



## **DEED OF COMMITMENT UNDER GENEVA CALL FOR THE PROTECTION OF HEALTH CARE IN ARMED CONFLICT**

We, (name of signatory), through our duly authorized representative(s),

*Concerned* with the immediate and long-term impact that attacks against health care personnel, facilities and medical transports have on the wounded and sick, the civilian population and health services at large, and the threat that they present for the right of everyone to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health;

*Affirming* our determination to protect the civilian population and other persons no longer taking part in hostilities from the effects or dangers of military actions, and to respect their fundamental rights;

*Reaffirming* our obligation to collect and care for the wounded and sick, and to treat all of them humanely and without distinction on any grounds other than medical ones;

*Recognizing* the importance of the neutrality and inviolability of health care personnel, facilities and medical transports to ensure the security and continuity of health care services to all, without discrimination;

*Rejecting* the notion that any cause, for whatever reason, may justify the unlawful treatment of the wounded and sick and attacks against health care personnel, facilities and medical transports;

*Accepting* that international humanitarian norms apply to and oblige all parties to armed conflict;

*Taking due account* of our international legal obligations with regards to the respect and protection of health care personnel, facilities and medical transports, and the wounded and sick, in particular those enshrined in International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law, as well as the principles of medical ethics;

*Mindful* that the Statute of the International Criminal Court criminalizes violence to life and person of the wounded and sick and the acts of intentionally directing attacks against buildings, material, medical units and transport, and personnel using the distinctive emblems of the Geneva Conventions in conformity with international law, as well as against hospitals and places where the sick and wounded are collected, provided they are not military objectives;

Hereby solemnly commit ourselves to the following terms:

1. TO RESPECT AND PROTECT the wounded and sick, whether civilian or military, friend or enemy, in all circumstances. This includes not attacking, harming or killing them, protecting them from ill-treatment and pillage of their personal property, and providing them with the health care and attention required by their condition, based solely on medical grounds with the least possible delay.
2. TO TAKE all possible measures to search for, collect and evacuate the wounded and sick without delay or adverse distinction, including by allowing civilians and impartial humanitarian organizations to assist in these tasks.
3. TO RESPECT AND PROTECT health care personnel engaged in the provision of health care. This includes not attacking, threatening or pressuring those who provide health care, respecting

the obligation of health care personnel to treat all wounded and sick persons without distinction on any grounds other than medical ones, and not otherwise unduly interfering with the work of health care personnel. It includes also not punishing health care personnel for performing medical duties, not compelling them to perform acts contrary to their medical ethics or to disclose information covered by medical confidentiality.

4. TO RESPECT AND PROTECT medical transports. This includes not attacking them, facilitating the medical evacuation of the wounded and sick, and allowing for the unimpeded and fast passage of all vehicles used for health care. It also includes not interfering with the functioning of medical transports, in particular not using them for military or other non-medical purposes, and respecting the no weapon policy inside medical transports.
5. TO RESPECT AND PROTECT health care facilities. This includes not attacking health care facilities performing medical functions, taking all feasible measures to spare health care facilities from the effects of attacks, and not depriving them from the vital resources needed for their functioning. It also includes facilitating the work carried out in health care facilities; refraining from any behaviour that disrupts the functioning of health care facilities, in particular not using them for military or other non-medical purposes, and respecting the no-weapon policy inside health care facilities.
6. TO GIVE due warning in the case that health care personnel, facilities or medical transports are used outside their humanitarian functions to commit harmful acts, allowing them necessary time to remedy the situation or to safely evacuate.
7. TO RESPECT the distinctive emblems of the red cross, red crescent and red crystal and not to use them for purposes not related to the provision of health care.
8. TO FURTHER ENDEAVOUR, in areas where we exercise authority, to:
  - i) Ensure, maintain and provide access for affected populations to essential health care facilities, goods and services, without adverse distinction;
  - ii) Facilitate the provision of health care by impartial humanitarian organizations.
9. TO ISSUE the necessary orders and directives to our political and military organs, commanders and fighters for the implementation and enforcement of our commitment, including measures for information, dissemination and training. Commanders and superiors are responsible for their subordinates. In case of non-compliance, we will take all necessary measures to cease violations immediately, initiate appropriate investigations and impose sanctions in accordance with international standards.
10. TO ALLOW AND COOPERATE in the monitoring and verification of our present commitment by Geneva Call and other independent international and national organizations and associated for this purpose with Geneva Call. Such monitoring and verification include visits and inspections in all areas where we operate, and the provision of the necessary information and reports, as may be required for such purposes in the spirit of transparency and accountability.
11. TO TREAT this commitment as one step or part of a broader commitment in principle to the ideal of humanitarian norms, particularly of international humanitarian law and human rights, and to contribute to their respect in the field practice as well to the further development of humanitarian norms in armed conflict.
12. This *Deed of Commitment* shall not affect our legal status, pursuant to the relevant clause in common article 3 of the Geneva Conventions of 1949.
13. We understand that Geneva Call may publicize our compliance or non-compliance with this *Deed of Commitment*.
14. We see the desirability of attracting the adherence of other such armed actors to this *Deed of Commitment* and will do our part to promote it.

15. This *Deed of Commitment* complements, or supersedes, as the case may be, any existing unilateral declaration of ours on the protection of health care in armed conflict.
16. This *Deed of Commitment* shall take effect immediately upon its signing and receipt by the Government of the Republic and Canton of Geneva which receives it as the custodian of such *Deeds*.