



PATHWAYS TO HOPE

Geneva Call | Annual Report 2024



Cover photo:

An armed rebel stands inside the Presidential Palace in Damascus, Syria, on December 10, 2024. Parts of the palace were ransacked as rebel forces seized control of the capital, prompting longtime ruler Bashar al-Assad to flee to Russia. The fall of Assad's regime marked a turning point in Syria's history, ending over a decade of civil war that began in 2011 during the Arab Spring uprisings. (Photo by Ali Haj Suleiman/Getty Images)



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Foreword

In a world where conflict continues to devastate civilian populations—from Colombia to Sudan and Myanmar—Geneva Call remains steadfast in its commitment to protect civilians in conflict situations wherever they are.

Armed groups and de facto authorities (AGDAs) significantly influence the lives of countless civilians, often with little regard for International Humanitarian Law (IHL).

Violence against civilians is escalating everywhere, driven by a disregard for basic IHL principles and growing dehumanization among most parties to conflicts across the globe. The international community's powerlessness in solving long-lasting wars around the world and its failure to promote lasting conflict transformation leave fragile contexts vulnerable to further violence. As this report goes to print, the humanitarian world is shaken by unprecedented funding cuts that jeopardize the situation of the most vulnerable victims of armed conflict.

Yet, over 25 years, we have learned that real change, though slow, is possible. Our commitment to civilian populations is rooted in a long-term vision focused on trust-building and patience. Despite the risks and criticism of engaging with armed groups, our work has proven valuable. For instance, in Syria, early dissemination of IHL to AGDAs has led to concrete positive outcomes for civilians.

This report, “Pathways to Hope”, reflects our belief that—even in today’s challenging global context—deep behavioral change by weapon carriers remains possible. It demands trust-building capacities, patience and long-term engagement. Anchored in our 2024-2027 Strategy, this report outlines our ongoing efforts to integrate IHL and relevant applicable human rights norms into AGDAs’ practices through dialogue and education. We also recognize that lasting behavioral changes require engaging a broader ecosystem—community leaders, religious figures, and policymakers—to safeguard civilians.

The challenges are immense and seem to grow every year, but through collaboration, foresight, and a shared belief in human dignity, we continue to make progress. The work reflected in this report not only showcases our impact but also offers hope, even in the darkest circumstances. Every achievement in one zone of armed conflict keeps us all going. The resilience of Geneva Call’s staff, their commitment to the mission, and their courage are key to our success.

We are deeply grateful for the trust and support of all who stand with us, and we remain committed to this mission with courage and resolve.

Jean Keller
Chairman of the Board

Alain Délétroz
Director General

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2024: A Year of Global Crisis, Shifting Power Dynamics, and Unprecedented Humanitarian Challenges

Over 320 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance at the end of 2024.¹ While this staggering figure highlights the scale of global suffering, it only tells part of the story. The year was marked by multiple crises, 120 armed conflicts², the worsening impacts of climate change, and political upheaval sparked by elections and instability.³ Sadly, 2024 was also the deadliest year on record for humanitarian personnel.

Conflicts caused widespread suffering for millions of civilians in 2024, leading to a twelfth consecutive year of increasing forced displacement.⁴ Over the past 75 years, the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and IHL have saved countless civilian lives and remain as relevant as

ever in safeguarding people from the effects of armed conflict. Yet, the disregard of their principles by conflict parties seems to be at its highest peak.

In many countries around the world, the international community found itself navigating difficult decisions between short-term conflict management and the pursuit of long-term stability, reflecting the scale and complexity of the crises at hand. This tension was particularly evident in regions experiencing protracted or escalating violence. In South-East Asia, for instance, Myanmar was ranked second in ACLED's Conflict Index with 5,058 battles and 1,717 incidents of violence against civilians in the country, marking a

significant increase from 2023. In Ukraine, fighting in eastern and southern regions intensified, with continued attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure and more than 13'000 civilian casualties since the beginning of the war.

The state of the world was further aggravated by the climate crisis. Severe floods impacted the Sahel, East Africa, and parts of Europe, while Southern Africa and the Americas faced devastating droughts. Heatwaves affected numerous regions around the world. These climate-related disasters significantly worsened food insecurity and triggered new conflicts with new forms of displacement. Conflicts, however, were the major drivers of food insecurity, disrupting food systems by imposing restrictions on farming and other critical food production processes, and contributing to the persistently high levels of hunger and malnutrition witnessed in recent years.⁵

"Deadliest" Year on Record for Humanitarians

Alongside the many examples of violence and destruction, another tragic milestone was reached in 2024. As conflicts



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¹ Global Humanitarian Overview 2024. November-December Update. OCHA. 31 December 2024.

² ICRC in 2024: Upholding humanity in conflict. ICRC. 16 December 2024.

³ ACLED Conflict Index – Global conflicts double over the past five years. ACLED. December 2024.

⁴ Global Trends report. UNHCR. June 2024.

⁵ The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2024. FAO. July 2024.

around the world continued, the risks to humanitarian workers also grew, resulting in as many as 281 humanitarian workers losing their lives globally last year, making it the “deadliest on record”, underlining yet again the imperative that all parties to a conflict must safeguard humanitarian workers, uphold IHL, and put an end to violence against aid workers.⁶

The Growing Influence of Armed Groups

It is against this backdrop that an estimated 210 million people lived in areas fully or partially controlled by armed groups or de facto authorities, with over 450 such groups of humanitarian concern operating worldwide.

Several key events led by armed groups marked a shift in traditional security dynamics in 2024. In Syria, more than thirty factions, led by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), succeeded in overthrowing the Assad regime, ultimately capturing Damascus and bringing an end to the Assad family’s decades-long rule. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, days of intense fear and chaos preceded the M23 armed group seizing control of Goma in January 2025, further destabilizing the region and exacerbating the ongoing conflict. More generally, the number of people living in areas under the full control of armed groups increased in 2024, mainly due to the expansion of exclusive territorial control exercised by armed groups.⁷



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Meanwhile, direct communication or support between states and armed groups also increased, which further fueled complicated conflicts using proxies. In addition, larger armed groups established localized proxies within the communities they interact with. These proxies not only strengthen their foothold in the regions they operate, but also create deeper, more entrenched networks of support and control. These shifts underscore the growing complexity of modern conflicts, where traditional state-based power structures are challenged by armed actors.

The number of people living in **areas under the full control of armed groups** increased in 2024

Challenges to Fundamental Humanitarian Norms

While violence levels are expected to remain high in 2025, predicting the evolution of conflict patterns remains challenging. Geneva Call is particularly concerned by the growing challenges to fundamental humanitarian norms exemplified by the alarming erosion of the global ban on anti-personnel mines (APMs). This erosion is not only driven by states that might use APMs, but also by “enabler states” that support their use. This troubling trend reflects a broader disregard for IHL that has intensified in recent years, and which Geneva Call has noted across several of its country operations. Moreover, the questioning of the total ban on APMs—often justified by security concerns—risks undoing decades of progress made in protecting civilians from the immediate and long-term humanitarian consequences of these indiscriminate weapons.

