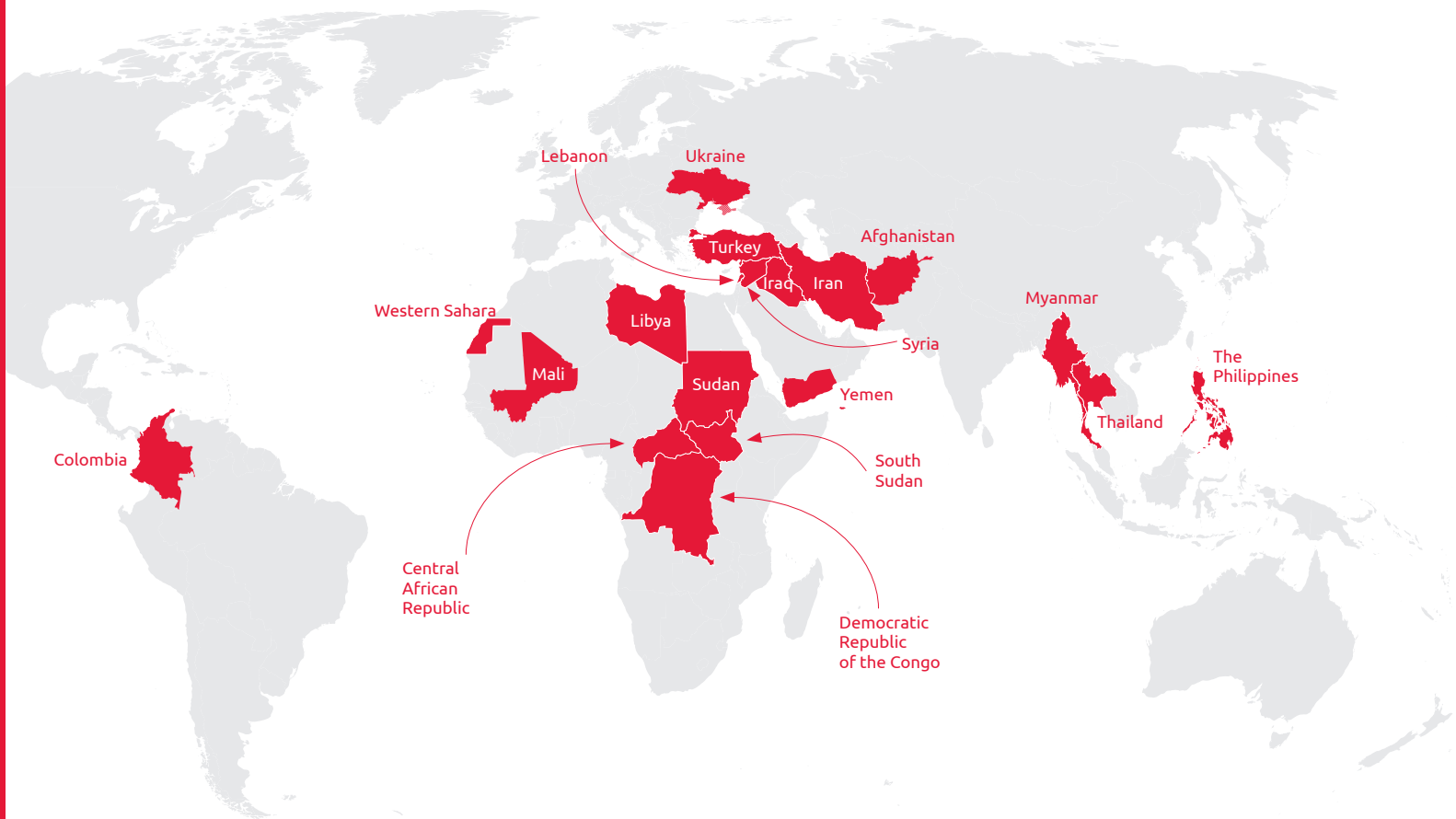




Annual report 2018



Countries of operations 2018





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Geneva Call Mission

Vision

During situations of armed conflict humanitarian norms and principles are respected, and civilians are protected.

Mission

In situations of armed conflict, Geneva Call, as a neutral, impartial and independent international humanitarian organization, endeavours to strengthen the respect of humanitarian norms and principles by Armed non-State actors, in order to improve the protection of civilians, while supporting local communities in their efforts to enhance their own protection.

Values

- Humanity
- Neutrality
- Impartiality
- Independence
- Accountability
- Dedication
- Respect

Geneva Call is a neutral and impartial NGO dedicated to promoting respect by ANSAs for international humanitarian norms in armed conflict and other situations of violence, in particular those related to the protection of civilians.

Geneva Call has accumulated valuable experience in engaging more than 100 ANSAs worldwide over the past 18 years. The key tool of engagement that Geneva Call uses is an innovative instrument known as the *Deed of Commitment*, which allows ANSAs to undertake to respect specific international humanitarian norms. 63 ANSAs have signed *Deeds of Commitment* to date and, as a general rule, they have respected their obligations. A number of other ANSAs have taken steps to bring their policies and behaviour into line with international standards. Geneva Call is also increasingly providing training sessions on International Humanitarian Law (IHL) to ANSAs as well as encouraging them to integrate IHL rules into their codes of conduct and other internal regulations. Geneva Call supports the dissemination

of IHL-related information to combatants through regular training sessions at field level. In addition, and to reach a broader audience, Geneva Call uses mass media (radio, TV, social media and a mobile phone application) to raise awareness among ANSAs of international humanitarian norms. As a pioneer in its field, Geneva Call has gained recognition for its efforts and achievements from many quarters, including the UN Secretary-General, the European Union and the African Union.



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Foreword

2018 has been an intense and difficult year, with the growing intensity of armed conflicts and the ongoing challenges of striving to reach agreements on how to stop them. The erosion of respect for International Humanitarian Law norms by the parties to the Geneva Conventions themselves is the source of serious concern. The challenge of convincing Armed non-State actors (ANSAs) to behave better than some states do, is one that Geneva Call faces more and more in the 15 contexts where it remained engaged in 2018.

Throughout the year, Geneva Call has engaged 86 ANSAs, 18 of them for the first time: in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Libya, Mali, South Sudan, Syria, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Yemen and Iraq. In some contexts, the usual clear lines between ANSAs and official armed forces are blurred by ANSAs temporarily or partially serving a given government. Geneva Call is addressing this new situation with a pioneering spirit: maintaining its engagement for as long as necessary in the absence of other organizations and remaining ready to handover to others if and when contexts stabilize.

In 2018, Geneva Call has strengthened its field presence, seen by partners as a key condition for effective monitoring, in particular with the signatories of our *Deeds of Commitment*. Monitoring of the Deeds during the second half of the year has brought with it some insightful results: the Deeds are recognized by ANSAs and partners as the flagship tool of Geneva Call, while their monitoring is seen as the Achilles' heel. It can, nonetheless, be said that most signatories do respect their commitments. Geneva Call's closer proximity to ANSAs and communities is regarded as a clear way to enhance both monitoring and engagement activities with signatories of Deeds.

The year has also been marked by serious difficulties with access in several countries such as Yemen, Syria and Afghanistan. Broadly speaking, Geneva Call has managed to continue with the implementation of its three-year strategy entailing the consolidation of its operating model, and the extension of its thematic and programmatic reach. Over the course of 2019, Geneva Call will be drawing up its next 2020-2023 strategy in consultation with its staff, donors and partners.

Whilst 2018 has been successful in terms of the consolidation of Geneva Call's operating model, the development of engagement with ANSAs and both thematic and programmatic related innovations, it has also been demanding from a financial perspective, ending with a deficit, as highlighted in the financial report. The strategic growth in income and operational expenses challenged the organization's financial management, leading to delays in booking costs and the outsourcing of accounting, creating additional costs. The Board of Trustees has approved a plan to address the ensuing deficit over a three-year period through tight cost control, a review of oversight, structure and staffing of the support functions and also flagged the need to obtain healthier financial reserves to support the organization's growth and development.

2019 should be a year of stabilization and reinforcement of the existing resources as well as the definition of the next 2020-2023 strategy in consultation with Geneva Call's key stakeholders.

Alain Délétroz
Director General

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Progress towards strategy 2017-2019

The important role of the organization in implementing mid and long-term strategies has been recognized as a positive development at the operational level, especially with regards to the long-term impact on the behaviour change of target groups and sustainability of the actions. The practice and experience gained so far give useful analytical insights and denotes that, globally, the operational strategy of Geneva Call was well implemented in 2018. Geneva Call was able to launch its activities and strengthened its presence in five new difficult contexts as planned initially; and develop new thematic engagement tools, using adapted training material. The elaboration of a New *Deed of Commitment* on the Protection of Health Care was a major step forward to increase Geneva Call's impact concerning this particular sector.

Strategic Objective 1 – Consolidation and concentration of action

Geneva Call's operations are concentrated in 10 priority contexts of armed conflict and focused on those ANSAs having the most severe impact on civilian populations; it has developed its tools for engagement and for promoting the respect of humanitarian norms; and it has consolidated the assessment of its results and impact.

Strengthening engagement: Geneva Call was able to register and deploy new missions in South Sudan and in Yemen (Aden), having successfully convinced the authorities of the relevance of its action in improving the protection of civilians. Initial training sessions with armed non-state actors were launched on humanitarian norms.

Development of engagement: Following successful field assessments, Geneva Call developed further its work in Mali, Libya and Ukraine. It increased its engagement with various armed groups and their local constituencies. Awareness campaigns on IHL were successfully launched in Ukraine, Libya, and the Philippines.

In addition, a success was achieved with armed groups making serious commitments to respect humanitarian norms. For example, the Peshmerga forces adopted its first ever code of conduct for its troops. Geneva Call will follow up this adoption with training of trainers and additional needed activities to make sure that the rules are being enforced at the field level.

Strategic Objective 2 – Development of engagement and thematic and programme-related innovations

Within a renewed and gradually decentralized operational framework, Geneva Call has initiated dialogue with "new generation" ANSAs and/or ANSAs that are difficult to access; it has innovated with the adoption of new themes and subjects and the launch of pilot programmes to support its engagement efforts with ANSAs.

Following the design of the Geneva Call security framework, context-based security guidelines were developed. One operational staff member undertook Hazardous Environment Awareness Training (HEAT), while other staff members will be trained in 2019.

The ANSA engagement internal guidelines, which is the first written document on how Geneva Call designs its humanitarian engagement with ANSAs, reached the last stages of its drafting. The release of the final version of the document is planned for early 2019.

Assessment and initiation of dialogue in new operational contexts: the operational teams conducted two field assessments in Afghanistan and in the Central African Republic (CAR). Initial contacts were made with the authorities, local stakeholders and relevant ANSAs. The missions in these contexts will be further developed in 2019.

Integration of new thematic areas in Geneva Call's engagement programmes: Training material related to the new themes of dis-

placement and the protection of cultural heritage was developed and ready to be deployed in several contexts.

In addition, Geneva Call developed its fourth *Deed of Commitment*, on the protection of health care during conflict. The tool is a result of a close collaboration with the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC), Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) and World Health Organisation (WHO).

An important achievement of the organization's operations was the pilot project launched in Sinjar, Iraq. The project aims at working with the civilian communities to train young members of the Yazidi communities. This involved visiting affected villages and raising awareness about the dangers of child recruitment by armed groups in particular.

Strategic Objective 3 – Transfer of leadership and consolidation of governance

Geneva Call has successfully achieved the transition to a new leadership and its governance suits the development of its objectives and activities.

In 2017, a consultant specialized in change management and governance accompanied Geneva Call's Directorate throughout the implementation of its leadership transition. In 2018, he also accompanied the Board of Trustees in the revision and adoption of Geneva Call's mission statement and values. He also reviewed responsibilities of Board Members towards Geneva Call's structure in general and towards the Directorate in particular. According to Geneva Call's statutes, there are three open positions on the board to be filled in 2019.

Strategic Objective 4 – Communication and appeal for acceptance and influence

Geneva Call has an overall communication and advocacy strategy, suited to the changes in the organization, which promotes its acceptance and influence among priority audiences.

Closing a process initiated in 2017, Geneva Call adopted a new visual identity in the second quarter of 2018 in order to ensure that our external visibility better matches the evolution of the organization.

A new position has been created in the communication and external relations department covering field communication. A communication officer was previously dealing with both the operational and institutional communication efforts, but since early 2018 an Operational Communication Coordinator accompanies the field missions in their access to media and social networks and their general awareness-raising activities. In addition, an Institutional Communication Officer is now in charge of strengthening Geneva Call's external outreach and further supporting Geneva Call's advocacy and influence-building efforts.

As examples of key advocacy initiatives in 2018, Geneva Call briefed the Political and Security Committee of the European Union, took part in a high-level panel organised in New York as part of the 73rd session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, and participated in the Paris Peace Forum.