⁶ Today’s top news: Aid worker deaths, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Lebanon, Haiti, Ukraine, Guinea. OCHA. 22 November 2024.

⁷ ICRC engagement with armed groups in 2024. Humanitarian Law & Policy (ICRC blog). 31 October 2024.



ВСТУПНІ ЗАУВАЖЕННЯ

Важливість дотримання міжнародного гуманітарного права — захист цивільних і мирних жителів та їхнього майна від наслідків збройного конфлікту.

Згідно з міжнародним гуманітарним правом, воюючі сторони повинні дотримуватися певних правил поведінки під час збройного конфлікту. Ці правила мають на меті зменшити страждання цивільного населення та обмежити вплив війни на природу. Вони є основою для захисту людських прав та гідності в умовах війни.

Міжнародне гуманітарне право складається з двох основних частин: Женевської конвенції про захист потерпілих до війни та Конвенції про захист потерпілих після війни. Ці конвенції встановлюють правила поведінки щодо цивільного населення, медичного персоналу, релігійних діячів та інших осіб, які не беруть участі в бойових діях.

Важливою частиною міжнародного гуманітарного права є принцип пропорційності. Він вимагає, щоб напад на військові об'єкти не завдавав надмірних цивільних втрат порівняно з очікуваними військовими перевагами. Також заборонено використовувати засоби та методи війни, які завдають надмірних цивільних втрат або не мають військового характеру.

Міжнародне гуманітарне право також встановлює правила щодо задоволення потреб цивільного населення. Воно вимагає, щоб воюючі сторони забезпечували доступ до гуманітарної допомоги та гарантували безпеку для осіб, які надають цю допомогу.

Важливою частиною міжнародного гуманітарного права є принцип гуманітарності. Він вимагає, щоб воюючі сторони поводилися гуманно по відношенню до всіх осіб, які перебувають під їхнім контролем, незалежно від того, чи є вони ворогами чи цивільними жителями.

Міжнародне гуманітарне право є основою для захисту людських прав та гідності в умовах війни. Воно встановлює правила поведінки, які повинні дотримуватися воюючі сторони, щоб зменшити страждання цивільного населення та обмежити вплив війни на природу.

2024 in Review

OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

In line with its strategic approach and objectives, Geneva Call continued to engage with armed groups and de facto authorities to address the protection needs of vulnerable populations in 2024.

The organization's four-year strategy (2024-2027) was crafted to help it stay flexible, responsive, and adaptable to the growing complexities of contemporary humanitarian challenges. During the first year of this strategy's implementation, Geneva Call focused on the four main strategic objectives defined within the plan:

1. Championing the Application of IHL: We continued to

prioritize the promotion of and adherence to IHL, ensuring AGDAs take concrete measures to respect the laws designed to protect civilians and mitigate suffering in armed conflicts.

2. Prioritizing the Protection of Civilians: Efforts focused

on vulnerable groups, such as women, children, and marginalized populations who are most at risk in conflict zones. Geneva Call worked to ensure their protection and advocated for their rights in the face of ongoing violence.

3. Cultivating the Universality of Humanitarian Norms:

Amid mounting pressure on the international legal framework for civilian protection, Geneva Call worked to promote the widespread adoption of humanitarian

principles, highlighting their universal foundations across various religions, cultures, and traditions.

4. Responding to Growing Operational Imperatives:

Recognizing the increasing demands of the humanitarian landscape, the organization committed to responding to operational challenges with a carefully balanced, strategic approach that maximizes our resources and impact.

Through these strategic objectives, Geneva Call aimed to strengthen its actions to

ensure effective protection for those most affected by conflict, while adapting to new and evolving challenges.

Through these strategic objectives, Geneva Call aimed to **strengthen its actions** to ensure effective protection for those most affected by conflict.



Tracking Impact and Strengthening Accountability: Geneva Call's Global MEAL Framework

To effectively measure progress and capture impact against the strategic objectives of the 2024–2027 Strategy, Geneva Call developed its **first ever comprehensive Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) framework**. This framework provides a structured approach to assessing the organization's interventions across all operational contexts, ensuring consistency and comparability in tracking results.



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MEAL framework provides a structured approach to assessing the organization's interventions across all operational contexts, **ensuring consistency and comparability** in tracking results.

At the heart of this framework is a comprehensive set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) with standardized definitions and a unified reporting system implemented across Geneva Call's global operations. These tools go beyond tracking outputs to assess meaningful outcomes, including increased knowledge, shifts in attitudes, and the practical application of IHL and humanitarian norms by AGDAs.

In addition to tracking behavioral and policy changes among AGDAs, Geneva Call places strong emphasis on internal accountability and monitoring mechanisms. This includes follow-ups on AGDAs' compliance with their existing commitments, and the effectiveness of partnerships with key stakeholders at local, national, and international levels.

Some of the outcomes and impacts captured during the first year of the strategy's implementation are presented below, as well as in the 'Intervention and Impact' sections for each country. By integrating these elements, the MEAL framework not only **strengthens Geneva Call's ability to drive meaningful change** but also enhances its adaptability and learning capacity in complex humanitarian settings.

Championing the Application of IHL

Geneva Call continued to raise awareness of humanitarian norms and IHL among AGDAs and stakeholders through training and ongoing, confidential dialogues, while also strengthening AGDAs' technical capacity to meet IHL obligations and supporting the

adaptation of their policies and practices. In 2024, Geneva Call's humanitarian engagement extended to over 190 AGDAs across the regions of Eurasia, Africa, MENA and Colombia.

In **Syria**, many armed groups seeking to overthrow Assad's regime showed a clear commitment to IHL during operations. They **issued military orders and public statements referencing the Geneva Conventions**, the protection of prisoners of war, and the safeguarding of civilian infrastructure. Geneva Call's extensive engagement with most of these groups is credited as a significant contributing factor. Notably, progress included the signing of a UN Action Plan in June 2024 to end the recruitment and use of children by the Syrian National Army (SNA).



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In **Ukraine**, a multi-faceted strategy was used to ensure Geneva Call reached the widest set of weapon bearers. This included on-site awareness sessions for newly integrated combat units and specialized training tailored to the unique

challenges of the conflict. Large-scale social media campaigns were launched to reach local and foreign fighters, even in remote combat zones. The **organization helped adapt training material and address dismissive attitudes toward IHL** thanks to a comprehensive Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices study in 2024, collecting data through surveys and interviews with combatants.

In **Myanmar**, Geneva Call sustained engagement with armed groups that had signed Deeds of Commitment and **helped translate commitments into action**—providing legal and policy guidance, delivering targeted training, and launching awareness campaigns. These efforts led to **the integration of key IHL principles**—such as child protection, prevention of sexual violence, and respect for individuals *hors de combat*—into **Codes of Conduct**, with a focus on ensuring their practical implementation on the ground.