Strategic Objective 5 – Successful management of growth

Over the three-year period of the strategy, Geneva Call has increased its budget by 33% and its staff by 50% by adapting its financial and administrative management to structural and operational changes and by guaranteeing the motivation and skills of its staff.

In 2018, Geneva Call's staff increased by 67% compared to 2017. A Human Resources unit has been created in order to professionalize the management of human resources and to develop the proper framework necessary to guarantee staff retention and to attract new talent.

Geneva Call increased its income and its operational expenses. However, its Financial Department experienced difficulties in accompanying the growth, leading to the Board of Trustees taking the decision in 2018 to outsource the accounting and to reviewing the oversight, structure and staffing of the Support Department. 2019 should be a year of stabilisation and reinforcement of the existing operations.

International Humanitarian Norms

What was the context?

Most armed conflicts today are non-international and involve ANSAs, either fighting government forces or other ANSAs. Although International Humanitarian Law (IHL) establishes a comprehensive legal framework, violations are widespread in today's conflicts. They include deliberate attacks on civilians or civilian facilities such as schools and hospitals; sexual violence; the unlawful recruitment and use of children in hostilities; the indiscriminate use of explosive weapons; the forced displacement of civilians; looting; obstruction or diversion of humanitarian assistance, and attacks on humanitarian workers. Thus, civilians are the primary victims of these conflicts and other acts of violence.

Many violations are committed by ANSAs. Yet, there is little systematic engagement with them to enhance the respect of international norms. The State-centric nature of international law poses further challenges as it is predominantly focused on States and ANSAs cannot become parties to relevant international treaties. Consequently, they may not feel bound to respect rules that they were neither consulted about nor have formally adhered to. Sometimes, they are also simply not aware of their responsibilities under IHL.

Geneva Call has been engaging and training ANSAs on international humanitarian norms since 2012. A number of ANSAs have undertaken to respect IHL and have taken measures to implement their commitments. In addition, Geneva Call has strived to share its experience and expertise with the humanitarian community through conferences, research, training and other activities.

What did Geneva Call achieve in 2018?

- Activities promoting and strengthening IHL implementation were organised in all the countries where Geneva Call has had operations during 2018, namely: DRC, Mali, Libya, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Colombia.
- Geneva Call's operations team organised a series of training sessions tar-

geting ANSA members at different levels, endeavouring to promote the participation of women to the greatest extent possible. During 2018, Geneva Call strengthened its work with local civilian communities by disseminating messages and increasing awareness of international humanitarian norms.

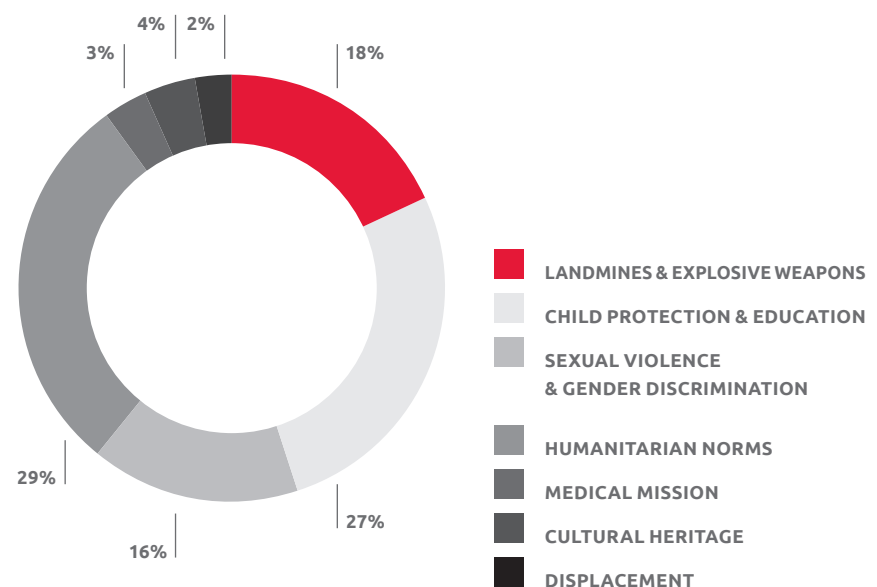
- During 2018, Geneva Call initiated a humanitarian dialogue on the key rules of the IHL with 18 additional ANSAs in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Libya, Mali, South Sudan, Syria, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Yemen and Iraq. There were a total of 86 ANSAs with whom Geneva Call's field teams interacted at different levels (awareness raising, knowledge, commitment/policy etc.).
- Eight ANSAs in Iraq worked with Geneva Call to revise their internal rules and regulations to be more compliant with IHL.
- Community structures that can have a direct influence on community perceptions and behaviours participated in awareness-raising sessions on international humanitarian law. Members of several community-based organi-

sations, civil society organisations and community leaders participated in the different awareness-raising and training sessions on international norms in most of the the countries of intervention.

- Geneva Call released a report on the role of ANSAs in the administration of justice in armed conflicts. The report (*The Garance Series: Issue 2 – Administration of Justice by Armed Non-State Actors, Report from the 2017 Garance Talks*) summarizes discussions held at an expert meeting convened in late 2017. It includes a legal analysis on the topic, examples of challenges that ANSAs may encounter when attempting to comply with the law (such as the notions of independence and impartiality of their judicial bodies and the prosecution of foreign fighters in Syria) as well as perspectives from selected ANSAs. It was presented at the 41st San Remo roundtable on "Deprivation of liberty and armed conflicts: exploring realities and remedies" in September 2018.

The graphic below represents the percentages of the ANSAs having taken real commitments according to different thematic areas of Geneva Call's expertise.

Humanitarian engagement per thematic in 2018 (%)



Child protection and education



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What was the context?

According to Save the Children, one in six children across the world are living in areas impacted by conflict. Children are being killed and maimed, abducted and raped, recruited and used in hostilities. The disruption of education is another major concern. According to the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA), between 2013 and 2017, there were attacks on schools in 74 countries.

In addition, the use of education facilities for military purposes not only creates a risk for the students and teachers but also has an impact on their access to education. The denial of humanitarian access has also led to devastating consequences for children, who were, in some cases, denied food, shelter and medical care.

Of the parties that are listed as perpetrators of grave violations against children in the last report of the UN Secretary-General on children and armed conflict, most are ANSAs. Many children involved in armed conflict are to be found among the ranks of ANSA forces.

Geneva Call has been working on the protection of children and education in armed conflict since 2010. To date, 27 ANSAs have signed the *Deed of Commitment* protecting children in armed conflict and have taken measures to implement them, such as the demobilization of child soldiers. Other ANSAs have undertaken similar pledges.

What did Geneva Call achieve in 2018?

- Child protection activities were undertaken in different contexts. A total number of 81 ANSAs received awareness-raising and training sessions on child protection and access to education for children. 27 signatory ANSAs strengthened their capacities and internal rules and regulations in terms of child protection, including the prohibition of the recruitment of children within armed forces.
- During 2018, Geneva Call initiated a humanitarian dialogue on child protection and education with 13 additional ANSAs, namely in the DRC, Libya, Mali, South Sudan, Syria and Ukraine.
- While organising awareness raising and training sessions on IHL and international humanitarian norms, Geneva Call's teams made sure to address child protection issues with the target groups.
- Awareness-raising, knowledge and training sessions were disseminated and organised with specific ANSAs addressing the protection of schools from military use and attacks.
- Regular follow-up activities were organised to monitor compliance with the *Deed of Commitment* for the signatory ANSAs and to address the cases of violations.
- Geneva Call contributed to the development of Save the Children's ANSA engagement guidelines. The main purpose of these guidelines is to support Save the Children's country office staff in assessing the opportunities and risks involved in engaging ANSAs on child protection issues.

Gender

What was the context?

Sexual violence and rape, in particular, are pervasive in many armed conflicts. Conflict situations create a climate where law and order are disrupted, and a sense of impunity may prevail among belligerent forces. In some conflicts, sexual violence is used strategically to terrorize and humiliate target civilian populations. In other contexts, it occurs in a more opportunistic manner, for example as a result of a lack of discipline.

There is no reliable data that gives a fair illustration of the magnitude of the problem worldwide as the number of cases of sexual violence is often under-reported. While men and boys are also victims of sexual violence, women and girls are particularly at risk and represent the overwhelming majority of victims. Armed conflict tends also to exacerbate discriminatory practices between men and women as it impacts gender roles and responsibilities.

The 2018 report of the UN Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence lists eight countries (CAR, DRC, Iraq, Mali, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, and Syria) where ANSAs are suspected of committing sexual violence. In addition, certain aspects of ANSAs' policies or practices are discriminatory, notably in regard to women's access to education, health and other services and/or participation in decision-making processes, such as peace negotiations.

Geneva Call has been working on gender issues since 2012. To date, 24 ANSAs have signed the *Deed of Commitment* prohibiting sexual violence and against gender discrimination and have taken measures to implement them. Other ANSAs have undertaken similar pledges.

What did Geneva Call achieve in 2018?

- Activities promoting gender equality and condemning sexual violence were undertaken in different contexts. A total number of 16 ANSAs participated in awareness-raising and training sessions on gender issues and strengthened their capacities and internal rules and regulations, namely in Myanmar, Colombia, the DRC, Iran, Lebanon, the Philippines,

Sudan, Syria, and Turkey. A humanitarian dialogue on gender was initiated with 2 additional ANSAs in Syria.

- The promotion of gender equality and international norms against sexual violence was conducted not only among ANSAs, but also among the concerned communities.
- Specific attention was also paid to the inclusion of women in decision-making and especially in the peacebuilding process. Women's participation and representation in peace talks has been an important element addressed and promoted by the operations' teams in different contexts such as: Colombia, Yemen, Lebanon, Ukraine, etc.
- During 2018, Geneva Call organised specific training sessions and workshops exclusively for women in Colombia, Lebanon, Yemen, Syria in order to strengthen their capacities in decision-making processes and to promote their participation during negotiations and peace talks.
- Geneva Call participated and contributed to international conferences and workshops with a view to raising awareness of conflict-related sexual violence, discriminatory practices and the importance of including women in decision-making processes, as well as more generally on the importance of engaging ANSAs on these issues, such as the collaboration for the UNICEF workshop in Lebanon during July 2018, the organization of the humanitarian conference for Syria gathering United Nations' organisation and NGO during December 2018; the European Union (EU) high level dialogue on "Advancing the role of Women in Peace Processes with Syrian and Yemeni women" during December 2018.



Landmines and explosive weapons



© Geneva Call

What was the context?

According to the Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining, 58 countries were contaminated by anti-personnel mines (AP mines) in 2017. These weapons have particularly grave consequences for civilians. Of the 7,239 casualties of landmines and other explosive remnants of war (ERW) recorded by the Landmine Monitor in 2017, civilians represented the vast majority of the casualties.

In addition to the human cost, AP mines and other explosive weapons hamper the delivery of essential services, such as health and education. Their presence also severely hinders the delivery of humanitarian relief, the return of displaced people and economic development.

According to the Landmine Monitor, in 2018, armed non-state actors used AP mines, including improvised explosive devices, in at least eight countries: Afghanistan, India, Colombia, Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan, Thailand and Yemen. Also, in 2017, Action on Armed Violence (AOAV) recorded the use of explosive weapons in populated areas by 55 different ANSAs. According to AOAV, of the 31,904 civilians killed and

injured by explosive weapons in 2017, ANSAs were responsible for 14,265 or 44% of them. Moreover, some ANSAs also have effective control over territories that are affected by AP mines and ERW. Communities living in such areas often receive little or no humanitarian assistance.

Geneva Call has been working on landmine issues since it was set up in 2000. To date, 52 ANSAs have signed the *Deed of Commitment* banning AP mines and have taken measures to implement them such as stockpile destruction. Other ANSAs have undertaken similar pledges. Moreover, in the recent years, Geneva Call has also addressed the use of explosive weapons in populated areas by ANSAs.

What did Geneva Call achieve in 2018?

- Activities on the ban of the landmines and against explosive weapons were undertaken in different contexts, such as Myanmar, Colombia, the DRC, Iran, Lebanon, Philippines, Iraq, Sudan, Syria, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, and Yemen. A total of 52 signatory ANSAs participated in awareness-raising and training sessions on international norms regarding the landmines and

explosive weapons. Among them, 16 ANSAs were engaged in activities aiming at strengthening their internal rules and procedures in that regard.