In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**, two **Deeds of Commitment** were signed, and **local monitoring mechanisms** were established to ensure compliance by the signatories. As a direct result, AGDAs took concrete steps to reduce harm to civilians—**liberating occupied schools, dismantling illegal roadblocks, and releasing unlawfully held individuals**, including three humanitarian workers. Notably, **46 children formerly associated with armed groups were released** and referred to child protection partners for reintegration and support.



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In Sudan, significant efforts were directed toward engagements with AGDAs on issues related to food security and humanitarian access. As a key outcome of these efforts, in January 2024, **a joint statement was signed with three AGDAs** addressing food insecurity and sexual violence.

In **South Sudan**, Geneva Call strengthened **the knowledge and commitment of AGDA leaders and members** through training, and **engaged members of armed self-defense groups** on IHL and child protection. These efforts culminated in the **signing of four unilateral declarations on the protection of civilians by key actors**.

In **Iraq**, Geneva Call **facilitated the return of over 50 families to Jurf Al-Sakhar and 327 families to Kirkuk**. Three Unilateral Declarations were also signed by groups pledging to protect the environment and infrastructure.

In **Yemen**, Geneva Call advanced its three-phase approach to IHL engagement, notably **training the Security Belt Forces in 2024** on better interactions with people with hearing impairments at checkpoints.

In **Thailand**, Geneva Call continued to follow up on BRN's **implementation of their Deed of Commitment on Child Protection**. This included organizing activities to disseminate knowledge on limiting the use of victim-activated explosive devices and the effects of explosives in populated areas to the members.

In 2024, Geneva Call also began exploring **conflict-related environmental issues**. The organization **developed training materials, conducted research, and created AGDA engagement tools**, which were implemented by its missions in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Prioritizing the Protection of Civilians

In **Burkina Faso**, Geneva Call expanded its humanitarian engagement through community-based initiatives, **strengthening social cohesion**, training and capacitating traditional chiefs and religious leaders as agents of change. It also intensified its connections with **local communities, Self-Defense Groups**, and provincial authorities.

In **Colombia**, Geneva Call's engagement with 32 communities **strengthened local capacity to negotiate safer conditions under the presence of armed groups**. As a result, communities reported tangible improvements: one indigenous community saw **a decrease in child recruitment**,

while a non-indigenous community noted a reduction in landmine use.

In **Iraq**, Geneva Call enhanced civilian protection by launching Interactive Dialogue Forums that brought together local communities and armed groups. These forums created **a safe and structured space for open dialogue**, enabling participants to raise protection concerns and collaborate on concrete, sustainable solutions. As a result, **trust-building between communities and armed actors was strengthened**, laying the groundwork for more responsive and accountable protection practices.

In **Thailand**, Geneva Call **strengthened the capacity** of civilian stakeholders to engage in constructive dialogue with armed

actors and other key parties, promoting **more inclusive and localized protection strategies.**

Cultivating the Universality of Humanitarian Norms

In the **Philippines**, the organization focused on **refining customary norms for protecting communities** from local conflicts and "rido", which are cycles of violent clan feuds or family conflicts that can persist for many years. It also supported Indigenous Peoples' leaders and organizations in conflict-affected areas, by providing capacity-building assistance to equip Indigenous Peoples' leaders with the tools and skills necessary to advocate for violence prevention and humanitarian protection.



Meanwhile in **Afghanistan**, Geneva Call worked with key IEA ministries, providing training on international humanitarian and human rights law, and engaged religious scholars and decision-makers to interpret and promote humanitarian norms through Islamic teachings. Major achievements **included the adoption of uniforms for police officers, enhancing identification and accountability**, and improvements in police conduct, **leading to better treatment of civilians at checkpoints and detention facilities**.

Finally, in **Libya**, Geneva Call successfully completed the second phase of its Training of Trainers (ToT) program, in collaboration with the Ministry of Defense (MoD) in the West, seeking to **reinforce humanitarian norms through culturally grounded and locally relevant governance mechanisms**.

Given that the conflict dynamics in which Geneva Call operates often transcend national borders, **adopting a regional lens is essential**. This approach strengthens both programmatic and global advocacy efforts by addressing cross-border challenges and influencing regional policies that impact civilian protection. It also enables a more holistic response to complex, cross-cutting issues such as food insecurity, child protection, and access to education. In Africa for instance, this strategy led to a **landmark regional conference in January 2024, which convened leaders from 7 AGDAs across East and Central Africa**. The event served

as a vital platform for dialogue, peer learning, and joint commitments to strengthen adherence to humanitarian norms. The regional approach also facilitated exploratory missions in Niger and Mozambique—paving the way for future operations—and enabled high-level engagement with regional institutions such as the African Union and IGAD⁸.

Gender and intersectionality

Women and children continue to bear the brunt of armed conflict, often facing targeted violence, including sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and exclusion from essential services. These risks are heightened in areas under the partial or full control of AGDAs, and are compounded by intersecting factors such as age, disability, class, and ethnicity. Geneva Call pays specific attention to the vital role that women play in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peacebuilding, and humanitarian access, fully in line with UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security [S/RES/1325(2000)].

In line with Geneva Call's strategic objective to strengthen civilian protection—particularly for women, children, and marginalized groups—the organization **adopts a gender-sensitive and context-specific approach**. This includes conducting tailored assessments to understand local gender roles and norms, the gendered power dynamics within AGDAs, and the differentiated impact of conflict on women and girls, including those displaced.



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Advocacy efforts in Northwest Syria, **led to the abolition of a discriminatory requirement for displaced women** to be accompanied by a male guardian. In Iraq, Geneva Call played a pivotal role in facilitating the return of displaced women and girls, contributing to a sustainable reduction in protection risks.

Engaging directly with women associated with armed groups is a key element of our approach, even in contexts where such groups are male-dominated. In 2024, Geneva Call held **its first-ever consultations with women associated with the cattle keepers** in South Sudan—a significant step toward inclusive dialogue and improved protection outcomes.

Engaging directly with women associated with armed groups is a **key element of our approach**, even in contexts where such groups are male-dominated.

⁸ The Intergovernmental Authority on Development



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consultations were designed to ensure inclusivity, particularly by involving diverse groups such as women, youth, people with disabilities, and religious and tribal groups.

Advancing Safety and Security at Geneva Call: An Innovative and Modern Approach

In 2024, Geneva Call undertook a major transformation of its safety and security practices, embedding ISO 31000-aligned risk management principles into its operations. Drawing on best practices from both the private and humanitarian sectors, the organization overhauled its security risk management system to better protect staff and ensure mission continuity. A key milestone was the launch of Geneva Call's first in-house Hostile Environment Awareness Training (HEAT), tailored to prepare teams for high-risk contexts.

In 2024, the organization overhauled its security risk management system to **better protect staff and ensure mission continuity.**

Safety and security considerations were integrated across units, promoting a culture of preparedness. The new Global Safety & Security Strategy introduced minimum-security

Conflict Sensitivity in Geneva Call's Activities: A Commitment to "Do No Harm"

Geneva Call's field missions consistently employ conflict-sensitive practices to ensure that programs promote peace, effectively address local conflict dynamics and minimize unintended negative impacts on communities and stakeholders, drawing on international best practices.

These practices include context analysis, risk assessment, stakeholder engagement, AGDA analysis and adaptive MEAL methods.

In Burkina Faso, for example, Geneva Call adhered to the principle of "do no harm" by tailoring its activities to the local realities. Each intervention was preceded by a contextual analysis to ensure that it would not exacerbate existing inter-community tensions. The organization adapted its training sessions to be accessible and inclusive, ensuring they were culturally appropriate and in local languages. Regular follow-ups ensured that interventions

remained flexible and responsive to evolving local needs, further reinforcing Geneva Call's commitment to working in harmony with local dynamics. Strict security measures were put in place to protect both teams and beneficiaries, ensuring that interventions were conducted safely and respectfully.

In Ukraine, the organization meticulously vetted local partners to ensure they adhered to humanitarian standards and avoided any association with particular factions. The organization also took care in selecting neutral training locations to minimize security risks and used impartial communication strategies to avoid any perception of favoritism.

Geneva Call's work in Yemen is another example of its commitment to inclusive and conflict-sensitive programming. The organization engaged closely with civil society organizations and community structures to ensure that its interventions reflected community priorities and contributed to local protection efforts. These

standards, modernized crisis management systems in line with ISO and BCI standards, and developed a multilingual SOP library. This streamlined, user-friendly model places Geneva Call ahead of many NGOs in the sector, reflecting a strong commitment to sustainable, responsible risk management and operational resilience in volatile environments

Research on AGDAs and IDPs

In 2024, Geneva Call also undertook key research on the protection of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the prospects for durable solutions in areas under the influence of AGDAs in Iraq, Syria and Yemen. Protecting and assisting IDPs is an extremely difficult task, whose responsibility falls on a number of different actors, including AGDAs. Engaging AGDAs on this subject

has thus become a necessity, one which Geneva Call takes on to ensure that respect for IHL benefits all civilians – residents and displaced alike. At the same time, much is still not known about the role of AGDAs in addressing displacement-specific challenges. Contributing to filling this gap was the objective of the study, with a view to offering insights that can support the efforts of Geneva Call, as well as other actors working to improve the protection of civilians generally and IDPs specifically.

INSTITUTIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

The organization's core operations and impact are enabled by a range of institutional-level activities, which provide the strategic, administrative, and infrastructural support necessary to ensure the organization's continued effectiveness and accountability.

Financial Management, Sustainability, and Funding Growth

In 2024, Geneva Call strengthened its financial resilience and sustainability through streamlined financial reporting and enhanced budget tracking systems. Despite a challenging funding landscape, the organization achieved full budget coverage, ensuring uninterrupted operations and program delivery.

Geneva Call secured a notable increase in multi-year core and earmarked contributions, reflecting heightened donor confidence and expanding its funding base. Strengthened financial and grant management systems enabled improved donor communication and reporting, with zero audit findings recorded during the period—affirming the integrity of our financial oversight and compliance.





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Digital Transformation & ERP Implementation

Geneva Call's digital transformation efforts continued at full pace in 2024, marked by the successful rollout of a new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system. This shift allowed for a seamless transition to in-house accounting and provided continuous support to key users.

Core operational processes were digitized using advanced IT tools, resulting in more efficient reporting and streamlined workflows. New platforms, such as an eSignature system and an online vetting platform, were introduced alongside tailored training sessions for staff across country and thematic units, reinforcing digital literacy and operational agility.

Strategic Operational Improvements & Procurement Optimization

The organization introduced key strategic tools in 2024, including an Annual Event Calendar and optimized travel planning grounded in historical data.

A centralized hotel database was established, streamlining logistics and improving cost efficiency.

Geneva Call's digital transformation efforts continued at full pace in 2024

Procurement operations were enhanced through stronger Request for Proposal (RFP) management, improved bidding processes, and individualized strategic planning for each budget holder. Travel management also saw measurable improvements, including reduced booking errors, smoother approval chains, and enhanced monthly reporting mechanisms ensuring compliance and cost control.

Strengthened Compliance, Transparency & IT Security

In 2024, Geneva Call further deepened its commitment to accountability and transparency.

The organization maintained high standards in administrative and financial recordkeeping—both digitally and physically—while reinforcing compliance with regulatory frameworks.

Procurement and travel policies were reviewed and updated, supported by comprehensive staff training to clarify roles and responsibilities. IT security was further fortified through the rollout of Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA), a clearly defined Segregation of Duties (SoD) matrix for ERP access, and robust email protection protocols, safeguarding organizational data and user integrity.

Workforce Development, Employee Engagement, and Wellbeing

As part of its people-first approach, Geneva Call conducted a global employee satisfaction survey in 2024 with a strong 72% participation rate. Insights from the survey were complemented by field-level focus groups on wellbeing, stress management, and resilience-building.

Updated HR policies, including a revised attendance policy, were rolled out to support effective and transparent people management practices. Senior field leaders received in-person training on resource management, and Geneva Call developed additional tools to promote staff well-being and ensure access to national healthcare support systems.

Relations with our Donors and Partners

Thanks to the continued trust and generous support of our donors, Geneva Call secured full budget coverage for 2024, enabling operational continuity despite a challenging funding landscape. We are especially grateful to our committed partners for increasing multi-year core and earmarked funding,

which further expanded our funding base and strengthened donor confidence in our work.

In November 2024, Geneva Call hosted its annual pledging conference, bringing together high-level representatives from institutional donors and partners, all of whom expressed their continued backing for Geneva Call's goals in the coming year. The event's opening featured Ms. Deike Potzel, Director-General for Crisis Prevention, Stabilization, Peacebuilding, and Humanitarian Assistance at the German Federal Foreign Office, who underlined the importance of IHL in protecting civilians in a world witnessing the continued rise of armed violence and devastating effects on civilian populations.

The conference concluded with remarks from H.E. Mr. Tormod Endresen, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Norway to the United Nations in Geneva, on the importance of actions that can break the cycles of violence that threaten international security.

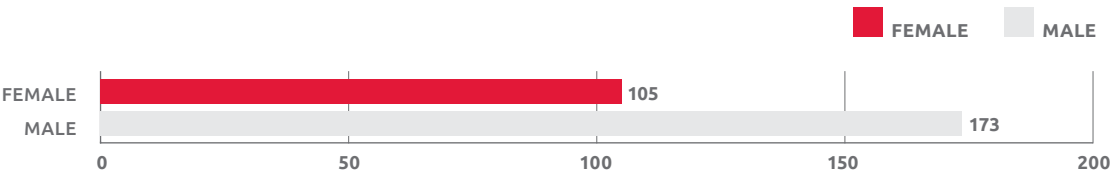
Thanks to the continued trust and generous support of our donors, Geneva Call **secured full budget coverage for 2024.**