- During 2018, Geneva Call initiated a humanitarian dialogue on landmines and explosive weapons with 3 additional ANSAs, namely in Syria and Ukraine.
- In May 2018, Geneva Call monitored the destruction of 2,500 stockpiled anti-personnel mines by the Sahrawi Mine Action Coordination Office (SMA-CO) in accordance with Geneva Call's *Deed of Commitment* banning AP mines, signed by the Polisario Front in 2005. The event took place near Tifariti in the presence of representatives of the Polisario Front and of the international community. This marks the seventh such a destruction since the Polisario Front signed the *Deed of Commitment*.
- In November 2018, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and Geneva Call organised an expert meeting to address the use of explosive weapons in populated areas by ANSAs. The meeting aimed at deepening the understanding of such use and options for engaging ANSAs in order to avoid or limit their use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas (EWIPA). In addition to OCHA and Geneva Call, the meeting participants included representatives of Austria, Chile, Colombia, Ireland, Norway, Switzerland, the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS), the UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), the ICRC, AOAV, Article 36, Humanicemos DH, Humanity and Inclusion (HI), Human Rights Watch, and the Syrian Democratic Forces. It examined the humanitarian impact of EWIPA use, the legal obligations of ANSAs as well as possible ways to engage them. Drawing on Geneva Call's study, "In Their Words", the meeting brought to the light actions that have already been taken by some ANSAs to better protect civilians from the use of EWIPA and which may be replicated in other contexts.

Displacement

What was the context?

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), by the end of 2018, an unprecedented 68.5 million people around the world were forced to flee from their homes by armed conflict, persecution or violence.

Direct attacks and ill-treatment, the loss of property, the increased danger of families being torn apart and of children being separated from other family members, a greater risk of sexual violence, and restricted access to health care and other essential services are among the common threats to displaced persons. As they struggle to meet their essential needs, they are placed in further jeopardy by tensions with their host communities (who are very often themselves affected by armed conflict and lack access to basic services), forced recruitment (especially children), settlement in unsafe locations, and their forced return to unsafe areas.

ANSAs are present in most countries where there are high levels of internal displacement. In many cases, ANSAs have themselves forcibly displaced people. They

sometimes prevent displaced persons from returning home or hamper the delivery of aid. In other cases, they control territory where refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) live, manage camps and provide or facilitate assistance.

What did Geneva Call achieve in 2018?

- Geneva Call includes and mainstreams training on displacement in its engagement work with ANSAs. It also targets civilian branches (of ANSAs) which are managing and/or controlling camps.
- Additionally, tools through which ANSAs can commit to the protection of displaced persons (such as a standard unilateral declaration) have been developed and Geneva Call has encouraged the collaboration with specialised humanitarian agencies in order to support its action in the field.
- A total of 7 ANSAs engaged on this topic, further dialogue was promoted, aiming to achieve concrete changes of behaviour in order for violations to stop and positive practices to be strengthened. Activities targeting the displacement of populations during the times of conflict were undertaken in different contexts, such as the DRC, Iraq, Myanmar and Syria. They included awareness-raising and training sessions on the international norms governing the protection of internally displaced persons and the prohibition of forced displacement.
- During 2018, pilot engagement projects were conducted with a selected number of ANSAs and specific training material on this topic was developed. This enabled Geneva Call to learn more about the ANSAs' perspective on the issue of displacement and to evaluate how training material could be adapted and improved. All ANSAs engaged acknowledged that they needed clarity regarding their obligations to protect displaced persons and additional training on this subject. Furthermore, they highlighted the challenges they face when conducting military operations. These included how to avoid causing the displacement of the civilian population and how to ensure that displaced civilians are able to safely access adequate shelter and food.



Cultural heritage



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What was the context?

In the recent years, cultural heritage has increasingly become the direct target of systematic and deliberate attacks by ANSAs. Examples include the destruction in 2012 of 14 ancient mausoleums in the World Heritage town of Timbuktu in Mali and the various acts carried out by the Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria since 2014.

In addition, changes in the dynamics of warfare have increasingly transformed urban areas into battlegrounds. As a result, historical monuments, religious buildings and other cultural sites have suffered significant collateral damage. For example, in Syria, the old city of Aleppo—a World Heritage Site—has been on the frontline of fighting between government forces and ANSAs.

The cultural heritage has been further affected by the illegal excavation of archaeological sites, the widespread looting of sites and museums, and the illicit trafficking of cultural objects.

Geneva Call started to engage ANSAs on the protection of cultural heritage in armed conflict in 2018.

What did Geneva Call achieve in 2018?

- During 2018 Geneva Call organised activities addressing the cultural heritage aspect in different contexts, such as Mali, Syria, Iraq and Myanmar. A total of 12 ANSAs participated in awareness-raising and training sessions on international norms regarding the protection of cultural heritage from the effects of armed conflict and committed to take measures in that regard.
- Geneva Call published a landmark report entitled “Culture under fire: armed non-State actors and cultural heritage in wartime”. This report presents the findings of a two-year long study funded by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and represents the most comprehensive research available on

this topic to date. It centres around three case studies—Iraq, Mali and Syria— and identifies first-hand accounts of both negative and positive practices, where some ANSAs have destroyed and/or looted cultural sites and objects, while others have taken concrete measures to respect and safeguard them. It examines the response from specialized agencies before offering recommendations on ways to enhance the protection of cultural heritage in armed conflict.

- The report was officially launched at an event at the Embassy of Switzerland in Washington D.C. on October 25, 2018, featuring a high-level panel with the participation of Yves Daccord, the Director-General of the International Committee of the Red Cross and Corine Wegener, the Director of the Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative.

Protection of health care in armed conflict

What was the context?

In the recent years, it has become increasingly common for medical personnel and facilities to come under attack. Although comprehensive worldwide data is lacking, the reality on the ground is unequivocal. The ICRC recorded 2,398 incidents of violence against health care facilities or staff in 11 countries, from the beginning of 2012 to the end of 2014. In total, more than 4,000 people were victims of this type of violence. The Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition's latest report documented these types of attacks in 23 countries in conflict in 2016. Similarly, MSF has made reference to continuous attacks against health facilities in Syria, Afghanistan, the CAR, South Sudan, Ukraine and Yemen.

There are different consequences of this type of violence, such as the loss of life, injury, destruction and the deprivation of vital care. Besides their immediate impact, attacks against health care personnel and facilities can also paralyse the delivery of emergency services and disrupt access to health care for the wider civilian population and wounded fighters, particularly when

hospitals or first-aid posts are forced to close. Attacks may also lead to health care staff leaving conflict areas, thus further exacerbating the trend.

ANSAs have often been involved in incidents of violence against health care facilities. Although many of these consisted of mere threats, ANSAs have also killed health care personnel or patients. Additionally, they have looted health care facilities and forced medical staff to provide free treatment and treat their own members before others. By occupying or using medical facilities, they have also put them at risk of attacks by other parties. By contrast, a number of ANSAs have also provided or facilitated the provision of health care in areas under their control.

Geneva Call started to work on the protection of health care in armed conflict in 2018.

What did Geneva Call achieve in 2018?

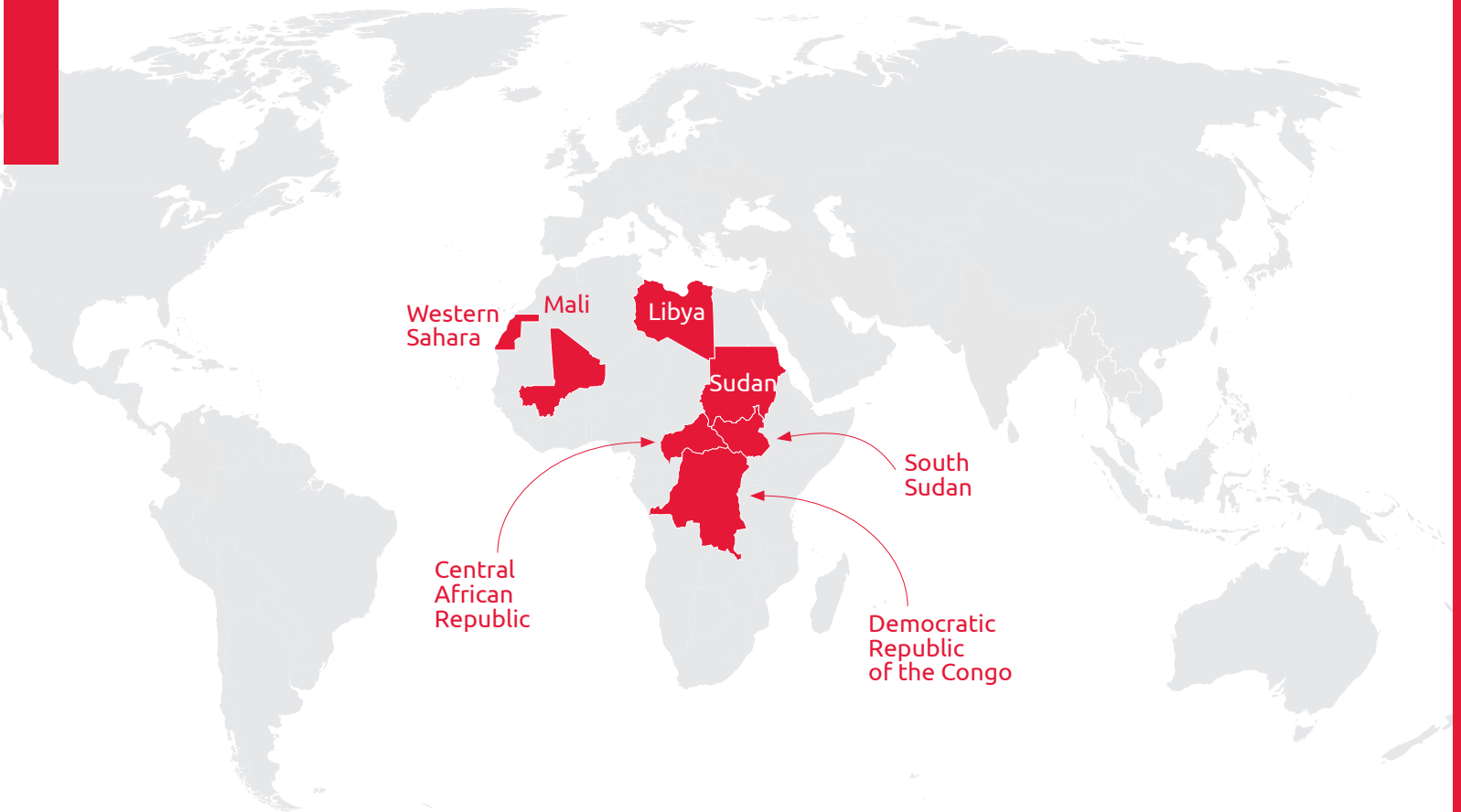
- Activities targeting the protection of health care during conflict were undertaken with different ANSAs, especially

in Mali. A total of 9 ANSAs participated in awareness-raising and training sessions on international norms regarding the protection of health facilities and personnel during conflict situations.

- During 2018, with the support of legal experts and practitioners, Geneva Call developed a *Deed of Commitment* on protecting health care in armed conflict. This new tool will help to engage ANSAs to: i) ensure access for affected populations to essential health care facilities, goods and services; and ii) facilitate the provision of health care by impartial humanitarian organisations.
- The *Deed of Commitment* was officially launched at an event in Geneva on 22 November 2018, with the presence of the ICRC, MSF-Switzerland, and WHO.
- The approach of Geneva Call with regards to the protection of health care during armed conflict situation, along with the *Deed of Commitment*, was also broadly presented to international actors during the Paris Peace Forum, in November 2018.



Africa



Africa: regional approach

What were the regional developments?

In 2018, Geneva Call focused its efforts on the DRC, the CAR, Libya, Sudan, South Sudan and Mali. Geneva Call's teams managed to initiate direct engagement with the leadership of ANSAs in Libya, to develop and consolidate their operation in Mali, and to extend their engagement with ANSAs in the DRC. Geneva Call also monitored existing engagement in Sudan and Western Sahara, and assessed the humanitarian situation in the Sahel region as a whole, South Sudan and the CAR to explore potential future operations in these contexts.

Sudan

According to UNOCHA, about 2 million people continued to be internally displaced in Sudan as of December 2018. Some ANSAs in Sudan continue to appear on the UN list of armed groups suspected of perpetrating violence against children. Antipersonnel mines are still present in West and South Kordofan, as well as in Blue Nile State, while Darfur remains contaminated by explosive remnants of war. In 2018, the only location that continued to experience conflict in Darfur was the Jebel Marra. In the Two Areas, the ceasefire continued throughout the entire year.

The Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army – Abdel Wahid al-Nur (SLM/A-AW), the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army – Minni Minnawi (SLM/A-MM) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement – North (SPLM-N) are all signatories to Geneva Call's *Deed of Commitment* banning AP mines. The SPLM-N has also signed the *Deed of Commitment* protecting children in armed conflict.