HUMAN RESOURCES

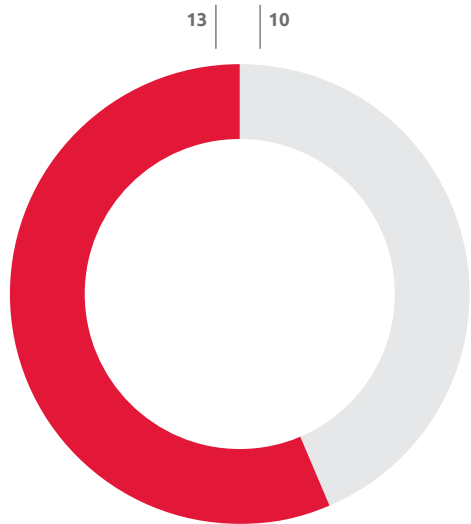
Note: As of December 31, 2024

Overall gender distribution

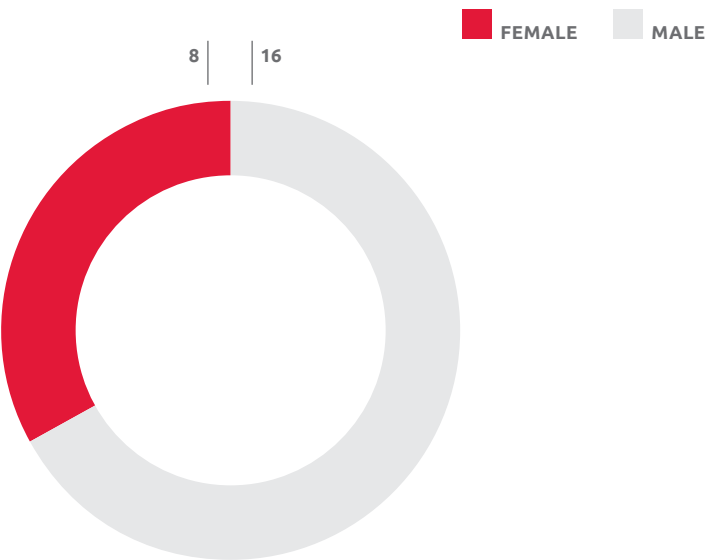


Applicants hired by gender in 2024

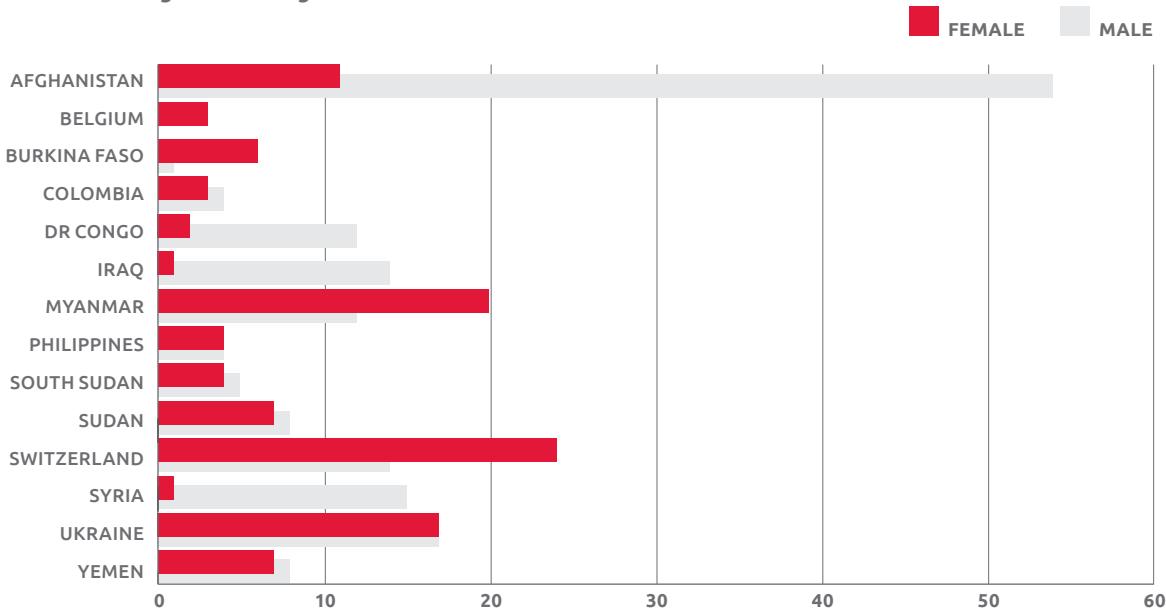
(HQ, Belgium and International recruitment only)



Leadership roles by gender



Gender distribution by country





Countries of operation in 2024⁹



⁹ The country pages in the following section are listed by geographical area.



COLOMBIA

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Context

In 2024, conflict in Colombia intensified, with AGDAs expanding their control to 71%¹⁰ of the country's municipalities, up from 48% in 2023.¹¹ The rural population suffered from armed violence, including targeted murders, forced displacements, confinement, child recruitment and association, landmine contamination, and extortion. Armed groups, already involved in drug trafficking, expanded their activities into illegal gold mining, sex trafficking, human smuggling, and controlling public contracts. The vacuum left by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia's 2016 demobilization attracted other AGDAs, who increased their ranks through child recruitment and association and enrolling local gangs. This led to significant leadership changes and a weakening of AGDAs' cohesion, internal structure, and discipline.

Since 2022, the Colombian Government has tried to negotiate peace through multiple talks with armed groups, but by 2024, several negotiations collapsed. AGDAs splintered or refused to move beyond temporary ceasefires. While some talks continue with smaller groups, the Government has shifted to

regional agreements, recognizing the challenges of national-level peace with fragmented groups.

Intervention and Impact

In Colombia, a law enacted in 2022 prohibits direct engagement with AGDAs without government authorization. To date, no permits have been issued. In response, Geneva Call redirected its efforts to engaging local community leaders, teachers, and healthcare workers, who often find themselves negotiating with armed groups. By training these individuals in IHL norms and principles, Geneva Call improved their knowledge and negotiation skills and strengthened community protection. Indirectly, this engagement also helped reach AGDA members who often reside within the targeted communities.

Geneva Call's initiatives, which included training leaders on IHL principles such as distinction, and proportionality, reached 32 communities in Arauca, Antioquia, and Norte de Santander. To ensure the impact of its initiatives is effectively measured and captured, Geneva Call conducted a post-intervention assessment. The findings revealed that 75% of target communities were able to negotiate better terms of coexistence with AGDAs. The protection measures jointly implemented

by Geneva Call and community leaders were effective, with AGDAs respecting the humanitarian norms posted on signs and banners. Overall, the sense of security increased in all the communities. AGDAs' respect for the territorial integrity of communities improved by 60%, and, on average, respect for local leaders and schools increased by 30%. In one indigenous community, there was a reported decrease in child recruitment, while in a non-indigenous one, the local population pointed to a reduction in the use of landmines. Overall, Geneva Call benefited around 17,000 people.

Challenges

The main hurdle to Geneva Call's activities was the legal restriction preventing the organization from directly engaging with AGDAs, limiting its ability to address compliance with IHL at the source. Another challenge was the fragmentation and leadership turnover within AGDAs, which made it difficult to maintain trust and promote IHL effectively.

Finally, the increasing intensity of the conflict is creating additional barriers to humanitarian access. In 2024, this did not cause delays to Geneva Call's work, but the prospects for 2025 are not encouraging.

¹⁰ Defensoría del Pueblo alerta porque el 71% de los municipios colombianos está amenazado por grupos armados. infobae.com. 11 December 2024.

¹¹ Colombia: Confinements and mobility restrictions in Chocó, Nariño and Arauca. acaps.org. 2 May 2024.



BURKINA FASO

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Context

Burkina Faso faces a severe crisis with escalating and compounding security, political, and humanitarian challenges, including attacks on civilians, armed clashes, and the proliferation of explosive devices. Politically, the military-led transition government was extended for five more years after consultations in May 2024. Additionally, Burkina Faso, along with Mali and Niger, left ECOWAS¹² in 2024 to form the Sahel States Alliance (AES).

The humanitarian situation is dire, with over 2.1 million persons internally displaced¹³, and worsening food insecurity. Restricted access to essential services and reduced international aid have intensified the crisis. The conflict is creating a complex environment of violence and instability that is severely affecting civilians first and foremost.

Intervention and Impact

Geneva Call has adopted a neutral, preventive and inclusive approach in Burkina Faso, focusing on training pro-government self-defense group members on IHL. The organization also advocates for humanitarian access to displaced persons, strengthens community self-protection mechanisms and ensures its activities do not exacerbate tensions. In 2024,

Geneva Call also furthered its efforts to improve social cohesion, reducing inter-community conflicts caused by self-defense groups, and enhancing food security amidst the ongoing conflict. By deepening relationships with local communities, and provincial authorities, Geneva Call solidified its presence, gained acceptance, and fostered peaceful coexistence through IHL awareness-raising campaigns and training. This effort also positively influenced the behavior of the groups Geneva Call engages with, including the Volunteers for the Defense of the Homeland (VDP).

Geneva Call collaborated with local CSOs to provide technical support and organize training sessions, ensuring that humanitarian standards were disseminated across hard-to-reach areas. Gender inclusivity and the principle of “leave no one behind” were central to the approach, ensuring both men and women participated equally in activities. Geneva Call also adhered to the “do no harm” principle, conducting contextual analysis before interventions to adapt to local realities and prevent exacerbating tensions.

In 2024, Geneva Call’s efforts contributed to meaningful shifts in civilian protection and institutional engagement in crisis-affected areas. Dialogues on the protection of civilians emerged as a direct

result of training provided to 75 community leaders and influencers, reinforcing local ownership of humanitarian norms. The training of 78 government officials on civilian protection and social cohesion helped strengthen the country’s institutional response to the ongoing crisis. The active involvement of women—who led a third of awareness-raising sessions—enhanced inclusive community engagement on issues such as child protection, education, and food insecurity. These outcomes were made possible through the sensitization of three self-defense actors and the training of over 592 members on international humanitarian and human rights law, child protection, and humanitarian access.

Challenges

Despite facing operational, legal, and organizational challenges, including bureaucratic obstacles, counter-terrorism measures, and funding shortages, Geneva Call adeptly handled these difficulties. Through advocacy, strengthened relationships with the authorities and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and effective funding strategies, it successfully maintained its activities, continuing to play a crucial role in civilian protection and promoting social cohesion in Burkina Faso.

¹² ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States

¹³ Burkina Faso: Aperçu de la situation humanitaire. OCHA. 30 June 2024.



LIBYA

Context

In 2024, Libya remained fragmented, with rival administrations in east and west and no unified government in place. Despite ongoing mediation efforts by the United Nations, the political deadlock persisted, and security conditions remained fragile – particularly in the west, where periodic clashes and territorial disputes between armed groups continued to put civilians at risk. Economic challenges further fueled criminality, smuggling, and human trafficking, compounding existing vulnerabilities. In this context, Geneva Call – active in Libya since 2017 – continued its efforts to enhance civilian protection by promoting respect for IHL and IHRL among AGDAs.

Intervention and Impact

Geneva Call's engagement in Libya in 2024 aimed to support the sustainable and institutionalized integration of humanitarian norms within both the security sector and other local governance structures. Through its partnership with the Ministry of Defense (MoD) in the West, a core group of MoD representatives received training to strengthen their understanding of IHL and IHRL and gained the skills to disseminate this knowledge within their units – an important step toward fostering internal ownership of these standards. In parallel, Geneva Call worked



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with tribal leaders – already influential figures within Libyan society, particularly in mediation, de-escalation, and conflict resolution – to deepen dialogue around humanitarian principles and explore their role in strengthening civilian protection within their communities. By engaging with these traditional authorities, Geneva Call sought to reinforce humanitarian norms through culturally grounded and locally relevant governance mechanisms. These outcomes resulted from the successful implementation of the second phase of Geneva Call's Training of Trainers (ToT) program with the MoD in Tripoli, and the broader dialogue initiatives undertaken throughout its engagement activities.

As part of its commitment to sustainability and localization, Geneva Call prioritized collaboration with local partners in its final years of operation to ensure the continuity of this work and promote national ownership of humanitarian norms. While

Geneva Call's direct presence in the country ended in 2024, its efforts contributed to building a more informed and committed network of actors advocating for civilian protection. The organization is therefore confident that the partnerships, capacities, and structures developed will continue to support respect for IHL and IHRL in Libya.

Challenges

Despite the continued need for sustained engagement on humanitarian norms in Libya, Geneva Call decided to suspend its direct operations in the country in 2024. This strategic choice was driven by a combination of factors, including the increasingly constrained political and operational environment, as well as limited funding opportunities. That said, the organization continues to assess the needs on the ground and remains open to re-engagement should conditions become more conducive.



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Context

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) faces a complex security and humanitarian crisis in its northeastern region, marred by a multiplicity of armed conflicts among numerous actors, a fragile security environment, and the deployment of foreign forces. The crisis continues to worsen, with over 25 million people needing urgent assistance, and 465,000 children deprived of education.¹⁴



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In North and South Kivu, the crisis is largely driven by violent conflict between the Congolese Armed Forces (FARDC) and armed group M23, drawing in armed actors aligned with both sides. Since M23's resurgence in November 2021, fighting has led to shifting frontlines and increasing territory occupation by the group. The

conflict has spurred civilian arming and the proliferation of weapons, while established AGDAs have expanded through recruitment and territorial gains.

In Ituri, the escalating violence of AGDAs has worsened ethnic tensions, particularly between Lendu and Hema communities.

Intervention and Impact

In 2024, Geneva Call helped reduce civilian protection risks and facilitated humanitarian access through engagement with AGDAs in a number of instances in conflict-affected areas of Ituri and North Kivu. Training provided to 804 AGDA officers and over 2,000 CSO and CBO¹⁵ members led to a marked increase in knowledge of humanitarian norms—up from 40% to 81% and 38% to 83%, respectively. As part of its humanitarian dialogue, Geneva Call responded to 19 alerts through 28 bilateral meetings, resulting in 12 concrete initiatives of increased compliance with IHL, including the liberation of occupied schools, the release of civilians (including 3 humanitarian workers), and the dismantling of a number of check points used for taxation and other purposes. These efforts contributed to the release of 46 children recruited by armed groups.