In 2018, Geneva Call focused its attention on the implementation of their obligations under the *Deeds of Commitment*; in particular, it conducted an in-depth monitoring of the *Deeds of Commitments* with both branches of the SPLM-N. The organization also met with the leadership of the JEM and SLA-MM in June 2018 to prepare the low engagement phase of their *Deeds of Commitment*, as the threats represented by AP mines is progressively decreasing.

Additionally, Geneva Call met with the official Sudanese authorities to explain its mission and values with the aim of securing support for its activities, conducting an awareness-raising session for 38 members of the Sudanese Ministry of Defence.

South Sudan

Although ongoing peace processes resulted in the signing of a peace agreement in August 2015 and again in September 2018, fighting continued in many parts of the country.

After launching its formal registration process in South Sudan in 2018, Geneva Call collected additional information on programmatic approaches, including potential targets, humanitarian coordination and the feasibility of the project, and began carrying out initial activities in the country. It organized several meetings with the South Sudanese authorities (most notably with the 1st Vice President, the representative of the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) with the aim of securing acceptance

from the authorities. It also carried out a training session in Juba for members of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), including the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition (SPLM-IO) Taban Deng branch.

Western Sahara

Western Sahara remains one of the regions of the world that is most contaminated by landmines. According to the Landmine Monitor, more than 2,500 people have been victims of AP mines and explosive remnants of war in Western Sahara since 1975. In 2018 alone, 22 new casualties were reported.

Geneva Call's humanitarian dialogue with the Polisario Front, and their subsequent signature of the *Deed of Commitment* banning AP mines in 2005 led to the progressive destruction of their stockpiles. In May 2018, Geneva Call monitored the destruction of 2,500 stockpiled AP mines by the Sahrawi Mine Action Coordination Office (SMACO) in accordance with the *Deed of Commitment*, bringing the total number of stockpiled AP mines they have destroyed to 17,954.



Central African Republic (CAR)



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What was the context?

CAR has not found its way towards peace yet, despite the African Union initiative for peace talks supported by the United Nations that should bring together former Seleka ANSAs, former anti-Balaka ANSAs and the Government. Hence, the country remained deeply divided between the different parties to the conflict, and there was the ongoing threat of large-scale violence spreading again, while clashes still occurred on a regular basis. These clashes mainly targeted civilian populations, especially internally displaced persons (IDPs), which represent at least 15% of the total Central African population.

What did Geneva Call achieve in 2018?

Geneva Call undertook a mission in the CAR in December 2018 in order to assess the situation and explore ways forward to implement effective operations in the country. The assessment concluded that there is a need for better protection of civilians, with clear gaps identified in the current protection response. Other humanitarian actors welcomed a future intervention by Geneva Call in the country. In this context, donors' support is essential to fill the gaps and alleviate the situation of affected population.

What challenges did Geneva Call face in this context?

Geneva Call will be looking for funding for its new operation in the CAR from 2019 onwards.

Expenditure

	CHF
TOTAL	51964

Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

What was the context?

Irregularities and contestation around the presidential elections at the end of 2018 worsened the security conditions in the DRC, which were further aggravated by the withdrawal of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Congo (MONUSCO) from most of its bases in the eastern part of the country. The presence and activities of more than 130 ANSAs also remained a major source of insecurity and violence against the civilian population and deteriorated humanitarian access even further.

What did Geneva Call achieve in 2018?

- Geneva Call extended the scope of the themes it covers in the DRC, adding a focus on forced displacement and humanitarian access (training sessions were designed and conducted with ANSAs).
- Geneva Call prepared the ground through bilateral discussions with ANSAs' leadership for the signature of the *Deed of Commitment* prohibiting sexual violence and gender-based discrimination with an additional ANSA.
- New engagements were initiated with additional ANSAs through a series of bilateral meetings, training and awareness-raising sessions.
- An in-depth study on humanitarian access was conducted and shared with the humanitarian community, both in Kinshasa and Goma. The study looks at the way humanitarian stakeholders are perceived by both communities and ANSAs and lists concrete recommendations intended for humanitarian actors, aiming at improving their access in North Kivu.
- Geneva Call became part of a consortium with Search for Common Ground and Mercy Corps aiming at tackling the impact of ANSAs behaviour on the value chain for goods. Geneva Call focuses on reducing the negative impact ANSAs can have on the proper functioning of local markets. By doing so, Geneva Call will participate in achieving the main

objective of the consortium, which is to restore proper value chains in North Kivu.

What challenges did Geneva Call face in this context?

One of the main challenges in the DRC was the safe and regular access to ANSAs. Geneva Call had difficulties in remaining in contact with some of them, either because of their involvement in armed clashes or because of their disintegration. Moreover, alliances between ANSAs were created and dismantled opportunistically and splits within ANSAs occurred regularly, making any sustained dialogue challenging.

Expenditure

	CHF
TOTAL	568 626



Libya



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What was the context?

Libya's political institutions have remained divided between competing governments in Tripoli and Tobruk. Efforts to find a political agreement and unify institutions have continued throughout the year, but no breakthrough was achieved. Major security developments on the ground include military confrontations in the "oil crescent", Libya's eastern coastal area from which more than half of Libya's crude oil is exported. The city of Derna fell under the control of the Libya National Army (LNA) in June and heavy clashes occurred between militias controlling the city in Libya's capital, Tripoli, in August and September.

Violations of IHL have remained worrying throughout the year, with reports of indiscriminate attacks, summary executions, kidnappings and attacks on medical facilities.

Libya has also remained an important hub for migration across the Mediterranean into Europe, with migrants recurrently being subjected to inhumane treatment in detention centres.

What did Geneva Call achieve in 2018?

- Geneva Call managed to establish contact with major arms carriers in the eastern part of the country and worked

on targeting ANSAs more precisely in the western region of Libya.

- Awareness-raising sessions on IHL were given to arms carriers in the eastern part of the country, and this initial contact allowed for larger training sessions to be organized in order to reach and facilitate the access to more actors with regards to the protection of civilian population during hostilities.
- The Libyan Protection Community was made aware of Geneva Call's programme through awareness raising sessions on IHL.
- Geneva Call regularly participated in coordination mechanisms, such as the protection cluster meetings and related working groups, as well as conflict sensitivity fora organized by the Swiss Human Security Division and the Peaceful Change Initiative.
- Geneva Call undertook a communication campaign using the Fighter not Killer materials to raise awareness of humanitarian norms among armed actors, civil society and communities, resulting in 677,124 video views and more than 4.5 million people reached on the social media.

What challenges did Geneva Call face in this context?

The main challenges in the Libyan context relate to the security situation and the existence of competing authorities. To overcome these challenges, Geneva Call tried to communicate with all the authorities and ensure that it is recognized as a neutral, impartial actor whose sole aim is the protection of civilians. Geneva Call also constantly reassessed its engagement strategy and maintained a flexible approach which involved engagement through intermediaries and meetings outside the country.

Expenditure

	CHF
TOTAL	308 403

Mali

What was the context?

Despite the signing of the Algiers' Agreement in 2015, armed clashes still occurred in 2018, mainly in the northern and central parts of Mali. In addition, intra- and inter-community tensions have arisen in the centre of the country, leading to armed clashes between the community-based self-defence militias. A coalition of small ANSAs claiming to fight Jihad firmly rejected the presence of the central State and considered all forms of State presence and international military troops to be a target.

All parties to the Agreement have a record of suspected breaches of international humanitarian norms and human rights, including child recruitment, gender-based violence, extrajudicial killing, and targeting of protected people and objects. These breaches have, on occasion, been recognised by the leadership of each actor. In addition, the armed actors that have emerged recently represent an increased protection risk for civilians. The recent armed clashes and the lack of respect for international humanitarian norms are fuelling tensions in the country, thus jeopardizing the peace process even further.

What did Geneva Call achieve in 2018?

- Geneva Call organised 15 training sessions on IHL for a total of 178 participants from a variety of stakeholders, including ANSAs, representatives from media, religious and political leaders, women and youth associations.
- Geneva Call consolidated a dialogue and a working relationship with 3 ANSA coalitions, offering them training sessions on humanitarian norms as well as training sessions on specific issues (child recruitment, protection of cultural heritage, protection of health care, and the protection of education). These activities were conducted in Bamako as well as in Gao and Mopti, to ensure a coherent approach.
- Geneva Call reviewed the charter of one of the coalitions, to ensure it reflected international humanitarian norms. Discussions and negotiations took already place with ANSAs members of the coalition on potential signature of *Deeds of Commitment*.
- Geneva Call developed new contacts with less structured ANSAs, present in the centre of the country, bringing them together for awareness-raising sessions on IHL.

- Geneva Call became fully integrated into all coordination mechanisms, such as the Protection cluster, and relevant sub clusters (child protection).
- Geneva Call successfully conducted a baseline study in Mopti and Gao, allowing the organization to define the reference values of its project in Mali. The baseline study confirmed there is a need for a direct dialogue with ANSAs on their behaviour.
- Geneva Call conducted workshops with representative of civil society in Gao and Mopti to formalize humanitarian messages for those ANSAs that are difficult to reach.

What challenges did Geneva Call face in this context?

The main challenge was the frequent floor-crossing of ANSAs and combatants, as well as fragmentations or mergers between groups, which had a considerable impact on the work between these entities and Geneva Call.

Expenditure

	CHF
TOTAL	218311



Asia and Europe



Asia and Europe: regional approach



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What were the regional developments?

The impact of armed conflict in Asia varies from one sub-region to another and, consequently, the patterns of protection needs are diverse. Advocacy for enhanced respect of IHL in these various armed conflicts must be tailored to the political, security and cultural contexts of each sub-region. As per the 2017-2019 strategy, Geneva Call has decentralized its operations to have a deeper understanding of communities' protection needs and a stronger analysis of compliance by ANSAs with IHL. Geneva Call has been working in the region for a decade and has gained unique and valuable access to ANSA-controlled territories. Long-term dialogue with ANSAs has led to increased interest from them on learning about IHL but not systematically to higher rates of compliance with it.

In 2018 Geneva Call continued to maintain a high level of dialogue with long-term-established armed actors in Thailand and

Myanmar. In the Philippines, Geneva Call has now established a formal presence in the country and launched a communication campaign, with the objective of advocating for respect for IHL. In Afghanistan, Geneva Call held numerous meetings with government representatives and other varied constituencies, hired staff and has set up a registered office in the country. It is developing dialogue with both anti- and pro-government armed parties to raise awareness of and increase respect for the protection of education and health care and the relevant norms of humanitarian law regarding the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

In Ukraine, Geneva Call officially launched its first ever programme, coupled with an information campaign. The Ukrainian government has officially recognized the situation of armed conflict and has approved and authorised Geneva Call to work across the country officially to promote IHL, while a number of media publications, radio and TV shows covered Geneva Call's work in

Ukraine with an audience of over 150,000 people. A series of training and awareness sessions on IHL were held for both State and non-state parties in Ukraine.

In parallel to developing a humanitarian engagement with ANSAs in the region, Geneva Call has been working with communities to increase their knowledge on their rights in armed conflict and to empower them to ensure their rights are respected. Geneva Call attempts to create a space for dialogue between communities and ANSAs, so that together they can identify ways to safeguard civilians from unnecessary and intolerable suffering.

Afghanistan

What was the conflict situation?

Afghanistan has been affected by a multidimensional armed conflict since 1978. There have been some efforts to achieve peace but none of the parties have fully committed to stabilisation. Pre-peace talks took place in late 2018 and raised some hope that peace can still be achieved. That said, the security situation has significantly deteriorated, the armed conflict is reaching a concerning threshold, humanitarian norms are being blatantly violated, civilians are suffering inhumanly, and humanitarian work and assistance are coming under constant threats. A dozen ANSAs control about 40% of the country; Afghan civilians and infrastructures are being directly targeted in hostilities, putting their life at risk. This

level of violence against civilians, including children to a large extent, endangers the virtuous circle of peace and threatens hopes that State authority and the rule of law could be re-established.

More civilians were killed in the Afghan conflict in 2018 than at any time since records have been kept, according to the 2018 report released by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). The report documented 3,804 civilian deaths in 2018. Among the dead were 927 children, the highest recorded number of boys and girls killed in the conflict during a single year. In total, UNAMA documented 10,993 civilian casualties (3,804 deaths and 7,189 injured), representing a 5% increase in overall civilian casualties and an 11% in-

crease in civilian deaths compared to 2017. UNAMA attributed the majority of civilian casualties –63%– to ANSAs.

The combined use of explosive weapons caused nearly 45% of the casualties. Ground engagement is the second cause of civilian casualties, followed by targeted deliberate killings, aerial operations and explosive remnants of war. Attacks on schools and health infrastructure and personnel have become a common practice, in direct violation of IHL. Lastly, Afghanistan is one of the most mined countries in the world with estimates of up to 640,000 landmines laid since the beginning of the conflict. The recent use of pressure plate improvised mines is causing approximately 60 deaths a month.