In addition, Geneva Call secured the signing of two new Deeds of Commitment by AGDAs, bringing the total DoCs in DRC to six. Local monitoring mechanisms were established to ensure compliance, while access was facilitated for five INGOs and local partners in key areas. Community feedback indicates a gradual behavioral shift among AGDA members in controlled zones.

Challenges

Despite the successes achieved by Geneva Call in promoting the protection of civilian populations, the organization faced several challenges, including the security instability in the provinces of North Kivu and Ituri, and the involvement of other AGDAs in the fight against the M23 alongside the FARDC.

To respond to these challenges, Geneva Call reviewed its security protocols and strengthened its partnership with CSOs to access hostile areas and engage the AGDAs of both provinces. It also continued to remind the AGDAs' senior commanders of their commitment to uphold IHL and IHRL and ensure these principles are respected by their troops in order to guarantee the protection of civilians in conflict-affected zones.

¹⁴ The Democratic Republic of the Congo. OCHA. 2024. / DR Congo: Violence and displacement deprive children of schooling. UNICEF. 17 February 2025.

¹⁵ CBO: Community-Based Organization



SUDAN

Context

Sudan has been engulfed in nearly two years of intense conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), with multiple other armed groups increasingly drawn into the fighting. The conflict has significant regional implications, with external powers fueling the armed conflict by supporting one side over the other.

According to OCHA, approximately 30.4 million people—over two-thirds of the population—are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. Of these, 637,000 are on the brink of famine, and 24.6 million are suffering from acute hunger.¹⁶ Access to affected regions remains a major challenge due to increasing insecurity, especially in areas like Darfur. While peace talks have been attempted, agreements have not been secured.

Intervention and Impact

In 2024, Geneva Call's engagement with armed groups and robust dialogue with other stakeholders in Sudan helped secure humanitarian access and improve civilian protection in Darfur, Blue Nile, and Al Jazeera. Through negotiations with tribal



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leaders and SAF commanders, Geneva Call facilitated the delivery of aid and medical supplies, while also contributing to the protection of civilian infrastructure such as markets, farmlands, schools, and health facilities. Armed groups began integrating IHL sessions into their recruitment and daily routines, distributing the 15 Rules for Fighters to new recruits.

A joint statement by three AGDAs addressing food insecurity and sexual violence marked a step toward strengthened accountability. Despite challenges, Geneva Call adapted its approach to the fluid security context, employing adaptable strategies and collaborating with local and international partners, including three CSOs in Darfur and Blue Nile. It also maintained

ties with Sudanese authorities, securing registration renewal in July. While direct engagement with female combatants remained limited, targeted awareness and training sessions with community leaders and women activists supported efforts to protect women and girls.

Challenges

Violence significantly increased and expanded throughout 2024. Geneva Call was able to adapt by maintaining its engagement with accessible armed groups and organizing training for key leaders, leveraging its established relationships with these groups. At the same time, a shortage of funding in relation to the growing needs aggravated operational challenges.

¹⁶ Sudan Humanitarian Update. OCHA. December 2024.



SOUTH SUDAN

Context

South Sudan is grappling with a multitude of crises, including a severely weakened economy, escalating food insecurity, and ongoing conflict. In 2025, an estimated 7.7 million people (57% of the population) are projected to face crisis-level food insecurity, or worse, up from 7.1 million in 2024, primarily in areas like Jonglei, Unity, and Upper Nile.¹⁷ Widespread flooding, ongoing conflicts, and displacement have further worsened the situation. Conflict, particularly in regions like Upper Nile, Western Equatoria, and Jonglei, remains a significant driver of instability, with violence, exploitation, and abuse being widespread, particularly affecting women and children.



on sexual violence and gender discrimination, protection of children and education, forced displacement, famine and food insecurity. Technical support is provided to, for example, the civil society members, women's groups and community elders. To advocate to AGDAs and the local government to respect IHL and IHRL, Geneva Call works at three levels: armed groups, CSOs, and local community members.

A Training of Trainers course for 32 participants further reinforced local capacity to cascade knowledge within armed groups. These efforts led to four unilateral declarations on civilian protection, signed by influential actors in Western Equatoria.

Geneva Call also prioritized gender-responsive approaches, ensuring women's active involvement in GBV prevention and conflict mitigation. Its strategic partnerships with local organizations and radio networks expanded outreach and fostered wider community engagement. By applying a conflict-sensitive, "do no harm" approach—rooted in consultations with local leaders and authorities—the organization ensured its interventions were both contextually grounded and locally endorsed.

Intervention and Impact

Geneva Call established its South Sudan office in Juba in 2000, focusing on promoting the application of IHL and protecting civilians during armed conflict. Its work includes engaging AGDAs in regions like Jonglei, Upper Nile, Abyei, Warrap and Western Equatoria through dialogue, training, and technical support. Conflict leading to a lack of protection of civilians remains a concern in South Sudan. The dialogue and training are focused

In 2024, Geneva Call's engagement contributed to strengthened civilian protection and greater adherence to international humanitarian norms across conflict-affected areas. Through training over 1,800 individuals—including 294 AGDA leaders and members, 896 self-defense group members, and more than 875 civil society members gained increased understanding of IHL, applicable human rights law, child protection, and civilian safeguarding.

Challenges

Security in South Sudan is challenging due to high inter-communal violence and criminality. Geneva Call mitigates risks by engaging with National Security Services, the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission, the governor's office, local partners, and conducting security analysis. The changing AGDA context and resource limitations also require careful logistics and planning for field activities.

¹⁷ Humanitarian Action – Analysing Needs and Response. South Sudan. OCHA. 2025.



UKRAINE

Context

The Ukraine conflict in 2024 has intensified, particularly in the eastern and southern regions, with both Russian and Ukrainian forces increasing military actions. Civilian areas endure indiscriminate shelling, and repeated strikes on energy infrastructure have caused rolling blackouts. Over 42,500 civilian casualties have been reported, with nearly 13,000 fatalities¹⁸, though the actual toll is likely higher due to challenges in verifying data. 3.7 million people are displaced¹⁹, and the number is expected to rise due to difficulties in collecting data from Russian-controlled areas. Damage to essential services, such as water systems and healthcare facilities, exacerbates public health risks.

Intervention and Impact

In 2024, Geneva Call adapted its strategy in Ukraine prioritizing improved adherence to IHL among a wide array of combatants. On-site training for newly integrated combat units and large-scale social media campaigns successfully reached both local and foreign fighters. Through 103 targeted training sessions, Geneva Call improved combatants' knowledge

of IHL by an average of 33%, including members of the International Legion.

Geneva Call also launched an e-learning platform and mobile app to sustainably address IHL knowledge gaps, with plans to integrate them into military university curricula and regular training programs. These tools helped expand Geneva Call's reach while embedding IHL within institutional learning systems.