What did Geneva Call achieve in 2018?

- Geneva Call organised a visit to rural communities in Afghanistan. After a series of meetings with various constituencies in Kabul and with government representatives, Geneva Call visited selected schools which had been attacked, to meet with teachers and children to discuss ways to improve safe access to education.
- Geneva Call entered into a partnership with the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) to operationalize the Safe Schools Declaration (SSD) in Afghanistan, which was amongst the first signatories. Geneva Call and NRC led consultations with communities in order to understand the patterns of attacks and use of schools, discuss with communities their sense of safety and discuss ways to engage with ANSAs on the SSD.
- Geneva Call presented its work to various State and non-state interlocutors and explained the focus of its approach. All of these parties expressed an understanding of Geneva Call's strategy to raise awareness of and increase respect for the protection of education and medical missions and the relevant norms of international humanitarian law regarding the protection of civilians in armed conflict, by anti- and pro-government armed parties.

What challenges did Geneva Call face in this context?

The security situation affects the presence and the implementation of regular activities. Given the context in which the hostilities are becoming more intense, humanitarian workers are being targeted, and ANSAs are showing resistance to engaging on IHL, Geneva Call expects challenges in terms of access and being able to rapidly implement its programmes.

Expenditure

	CHF
TOTAL	117 263

Myanmar



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What was the conflict situation?

Fighting between the Government and ANSAs representing particular ethnic groups has gone on for decades. Violations of IHL and international human rights law have plagued the country, particularly in border areas.

Active fighting is mainly confined to Shan and Kachin States, where it spurs new displacement. Tensions remain high in south-eastern Karen and Karenni States as well as in Chin State in the north-west. Sporadic violence has also taken place in Rakhine State where the ongoing crisis remains a situation of grave humanitarian concern. Geneva Call does, however, closely follow the situation, particularly to monitor potential ANSA recruitment among refugees and IDPs' populations and track the civilian impact of the northern Rakhine State clashes between the Arakan Army

(AA) and Myanmar Army, which became more frequent towards the end of the year. Alleged IHL/IHRL violations—including mass abductions, the use of antipersonnel mines, child recruitment and sexual violence—by armed actors, are increasingly frequent and flagrant, particularly within Shan State. Although the media attribute most violations to Myanmar's military forces, ANSAs are typically accused of smaller-scale violations which also have a serious impact on civilians.

Geneva Call remains focused on the entrenched humanitarian crises throughout conflict-affected areas across northern and eastern Myanmar. Myanmar's sub-national conflicts involve an exceptional number of ANSAs as well as numerous other armed actors, including State forces, government-backed militias, and commercial and/or criminal enterprises. In Kachin and northern Shan States, increasingly

frequent and intense armed clashes have borne tremendous harmful effects for the civilian population.

Geneva Call has been active in Myanmar since 2003 and currently focuses its efforts on the protection of communities in Shan, Kachin and Karen States.

What did Geneva Call achieve in 2018?

- Geneva Call made strategic use of key thematic focuses to extend its conflict-sensitive approach and build acceptance for its work in Myanmar. In its first activities focused on displacement and cultural heritage, Geneva Call led workshops for the Pa-Oh National Liberation Organization (PNLO) and Pa-Oh civil society on displacement and for the Ministry of Ethnic Affairs on cultural heritage.

- ANSAs which have signed a *Deed of Commitment* were supported in implementing, monitoring and improving their compliance with the signed *Deeds of Commitment*, as necessary. In particular, workshops were held for the Karen National Police Force (KNPF) and Karen National Defence Organisation (KNDO), to ensure there is a good level of understanding of the signed *Deeds of Commitment* throughout all branches of the Karen National Union (KNU).
- Geneva Call and the Karen Human Rights Group piloted joint training sessions for the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) on IHL and the *Deeds of Commitment*. Based on the success of the 2018 pilot, the program will expand and be jointly delivered throughout 2019.
- Dialogue with the Restoration Council of Shan State (RCSS) leadership was maintained and further strengthened. The RCSS verbally committed to signing the *Deed of Commitment 3* in 2019.
- Several multi-partner ANSA workshops were delivered to KNU and RCSS, together with the International Labour Office ILO & Save the Children.
- Numerous workshops were held for CSOs, to improve their knowledge of humanitarian norms, increase their support for Geneva Call and strengthen the impact of Geneva Call's engagement with ANSAs. For example, a five-day Training of Trainers on workshop was held for Kachin CSOs, including some Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO) representatives. Other activities took place with ethnic-Shan, Talan, Karen and Kachin CSOs.

What challenges did Geneva Call face in this context?

- Geneva Call works with parties to the conflict, many of which are considered by the Myanmar Government and Myanmar law as entities ranging from suspect groups to "unlawful/terrorist organizations." Under the Myanmar Criminal Code, it is considered "unlawful association" to be in any way connected to organizations included in the Government's classified list of "illegal" groups. Anyone perceived as being connected to such groups is vulnerable to arbitrary and immediate arrest.
- Overall, security challenges in Myanmar remain of concern. Faced with increasing government opposition to humanitarian activities, many registered organizations that partner with Geneva Call are unable to obtain travel authorizations to access project areas. Many humanitarians—particularly Myanmar nationals who work with INGOs—are at continuous risk of arrest. To navigate these challenges, Geneva Call will remain officially unregistered in Myanmar and will continue to make travel and activity decisions based on its strict security protocols and in-depth internal risk assessments.

Expenditure

	CHF
TOTAL	374 551

The Philippines



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What was the conflict situation?

The main locus of the various armed conflicts in the Philippines has been in Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago in the South of the country which has been the centre of resistance towards the Philippine State, by the Moro and the National Democratic movement. Despite peace processes, recent years have seen armed struggles against the government. This is often intertwined with grass roots conflicts between political families or powerful clans, ethnic groups, and ANSAs which often blur the lines between the different contexts. This slow progress of the peace process is heightening frustrations within both long-term, established ANSAs and amongst sections of the Moro population, particularly the youth.

This situation has contributed to the development of new, more fundamentalist, ANSAs. The area from the eastern parts of

Central Mindanao up to the east coast of Mindanao is where the armed wing of the Leftist movement is most active and there are frequent clashes between the New People's Army (NPA) and State security forces. While frequent, these are usually less intense and have a less significant humanitarian impact than incidents in the Moro areas of Mindanao. Of all the Moro ANSAs, the different factions of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) can be said to have been most militarily active in 2018. Meanwhile the largest Moro group, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), and the Government made significant strides towards concluding their peace process through the ratification of a law providing for the establishment of a new autonomous political entity which will be voted on in a referendum in early 2019.

Unlike 2017 with the eruption of the Marawi Crisis, 2018 did not see as intense and protracted battles between government

forces and Moro ANSAs. However, frequent fighting involving the BIFF and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) continued to take place in Central Mindanao; serious clashes between security forces and the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) continued in Western Mindanao, while the Lanao region did see a handful of firefights between Dawla Islamiyah (DI) and State forces.

Despite notable developments to peacefully resolve some of the major conflicts in the Philippines, armed confrontations continue with a significant humanitarian impact, especially in Mindanao. 2018 saw several instances of attacks and bombings which fail to distinguish between civilians and military targets. The decades-long conflicts are estimated to have killed more than 120,000 and displaced millions in Mindanao alone.

What did Geneva Call achieve in 2018?

- Geneva Call maintained its relationship with ANSAs that are involved in the peace process and held several meetings with the leadership of these ANSAs to ensure that they can serve as a channel to promote IHL among the new generation of ANSAs.
- A communication campaign was promoted, with videos adapted to Filipino, the Fighter not Killer mobile app, as well as several thematic booklets translated into Filipino. The app, for example, was downloaded over 200 times. The reception was positive and there were a number of CSOs keen to take part in dissemination of printed materials and communicating humanitarian norms at the community level.
- A two-day orientation/awareness-raising session and consultation was held with Central Mindanao-based CSOs in December 2018 to prepare, and identify appropriate partners, for further engagement with hard-to-reach ANSAs in the country.

What challenges did Geneva Call face in this context?

2018 saw stricter restrictions on movement for all international organisations in conflict-affected areas in Mindanao following new guidelines issued by the Department of Foreign Affairs. This may affect Geneva Call's work; however, the full impact is not yet known.

Recurrent clashes between State security forces and ANSAs have led to consultation sessions with key community leaders from affected areas being postponed, on a regular basis.

Expenditure

	CHF
TOTAL	212,756

Thailand



© UN Photo/John Isaac

What was the situation of armed violence?

The armed violence affecting Thailand's three southern provinces of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat, as well as parts of neighbouring Songkhla province, may be considered primarily ethnic in nature, pitting Malays against the Thai State. Although not a religious conflict as such, the insurgency is heavily informed by Islamic understandings and concepts. It emanates from a separatist movement that is highly fractured but has two main groupings: the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN) and the Majlis Syura Patani (MARA Patani). The latter, an umbrella organization of separatist groups, is engaged in a Malaysian-facilitated peace process with the Thai government. Mainstream BRN, or what some call its armed wing, remains outside of the peace process and is thought to be responsible for the vast majority of violent incidents targeting the Thai security forces in the Deep South. There is very little engagement by international humanitarian actors with the movement.

In terms of the armed violence, the trend continued to show less blatant violations of international humanitarian norms and less frequency of incidents generally, while spikes could be observed along a tit-for-tat pattern. According to Deep South Watch (<https://deepsouthwatch.org/en/node/11892>) there were 548 incidents recorded during the year. According to the institution, 240 incidents are directly related to separatism. Despite the over-

all positive trend, several incidents were reported showing a lack of distinction between military objectives and civilians.

An apparent breakthrough in the negotiations between MARA Patani and the Government about a pilot safety zone eventually hit a stumbling block, leaving the peace process at an impasse at the end of the year. Both the Malaysian facilitator and Thai chief negotiator have been replaced in the latter half of the year, while the format the process will take will likely depend further on the outcome of the elections in Thailand, scheduled for March 24, 2019.

What did Geneva Call achieve in 2018?

Geneva Call consolidated its engagement with ANSAs and expanded its work with civil society with the principle objective of disseminating and increasing ownership of humanitarian norms at the community level.

- Four training sessions were held with ANSAs representatives on humanitarian norms and their applicability to the policies and practices of ANSAs and the specific situation of armed violence of Thailand.
- The relevance of signing *Deeds of Commitment* on Child Protection and Protection Health Care in conflict situation was particularly emphasised during bilateral meetings with ANSAs representatives.

- Geneva Call reached out to different CSOs for potential strategic partnership through capacity-building sessions for more than one hundred members.
- Local training sessions by capacitated CSOs were carried out to disseminate knowledge of international humanitarian norms to conflict-affected communities.
- Through a series of technical meetings, Geneva Call strengthened its relations with the Thai authorities which have become increasingly supportive of the organization's work, following awareness-raising sessions for relevant government agencies.

What challenges did Geneva Call face in this context?

- Working on issues related to the violence in the Deep South of Thailand requires a careful approach and diplomacy to ensure comprehensive support from the authorities. Although the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and National Security Council continued to support and facilitate interventions, there is a need for further outreach towards the security sector.
- Geneva Call's communication materials had to be rewritten to take into account certain local sensitivities and identified risks.
- Some of the activities to promote respect for humanitarian norms by ANSAs need to take place outside of the country because of sensitivity considerations, requiring more resources to organize.

Expenditure

	CHF
TOTAL	194 580

Ukraine

What was the conflict situation?

The civilian population trapped along the 500km line of separation between the Ukrainian forces and separatist insurgents suffer on a daily basis from violations of the ceasefire agreed in Minsk in 2014-2015. Improvements in their situation remain uncertain, as escalation is possible and parties to the conflict are not showing any commitments to taking concrete steps towards peace. This stresses the need for all sides, State and non-state, to assume greater responsibility, as enshrined in the relevant laws, for those civilians isolated along the contact line. Currently, there is limited engagement with armed parties, especially non-state ones, to the conflict in eastern Ukraine on their legal obligations to protect civilians from unnecessary suffering and ensure their fundamental rights are protected.

Since the beginning of the conflict, at least 3,035 civilians have been killed and between 7,000 and 9,000 have been injured. Violations of IHL are reported, by both the separatist groups and the Ukrainian armed forces. A lack of respect for the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution, and the widespread use of explosive weapons is translating into a high percentage of civilian casualties and the destruction of or damage to civilian infrastructures like schools and hospitals. The use of cluster munitions and anti-personnel mines has caused 1,796 casualties (incl. 238 civilians dead). Over 2 million civilians live in proximity to lands contaminated with unexploded ordnance/landmines. Beatings and electrocution of genitals, rape, threats of rape, and forced nudity have been used as a method of torture to punish, humiliate, or extract confessions from detainees. Numerous checkpoints have also increased the risk of sexual and gender-based violence against civilians, mainly women. Dissemination of IHL by the government is challenging due to limited resources and the lack of IHL-related curricula. This is even more relevant in non-government-controlled areas (NGCA) where armed parties are difficult to reach, for political and strategic reasons.



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What did Geneva Call achieve in 2018?

- The Ukrainian government has approved and authorised Geneva Call to work across the country officially since September 2018 to promote IHL, including in the NGCA where Geneva Call needs access. Geneva Call maintained regular bilateral meetings with the host Government to coordinate the work and select those priority armed actors to be engaged.
- Geneva Call organized a press conference in Ukraine on December 13, 2018 to launch its first ever programme in Ukraine. An information campaign entitled “War has rules too” was also launched at the same time, including brochures and leaflets. New videos on the protection of civilians, children, education and civilian infrastructure, especially designed for Ukraine, were presented.
- A Geneva Call website in Ukrainian and Russian was developed and social media accounts (Twitter, Facebook and V Kontakte) for Ukraine were also set up. The content of the mobile phone application “Fighter not Killer” was translated into Russian and Ukrainian and launched.
- A number of media publications, radio and TV shows covered Geneva Call’s work in Ukraine with an audience of over 150,000 people.
- Geneva Call trained 430 members of Azov, a special unit police, the law police academy, and patrol command officer

on IHL and raised awareness on IHL and the protection of education among 30 fighters in the NGCA through dialogue, discussions, and presentations of Geneva Call’s work.

- Geneva Call led a series of 25 advocacy sessions to influence decision makers and armed group commanders to improve IHL protection through advocacy instruments.
- Geneva Call had 10 direct engagement sessions with ANSAs to plan for future sustainable humanitarian dialogue.

What challenges did Geneva Call face in this context?

Geneva Call has succeeded in promoting humanitarian norms via social media in Non-GCA (NGCA) and continues formal and informal efforts to lead similar humanitarian engagement with the leadership of de facto forces and administrations in NGCA. However, restricted access to NGCA has been a constraint to develop humanitarian engagement as has been successfully achieved with other armed entities in the rest of Ukraine.

Expenditure

	CHF
TOTAL	162 121

Latin America



Colombia

A grayscale map of Latin America is shown, with the country of Colombia highlighted in a solid red color. The word "Colombia" is written in red text to the left of the highlighted area. The map includes the outlines of Mexico, Central America, and South America.

Colombia



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What was the context?

Six months after the elections, Colombia has seen a worrying increase in armed activities that have directly affected the civilian population, especially in departments such as Chocó, Cauca, Antioquia, Arauca, among others. The actions of the so-called “post-demobilization” armed groups intensified in many areas. There are numerous recorded events of actions involving the People’s Liberation Army (EPL), the National Liberation Army (ELN), the Colombian army and the police. Recruitment of children and adolescents, combat, and the increase in civilian victims as a result of antipersonnel mines are some of the events that are exacerbating the humanitarian context.

This situation is attributed to different reasons, such as the departure of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP) from the territories, the low

percentage of progress in the implementation of the agreements, the insecurity regarding the course that peace will take (implementation of the agreements with the FARC-EP) with the new government, and the territorial and economic expansion of several armed groups. Likewise, and after the dialogue between the new Government and the delegation of the ELN came to a standstill, the Government, in reaction to the military actions of this armed group, decided to put an end to this process, which leads to greater uncertainty and an increase in the vulnerability of the civilian population.

Added to this, the political, social and humanitarian context of Venezuela increases the risk factors directly affecting the civilian population, both Venezuelan and Colombian migrants, especially on the border. The political tension has spread across the region and could lead to a possible military confrontation. With the conclusion of the

strategic assessment in March 2018 and following the above-mentioned developments, the decision was taken for Geneva Call to pursue its activities in Colombia.

What did Geneva Call achieve in 2018?

- In 2018 Geneva Call started to explore new advocacy options vis-a-vis established and new armed actors, within the framework of uncertainty in the implementation of the peace process with active armed actors in Colombia. It continued the work of combining direct dialogue, capacity-building and advocacy, conducting meetings and training sessions in the Bucaramanga and Cúcuta prisons with the male and female prisoners of a key armed actor. This made it possible to address issues such as protection from sexual violence, mine action and the child protection, as well as the role of guerrilla women in the negotiation process and gender

issues. This approach facilitated the activities targeting civil society and international actors, with an increased emphasis on direct activities with affected communities, notably on Mine Risk Education (MRE).

- Two meetings were organised with the delegation of an armed actor in Havana, with one bringing together only the women of the delegation. Discussions were geared towards the importance of signing *Deeds of Commitments* on Child Protection. In addition, contact with the armed actor's representative in Switzerland was maintained throughout the reporting period.
- At least 6 meetings were organised with Colombian Government representatives (Colombian High Commissioner for Peace in November 2018 in Geneva, meeting with the Government peace negotiator Guillermo Fergusson on May 12, various meetings in Geneva in October, meeting with the Foreign Minister in Bogotá during July 2018, meeting with the President, in Paris, in November).
- 4 workshops and training sessions were organised with communities and CBOs/CSOs, on mine action, IHL, basic humanitarian demining and a comprehensive approach to mine action in Cauca, Chocó, Nariño and Arauca.

What challenges did Geneva Call face in this context?

The main challenge has been related to obtaining appropriate funding to conduct the activities, thus limiting the organisational capacity to respond to the situation. Moreover, the changes at a national level and the definitive breakdown of the peace process(es), challenge the sustainability of the work of Geneva Call. The emergence of new actors in the conflict, whose motivations are mainly economical, makes the recognition of IHL and dialogue about it more difficult despite our long-term experience with ANSAs in the country.

Expenditure

	CHF
TOTAL	212 310

Near and Middle East (NAME)





Near and Middle East: regional approach

What were the regional developments?

As per Geneva Call's 2017-2019 strategy, the decentralization of operations has led to enhanced operational developments and contacts with ANSAs and relevant stakeholders in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria (North East) and Yemen.

Thanks to its longstanding work and access to many of the key regional ANSAs and stakeholders, Geneva Call is increasingly being approached to work to directly improve the protection of civilians by training ANSAs, but also indirectly by strengthening the IHL and thematic knowledge of national and international NGOs working on the protection of civilians.

These requests and the level of the activities that Geneva Call is implementing in the region have created an increased need for support and expertise. It has also made it necessary to set up a "regional support unit" in order to bring Geneva Call closer to its target audiences, increase its response capacity, and to reduce the reaction time for the country programmes, while serving as a hub for regional and transnational activities for the region.

The regional support unit would therefore fulfil an operational support role to the country offices of the region, with a strong emphasis on regional advocacy on humanitarian norms. With a more strategic location where decisions are taken and where the necessary language requirements and regional know-how are more easily found, the regional support unit will - more effectively and efficiently - respond to the needs for expertise and support at an operational level.

The overarching objective of the regional strategy is to enhance the humanitarian engagement capacity in the region by proposing strategies and means to engage with transnational ANSAs, by increasing stakeholder support for the humanitarian engagement of ANSAs, and by building the knowledge of Geneva Call staff and

its partners on international humanitarian norms and Islamic Law.

- A mapping of key regional stakeholders including NGOs, influential religious or political actors, faith-based organisations, etc., has been completed and is being updated on a regular basis.
- Two multilateral meetings and briefings have been organized in the region, in preparation for future events aiming at promoting the support for ANSA engagement and Geneva Call's work in the region.

Iran & Turkey

A localised conflict in Turkey is still ongoing, but the threshold is lower than in previous years. A lack of direct access to Turkey and Iran has made monitoring activities more difficult than before and directly impacting Geneva Call's work.

Moreover, difficulties and challenges were faced while working to identify potential partners and establish partnership agreements in order to be able to implement programme activities.

For these reasons, Geneva Call was not able to be fully operational with a dedicated programme for each country. Despite these challenges, contact was maintained with ANSAs through a number of bilateral meetings in Sulemaniyah/Kurdistan Regional Government and in Europe.

Iraq



© Geneva Call

What was the context?

Despite victory having been claimed over the Islamic State group (ISg), in the last 6 months several incidents have been reported in which the ISg has attacked the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) in the governorates of Anbar, Salahdin, Ninveh, Diyala and Kirkuk. ISg elements are maintaining safe havens in the Iraqi territories bordering Syria and other hard-to-access areas within Iraq.

In the post ISg context, Iraqi society is divided up according to ethnic, sectarian, religious and communal lines, which at present poses an imminent threat to the long-term stability and security of the country. Simultaneously, these divisions provide the opportunity for groups such as ISg to stage their comeback in selected

locations and to capitalize on these dynamics which create a climate of vulnerability. The Kurdish region and especially its border areas are affected by the on-going clashes between the Turkish army and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). Since April 2018, Turkey has increased its military activities and presence within the Kurdistan region and is threatening to carry out a military offensive against PKK positions and also against its affiliated groups in Sinjar, Qandil and Makhmur.

Recently, international NGOs, local civil society organizations (CSOs) and leaders of internally displaced persons (IDPs) have reported that several violations have been committed by armed actors in the areas retaken from the ISg. Inside the camps in Kirkuk, Nineveh, Salah al-din and Anbar, the violations relate to sexual violence and

gender discrimination, as well as recruitment of children. In addition, there have been a number of reported cases of civilians being killed due to explosive remnants of war (ERW) in the above-mentioned areas.

Given this, it was critical to continue engaging Shia, Sunni, Turkmen, Christian and Yazidi ANSAs/armed actors, including the Peshmerga forces, on humanitarian norms as the disputed territories in Kirkuk, Ninveh, Makhmour and Diyala coupled with returnees' issues relating to their ethnic background can trigger low to medium scale violence.

What did Geneva Call achieve in 2018?

- Geneva Call supported the Ministry of Peshmerga in developing the Code of Conduct (CoC) for Peshmerga forces, which was adopted by the Ministry of Peshmerga. The relationship with the Ministry of Peshmerga stepped up into an advanced stage and a dialogue was initiated on further strengthening the role of their internal accountability and policy unit. Geneva Call provided training on humanitarian norms to the intelligence unit of the PUK.
- Geneva Call engaged all the key PMF groups within and outside the commission and further strengthened its relationships with the heads and senior commanders of the PMF groups. The Geneva Call team organized a high-level training session on rules on protection of IDPs and forced displacement for the top leadership of 20 PMF groups which contributed not only to raising awareness and knowledge on IDP protection issues, but also offered new avenues to continue to engage the leadership of various PMF groups on policy-level commitments.
- In December, the Nineveh Guards and Ezidkhan Forces each signed a unilateral humanitarian declaration after a training sessions and awareness-raising sessions with the leadership of both forces. The negotiations on the signature of *Deeds of Commitment* with these groups are at their final stages.
- Geneva Call started activities in Diyala province. Mechanisms to improve communication between ANSAs/armed actors (notably the PMF) and humanitarian actors have already been developed and several focal points from different PMF groups and other armed actors have already been trained. Geneva Call signed an MoU with the Nineveh Guards and accordingly provided 5 training sessions to the to the highest and second level commanders of the forces.

- Geneva Call made very important progress in terms of its presence, activities and humanitarian engagements with ANSAs/armed actors as well as interactions with the other stakeholders across Iraq. Geneva Call consolidated and developed working relations with relevant local, regional and national authorities including parliamentarians in Erbil, Duhok, Baghdad, Sulaimaniyah, Anbar, Kirkuk, Salahadin, Diyala and Nineveh (especially in Sinjar).
- Geneva Call has launched a community-based protection (CBP) project with a local partner in Sinjar to disseminate messages and notebooks on the humanitarian norms to the citizens and ANSAs/armed actors in the area. The team conducted training sessions on the protection of displaced persons in armed conflict, within IDP camps and outside of the camps, targeting CSOs, international organizations, IDP leaders, the camp management authorities, local authorities and political representatives of influential armed actors. Geneva Call initiated a dialogue on the promotion of humanitarian norms with the human rights, relations and security and defence committees of the National Parliament.

What challenges did Geneva Call face in this context?

The political changes at the national level, the divisions within the opposition and the internal tensions between the various armed actors sometimes hamper the implementation of the operations. There remains a larger concern that the result of the conflict and challenges of reconstruction and reintegration will lead to the breakup of Iraq and that sectarian tension will plague the region for years to come, possibly expanding into a proxy conflict among various international groups (transnational ANSAs). Additionally, there are concerns that the ISg, having lost control of territory in Iraq and Syria, may revert to its insurgency roots and refocus on orchestrating terrorist attacks.

Expenditure

	CHF
TOTAL	1 244 167

Lebanon



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What was the context?

Since the end of the civil war in 1990, the situation in Lebanon has remained fragile with politically motivated armed violence occurring in various Lebanese regions, at times between armed groups. Regular security-related incidents also occur in the Palestinian refugee camps, mainly in Ain al-Hilweh (Saida), Tripoli and Beirut (e.g. clashes in the Shatila camp in March 2018). Typically, armed violence in Lebanon involves armed groups and militias – some being derivatives of Lebanese political parties who have proven to be one of the main reservoirs of armed groups in the society. Historical, geopolitical and socio-political dynamics have meant the Lebanese State has been unable to control violence through

law enforcement. The Syrian conflict has further exacerbated existing political tensions in Lebanon, and increased fears of a resurgence of armed conflict.

Despite the relative recent calm, the situation may still deteriorate quickly, with arms being easily accessible throughout the country. In addition to the Southern border, the North and the Beqaa are at risk of escalation and increased armed violence, especially with the ever-delicate balance of sectarian and tribal influences, that has further been disrupted by the huge numbers of Syrians seeking refuge in those areas.

What did Geneva Call achieve in 2018?

- The Friends of International Humanitarian Law Network – an initiative launched by Geneva Call and the first of its kind in the region – held its second and third round of thematic discussions around the protection of cultural heritage in armed conflict and the protection of health care in armed conflict, respectively. The initiative brings together Lebanese actors from all parts of the country as well as Palestinian and Syrian civil society organisations (CSOs).
- 22 Sunni Sheikhs – religious education teachers, imams and prayer leaders – affiliated with Dar Al Ifta' in Tripoli, attended a 1-day IHL awareness-raising workshop. The training session was specifically tailored to respond to questions related to IHL and Sharia Law. A related nation-wide mapping of religious actors was also finalized and will serve as a basis for the Geneva Call engagement strategy concerning religious leaders.
- Geneva Call pursued its engagement with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and non-PLO factions in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. It worked – together with the Legal Support Unit (LSU) of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation/Palestinian National Security Forces (PLO/PNSF) – to carry out concrete measures with the aim of preventing and/or reducing the impact of armed violence on the camps' population, namely by further improving and adopting the Code of Conduct and Ethics for the PNSF.
- A partnership was established with the Syrian CSOs URDA and Discostamine, with training sessions on IHL initiated. Action plans were renewed with Basamat for Development, a Syrian CSO, and Syrian Sheikhs to conduct IHL awareness-raising sessions with Syrian refugees. In 2018 a total of 9 training sessions were held by Geneva Call and 11 were held by ToT (Training of Trainers) graduates.
- Syrian CSOs and influential actors from the Syrian refugee community (Sheikhs and lawyers) were engaged on humanitarian norms through training sessions. Many were able to disseminate the acquired knowledge in their communities. Several meetings were held with Syrian CSOs and activists to discuss possible future collaboration. A 3-day collective IHL training session was held with Syrian CSOs, mainly active in Southern Syria and working in several sectors such as protection, relief, and medical care.
- A workshop with donors and stakeholders, hosted by the Human Security Division of the Swiss Embassy, took place to present Geneva Call's activities in Lebanon and the region.

What challenges did Geneva Call face in this context?

In Lebanon, political tension affects Geneva Call's planned activities with political parties. Moreover, given its small size and limited visibility and the fact that Geneva Call does not deliver direct aid activities, it is sometimes difficult to engage new actors.

Difficulties in obtaining the necessary funding also affected the proper implementation of the strategy.

Expenditure

	CHF
TOTAL	460935

Syria

What was the context?

Now in its eighth year, the conflict in Syria is marked by the presence of a proliferation of actors, including ANSAs: the Syrian Government Forces and Hezbollah, the Russian and Iranian Forces and militias fighting in support of the regular military forces, the Free Syrian Army (FSA) brigades supported by Turkey who controls parts of North-Western Syria, Salafi-Jihadi movements, the Islamic State group (ISg), the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and the Kurdish Forces YPG/YPJ, supported by the US coalition forces, who control the territory in the North-East of Syria.

During the first quarter of 2018, the conflict witnessed two emergency situations in Afrin and Eastern Ghouta, leading to continued internal displacement and the loss of livelihoods. A question mark remains over the future of the more than 350,000 estimated residents that are located in eastern Ghouta. Last June, an escalation of hostilities between the Syrian Government and opposition groups in south-western Syria led to the displacement of around 271,800 Syrians who claimed asylum and protection from neighboring countries, as well as the transfer of ANSAs from the South to the North of Syria. Escalations are set to continue in the Idlib area as the

Syrian regime decided to take control of this area, with Russian and Iranian support. An agreement was reached between Turkey and Russia to establish a demilitarised buffer zone 15-20 km into the opposition area where some radical ANSAs are operating, which delayed a potential Syrian Government operation in Idlib province which would have led to the displacement of at least 3 million people.

According to Reliefweb, the ongoing armed conflict in Syria has caused an influx of displaced people and refugees across the region and beyond, with over 6.6 million displaced persons. There are highly



credible reports of the use of children in hostilities by all sides, many children have been killed, and almost all ANSAs involved in the conflict have recruited children from both local and refugee/IDP communities. Discriminatory laws and practices have also encouraged impunity for gender-based violence, while there have been many reported cases of sexual torture of women, men and children.

What did Geneva Call achieve in 2018?

- The Fighter Not Killer (FnK) campaign was launched in February 2018, linked to the Afrin military campaign. In September 2018, 3,850 posters covering the same six humanitarian messages summarising the 15 rules of IHL were disseminated, through the AFAQ foundation, around the Idlib countryside, during different IHL training sessions (Ma'arat Al-Nu'man - Azaz-Afrin - Idlib city- Maasran in rural Idlib - Klibt in rural Idlib).
- In North-east Syria, Geneva Call held training sessions for staff members of 5 of the main camps for IDPs and refugees, on international humanitarian norms, reaching approximately 140 people. In addition, Geneva Call carried out IHL training for staff of the Women's Foundation and the Ministry of Youth and Sport which are linked to Rojava, the self-administration of North-Eastern Syria.
- Following engagement with Geneva Call, the SDF adopted a new minimum recruitment age of 18 years. This age limit also applies to the YPG and YPJ who signed a *Deed of Commitment* with Geneva Call which previously hold a reservation limiting the age to 17 years. This demonstrates significant progress towards adopting IHL standards.
- In May 2018, following long-term engagement by Geneva Call, the Islam Army took the initiative to release all children recruited by the faction, and to stop recruiting any individual under the age of 18, or where they do not have proof of age.
- Geneva Call's partner, the AFAQ Academy carried out specific training sessions (child protection, gender-based violence, landmines) for signatories of the *Deeds of Commitment* as well as other Syrian ANSAs active in North-west Syria. The participation of these ANSAs in the session, shows the importance they give to the commitments undertaken.
- On 11 and 12 July 2018, Geneva Call, in collaboration with the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), organized a two-day conference with 11 FSA brigades in Geneva on the protection of children in armed conflict. Geneva Call conducted discussions separately with each signatory ANSA on the implementation of the *Deed of Commitments* they had signed.
- Geneva Call conducted several training sessions on international humanitarian norms; for Syrian CSOs based in Lebanon, the Kurdish Red Crescent (NE-S), IHH (a Turkish humanitarian organization) key staff in Antakya and in Istanbul as well as guards of different detention centres in Derek and Qamishli (North-east Syria).
- A workshop entitled "International Humanitarian Law, protection and access in Syria: Challenges, impact and recommendations" was organized on 18 and 19 December 2018 in Beirut, Lebanon. The workshop was organised in Lebanon to facilitate the broader participation of actors that operate both outside and inside Syria. It provided tools and frameworks for participants to enhance their own capacity, and to discover new methods and standards for operating in complex environments, where traditional approaches to humanitarian operations, international humanitarian law, access, and proximity to vulnerable populations are being challenged. It targeted a total of 32 NGOs and UN agencies working in both opposition-held areas and government-controlled areas.

Expenditure

	CHF
TOTAL	1 158 719

What challenges did Geneva Call face in this context?

An important challenge is the fluidity of Syrian ANSAs, who regularly change alliances or dissolve to reappear under new identities. As a result, while Geneva Call has engaged FSA brigades since 2012, many of them no longer exist in the same configuration. Also, the lack of direct access to the North West, Centre and South of Syria, as well as to the Damascus area, limits our capacity for monitoring and for dialogue with the radical ANSAs who are controlling these areas. Another key challenge is the current lack of direct contact with the Syrian Government. Geneva Call will try to reach them through local stakeholders.

Yemen



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What was the context?

Yemen has witnessed long periods of instability and conflict between government forces and other armed actors on the one hand and among different political, tribal and armed groups on the other. Since the arrival of Ansar Allah/Houthis in the capital city of Sana'a, leading to the displacement of the Mansour Hadi government in 2014, the conflict further escalated into all governorates of Yemen in early 2015 and led to the mobilization of an Arab coalition to reinstate the Hadi government. In November 2017 tension emerged between the former allies, the General People's Congress (GPC) of former president Saleh and Ansar Allah/Houthis, which created a law and order problem in Sana'a, ultimately leading to the killing of the ex-president and head of the GPC one month later.

The tension between the Hadi government and other armed actors opposed

to the Ansar Allah/Houthis continues to destabilize the security situation of the Southern governorates. Taking advantage of a power vacuum, other forces, including Al-Qaida in Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and the Islamic State group (ISg) are gradually increasing their presence on the ground and expanding their influence. This makes the security situation fluid in the south, where Geneva Call set up an office in Aden in April 2018.

The North remains under the control of Ansar Allah/Houthis forces, which are in conflict with the State and its allies, while there is an independence movement in the South supported by a group of AN-SAS officially linked to the Arab Coalition group, yet diverging in regards to priorities and key issues. This makes the situation for civilians unbearable and the divisions more profound, against a backdrop of profound poverty and the existence and even expansion of Al-Qaeda/ ISg, adding

a new layer of complexity to the country's ongoing troubles. The more the conflict becomes protracted, the more Yemeni society becomes divided along sectarian (Sunni/Shia) but also ideological lines (Southern independence movement versus more conservative Aden/Riyadh line).

The Yemeni population is becoming increasingly vulnerable due to poverty and displacement, rivalries and tribalism, militarized communities, and a lack of education. Sexual violence and gender discrimination have reportedly become even more pervasive as the fighting has spread. In addition to difficulties created by the general security situation and insufficient humanitarian aid, it has been reported that security incidents are widespread, humanitarian workers are being constantly intimidated, medical personnel and health facilities are threatened, and the delivery of humanitarian assistance is constantly interfered with.

The peace talks planned in Geneva in September could not take place, due to the absence of the Ansar Allah/Houthis delegation. The UN Secretary General envoy for Yemen, Martin Griffiths, started another round of individual meetings with high-level authorities from both sides and announced peace talks in early December 2018 in Sweden. The Sweden peace talks resulted in some confidence-building measures including a ceasefire and the handover of the Hudaydah port.

What did Geneva Call achieve in 2018?

- A series of meetings were organized with INGOs, authorities, UN agencies, ICRC, and MSF to understand and analyse the context before approaching armed actors to promote their respect of IHL.
- One of the major developments during 2018 was in the field of civil society engagement. Geneva Call not only identified and engaged CSOs but also had meetings and sessions on IHL with academics, media and INGOs. Several training sessions were conducted for CSOs and INGOs and one session targeted particularly the high-level commanders of security forces.
- In collaboration with the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MoPIC), Geneva Call organized a one-day training session on IHL and Geneva Call's work for mid-level officials of different ministries such as human rights, legal affairs, MoPIC, Interior, social welfare, education, national security and immigration. 33 officials participated, including 11 women.
- In November 2018, a one-day IHL awareness raising session was organized with and the leaders of the Southern Popular Resistance Committees in different clusters of Aden. 14 participants took part in the event and shared their practical experiences on the violations of IHL they experienced during the civil war in Aden. They understood the importance of IHL promotion and its respect by armed actors for the protection of civilians.

- Other IHL events were organized with high-level officials of the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Defence. Commanders and officials, including soldiers and office staff from the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Defence participated in the event. A total of 87 participants including army generals, brigadiers, colonels and other high-level officials were present.
- Geneva Call launched the Fighter Not Killer Facebook campaign in March and April in the country which reached 2.8 million people. The campaign was again launched in June and reached 2.3 million and for the fourth time in August, reaching 3.3 million people including the general public and members of armed actors. The Fighter Not Killer mobile app was launched in Yemen in August 2018, reaching almost one million individuals.

What challenges did Geneva Call face in this context?

The security situation remains very unstable in Yemen and the ability of international staff to work in the country is limited. As the organisation is new in the country, it needs some time to become established and train/prepare its staff and partners as required. Geneva Call is operational from Aden, targeting the Southern governorates where a genuine dialogue has been launched with key actors. Still, the volatile security situation and the collapse of the State institutions creates risks that Geneva Call is constantly assessing while adjusting its operations accordingly, so as to not jeopardize its presence.

Expenditure

	CHF
TOTAL	733 206

Policy and legal unit

During 2018, the Policy and Legal Unit (PLU) has continued to consolidate institutional memory and support internal capacity building and policy development. It notably produced internal methodological guidelines for Geneva Call's staff on humanitarian engagement with ANSAs (and other target groups) as well as new training materials on displacement and cultural heritage. Another important achievement was the drafting of a new *Deed of Commitment* on the protection of healthcare in armed conflict, which will enable Geneva Call's staff to engage with ANSAs on this new thematic. The PLU also provided internal trainings at HQ and country office level as well as substantial support for field operations (IHL training of ANSAs and civil society organizations, review of ANSAs codes of conduct and unilateral declarations, legal advice, etc.).

Moreover, the Policy and Legal Unit published a study "Culture under fire: armed non-State actors and cultural heritage in wartime" as well as the report of an expert meeting on the role of ANSAs in the administration of justice. In partnership

with the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, it also embarked into a major research project on the practice and interpretation of selected humanitarian norms by ANSAs. Drawing on the database www.theirwords.org and case studies, the project aims to increase knowledge of ANSAs perspectives and inform strategies to promote their compliance with international law.

Throughout the year, the PLU continued to liaise with relevant stakeholders, build partnerships and represent Geneva Call in various expert meetings and fora.

Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning

According to the 3-year strategy of the Geneva Call, during 2018 the MEAL unit objective was to focus on training staff while adapting the tools and processes from feedback received by staff to ensure they fully met Geneva Call's needs.

All tools developed in 2017 were tested among different field missions. As a result

of this process revised planning documents were developed, approved, presented and tested by the operations' staff.

Separately, the following was developed and undertaken:

- Clearly identified key outcomes and indicators to track regarding the Terms of Commitments steps used by Geneva Call.
- MEAL guidelines & training kit were developed as part of the Engagement Guidelines.
- Presentations of MEAL guidelines to all new staff that passed through Geneva.

During 2018, MEAL realised an in-depth evaluation on the *Deed of Commitment* as a tool largely promoted and used by Geneva Call throughout the regions. The reports with the findings and recommendations will be released during the first quarter of 2019.

Communication

Institutional communication

In June 2018, Geneva Call's new visual identity was launched, to better reflect the organization's mission and to boost its visibility among very different audiences. The new logo adopted is strong and impactful, yet easily recognized and understood in all cultural contexts.

The process to design and develop a new Geneva Call website as well as a presentation video was commenced in the last quarter of 2018 and is expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2019. The objective of the new website is to present our operations and activities in a more visually engaging, modern and impactful way. The new presentation video will provide an up-to-date overview of the organisation's mission and successes.

In parallel, efforts were being deployed to define priority audiences, red lines and key messages for institutional advocacy at the international, regional and thematic levels, together with roles and responsibilities in relation to advocacy activities.

Operational communication

The operational communication unit continued to support field programmes in the definition of their operational communication strategies and the communication roles at field level were further consolidated. Targeted communication material to develop capacity in the field was also prepared, to enable Geneva Call's operational staff in the field to be more independent regarding external communication.

Regarding the Fighter not Killer campaign, the mobile phone app was installed almost 15,000 times, with the most installs in Yemen and Iraq. In 2018 alone, the Fighter not Killer video campaign on Facebook reached approximately 2 million people in Iraq, and over 200,000 in Syria.

Virtual reality videos, to highlight some of the key rules of international humanitarian law, as well as videos illustrating our operations in Syria and Western Sahara were produced and published.

Administration and Finance

During 2018, Geneva Call undertook an overhaul of its human resources management policies. New tools and procedures were developed and adapted to strengthen the human resources management and introduce best practices.

Mandatory and optional training procedures promoting the professional growth of the organisation's employees were developed.

Moreover, the recruitment policies and procedures were developed and improved further, along with new tools facilitating a better integration within the organisation's structure.

In terms of finance and accountancy, efforts continued in assessing the internal control system and identifying the needs for improvement or development of additional tools and procedures. Accounting standards

and software systems continued to be implemented and tested at both levels, field and headquarters. Various implementation and follow-up challenges impacted the overall progress and accuracy of the financial situation. Specific measures were developed and applied by the end of the year to address the situation and continue to be strengthened for the 2019.

Financial Statement

The strategic growth in income and operational expenses challenged the organization's financial management, leading to delays in booking costs and the outsourcing of accounting, creating additional costs. The Board of Trustees has approved a plan to address the ensuing deficit over a three-

year period through tight cost control, a review of oversight, structure and staffing of the support functions and also flagged the need to obtain healthier financial reserves to support the organization's growth and development.

Expenditure (CHF)

	Annual Report	2018
Africa	CAR	51964
	DRC	568626
	Libya	308403
	Mali	218311
	Other contexts	161924
Asia/Europe	Afghanistan	117263
	Myanmar	374551
	The Philippines	212756
	Thailand	194580
	Ukraine	162121
Latin America	Colombia	212310
NAME	Iraq	1244167
	Lebanon	460935
	Syria	1158719
	Yemen	733206
	Other contexts	54129
Operational Support		1738002
TOTAL		7971968

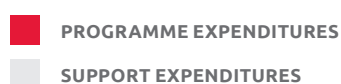
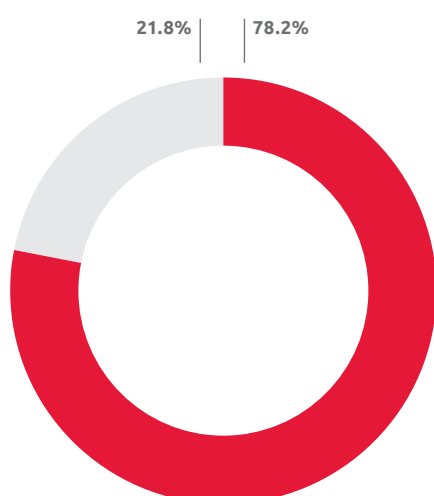
Balance sheet (CHF)

	2018	2017
Cash and cash equivalent	1 504 235	894 458
Current accounts	–	13 545
Receivables from donors	363 866	375 162
Other receivables	204 592	794
Prepayments and accrued income	106 501	48 289
CURRENT ASSETS	2 179 194	1 332 248
Fixed assets	49 378	38 854
NON-CURRENT ASSETS	49 378	38 854
TOTAL ASSETS	2 228 572	1 371 102
Payables from goods and services	304 136	107 169
Other liabilities	266 998	40 324
Accruals expenses	38 990	29 133
Current liabilities	610 124	176 626
RESTRICTED FUNDS	2 355 178	976 448
Organization capital		
– Initial capital	50 000	50 000
– Free capital	200 000	200 000
– Accumulated benefit/deficit (beginning of the year)	-31 972	-95 052
– Result of the Year	-954 758	63 080
TOTAL ORGANIZATION CAPITAL	-736 730	218 028
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND ORGANIZATION CAPITAL	2 228 572	1 371 102

Statement of operations (CHF)

	2018	2017
OPERATING INCOME		
Free donations received - unrestricted	32 545	96 695
Contributions from public authorities	8 063 608	5 244 289
Restricted contributions from private donors	252 700	261 466
Other income	1 601	104 992
TOTAL OPERATING INCOME	8 350 454	5 707 442
OPERATING EXPENDITURES		
Programme expenditures	6 233 966	4 904 868
Support expenditures	1 738 002	706 541
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES	7 971 968	5 611 409
OPERATING RESULT	378 486	96 033
FINANCIAL RESULT		
Financial charges	-115 134	86 784
Exchange loss	-20 489	-16 573
Exchange gain	-225 978	-269 515
Exchange gain	130 769	372 872
Interest earned	564	-
EXCEPTIONAL RESULT	-250 332	-
Previous years expenses	-250 332	-
VARIATION OF RESTRICTED FUNDS / CHANGE IN FUND CAPITAL	-967 778	-119 737
RESULT OF THE YEAR	-954 758	63 080

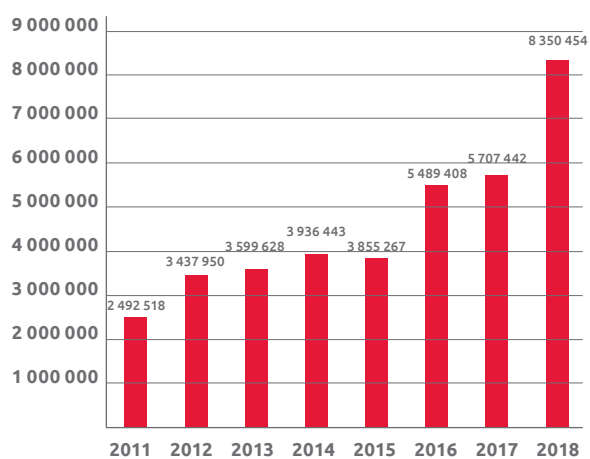
Expenditure



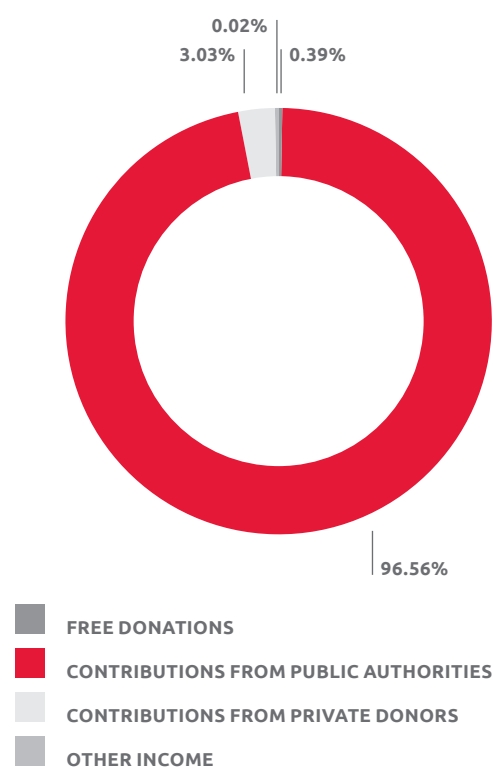
Cash flow statement (CHF)

	2018	2017
RESULT OF THE YEAR	-954 758	63 080
Change in capital of restricted funds / Change in fund capital	1 378 730	-830 029
Depreciation	36 344	24 505
Increase (-) / Decrease (+) Receivables from services	11 296	1 354 932
Increase (-) / Decrease (+) in cash for projects	13 545	-13 545
Increase (-) / Decrease (+) Prepayment and accrued income	-58 212	9 829
Increase (-) / Decrease (+) Other short-term receivables	-203 798	62 095
Increase (+) / Decrease (-) Other short-term liabilities	226 674	-88 335
Increase (+) / Decrease (-) Payables from goods and services	196 967	-83 597
Increase (+) / Decrease (-) Accruals expenses	9 857	1 789
CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	656 646	500 724
Investment (-) in tangible fixed assets	-46 868	-45 454
Cash flow from investment activities	-46 868	-45 454
INCREASE (+) / DECREASE (-) IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENT	609 777	455 270
Cash and cash equivalent beginning of the year	894 458	439 188
Cash and cash equivalent end of the year	1 504 235	894 458
INCREASE (+) / DECREASE (-) IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENT	609 777	455 270

Evolution of income since 2011 (CHF)



Sources of funding



Geneva Call is thankful to its donors and supporters

- The governments of Australia (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade), Belgium, Finland, France, Italy (through the GICHD), Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency), Switzerland (Human Security Division and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation) and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (Department for International Development) through its embassy in Myanmar and Thailand.
- The European Commission (Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department, including through Danish Church Aid and Save the Children Norway), the Danish Refugee Council, Joint Peace Fund, Search for Common Ground, UNESCO, UNICEF and UNMAS.
- The Commune of Anières, the Commune of Chêne-Bougeries, the City of Geneva and the Republic and Canton of Geneva.
- The contributors to the Alexander Notter Fund, Hans Wilsdorf Foundation, La Loterie Romande and Stiftung Usine.

Support us

Finding new financial resources represents a continuous challenge for Geneva Call. To address this, Geneva Call particularly seeks guaranteed multi-year funding, as this is a significant aid to overall planning and human resources commitments. It also reduces administrative costs, thereby allowing more resources to be dedicated to field activities.

Geneva Call is greatly appreciative of its donors and particularly those who give an element of core funding; this allows the organization greater flexibility and responsiveness to emerging needs.

Geneva Call wishes to thank its current donors for continuing to fund it in this manner and hopes that new donors will consider doing so over the coming years.

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