A major outcome of the year was Geneva Call's support to the Ministry of Defense in revising "Order 164," a comprehensive code of conduct for all combatants. This policy revision fills a critical gap in IHL understanding, and Geneva Call will contribute to producing a simplified version for widespread dissemination.

The organization collaborated with CSOs, duty-bearing institutions, international NGOs, and UN agencies to reinforce protection standards. A rigorous "do no harm" approach ensured the safety and relevance of interventions, with partners and training sites carefully vetted. Geneva Call also completed a Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices study in 2024, gathering insights through interviews and surveys with combatants. The study revealed both persistent

knowledge gaps and growing respect for humanitarian norms. Encouragingly, trained combatants reported applying IHL principles in active combat, underscoring the impact of Geneva Call's sustained engagement and trust-building efforts.



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Challenges

Reaching frontline combat units remains challenging due to their active roles and short rotation periods. To address this, Geneva Call offers online learning resources and carefully plans training sessions to prevent re-traumatization of combatants. The organization also tailors its approach to combat skepticism toward IHL, fostering trust and improving understanding among participants from all conflict parties.

¹⁸ Ukraine: Protection of civilians in armed conflict. OHCHR. February 2025.

¹⁹ IOM Aims to Aid Two Million People in Ukraine in 2025 as War and Displacement Continue. IOM. 21 February 2025.



SYRIA

Context

The collapse of the Assad regime in December 2024 marked a significant turning point in Syria's decade long crisis, bringing a sense of optimism after thirteen years of conflict. The country, however, faces numerous challenges during its transition period.



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Intervention and Impact

In Northwest Syria, Geneva Call prioritized humanitarian engagement with duty bearers on recruitment and association of children in armed groups, housing and property rights violations, protection of civilian infrastructure, health services, and gender-based violence. Geneva Call continued to closely monitor the implementation of its Deeds of Commitments (DoCs) on these core thematics and worked with armed groups to reduce harm to civilians by addressing incidents of non-compliance with IHL during hostilities.

In late 2024, as part of Geneva Call's efforts to strengthen its internal accountability and monitoring system for two DoC signatories on child protection, an internal assessment was conducted to evaluate their adherence to commitments. The data was analyzed to inform a "pause and reflect" exercise – a structured, confidential discussion with the groups, focusing on progress, challenges, and agreed-upon action points to improve compliance. A new Unilateral Declaration was also introduced in 2024 to protect civilian housing, land, and property. This was the result of sustained engagement over 18 months, marked by a strong positive commitment from the armed group, as several hundred properties were returned to their legal owners.

In Northeast Syria, local authorities abolished discriminatory administrative practices, such as requiring displaced women to travel with a male guardian and obligating elderly or dependent individuals to secure separate travel documents. These outcomes signal growing respect for civilian rights and protection norms, influenced by Geneva Call's continued efforts to embed humanitarian principles in practice.

Geneva Call continued its work promoting behavioral changes by the Internal Security Forces,

and other branches of the local authorities, advocated for the revision of discriminatory movement restrictions on IDPs, and continued to support the protection and expansion of both humanitarian and civic space.

In 2024, Geneva Call's sustained engagement on IHL contributed to notable protection outcomes during key military operations in Syria. Most armed groups involved in the overthrow of the Assad regime demonstrated a strong commitment to IHL, resulting in minimized civilian harm and limited destruction of infrastructure – a reflection of years of Geneva Call's capacity-building efforts with nearly all of these actors. A landmark achievement was the signing of a UN Action Plan by the Syrian National Army in June 2024 to end the recruitment and use of children, a process partially enabled by Geneva Call's long-term dialogue and advocacy.

Challenges

The ongoing conflict in Gaza led some armed groups in Syria to question the value of IHL. In response, Geneva Call adapted its training materials to emphasize the alignment of IHL with Islamic law, enhancing its relevance to the groups it engages. Another major challenge was underfunding, which meant that only essential activities were undertaken.



IRAQ

Context

Iraq remains caught in a web of shifting regional alliances and lingering conflicts. The fall of the Assad regime in Syria, Türkiye's rapprochement with the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), and the threat of the Islamic State continue to fuel volatility and tensions. Uncertainty looms over the fate of thousands of refugees and detainees as control of Al-Hol camp changes hands, while conditions for safe IDP returns remain unmet.

Iraq also faces pressure from Iran-backed groups involved in the Yemen and Syria conflicts, while the U.S. demands action against them, warning of consequences. Political rivalries have escalated into targeted assassinations, adding to instability. Humanitarian needs are worsening as the loss of USAID funding impacts aid delivery. Calls to dissolve the PMF risk renewed violence.

Intervention and Impact

In 2024, Geneva Call expanded its efforts by introducing Interactive Dialogue Forums, facilitating discussions between local communities and armed groups, raising their protection concerns. These discussions have led to positive responses from armed groups, and fostered stability and civilian protection. Geneva Call collaborates with IOM to address

barriers to IDP return and has signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with the Iraqi National Commission for IHL. In 2024, it conducted 53 workshops, training 1,693 participants, including 815 armed group members and 878 CSO representatives (593 men and 285 women) on topics such as displacement, civilian infrastructure protection, and humanitarian access. Women played a key role in these initiatives, with many participating in dialogues on gender-specific concerns, as well as the return of women and girls, who make up a significant proportion of displaced populations.

Geneva Call's 2024 efforts facilitated the return of over 50 families to Jurf Al-Sakhar and 327 families to Kirkuk. It secured humanitarian access by facilitating the removal of military barricades in Sinjar and easing checkpoint restrictions in Anbar. Engagement with armed groups enabled humanitarian actors to resume operations, such as Samaritan's Purse in YBS-controlled areas.



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Three Unilateral Declarations were signed: YBS committed to protecting the environment and infrastructure, while the Ali Al-Akbar Brigade pledged environmental protection. Geneva Call's interventions also reclaimed civilian buildings occupied by armed groups, restoring education and public services in Sinjar. Additionally, it reopened agricultural lands near the Syrian border, improving food security and livelihoods.

Challenges

Following the October 7 Hamas-Israel conflict, armed groups grew less receptive to IHL discussions. Geneva Call adapted by using conflict-sensitive engagement strategies, incorporating Islamic principles into training to reinforce alignment with IHL norms. Regional developments diverted armed groups' attention, requiring a shift to informal dialogue. Funding constraints remain a concern. In response, Geneva Call is seeking new donors to sustain engagement.

Yazidi Religious man Mam Fakhir:

"We acknowledge and appreciate the engagement of Geneva Call in our war-torn region of Sinjar, without their engagement with armed groups the situation could have remained as bad as it used to be some years ago."



YEMEN

Context

The conflict in Yemen has become increasingly complex over the past decade, with recent developments, including the Gaza conflict and the AnsarAllah (Houthi) blockade of the Red Sea, adding further challenges to both the humanitarian situation and peace process. The parties continue sporadic clashes, fighting for territory and resources while deadly airstrikes continue to hit Sana'a and northern governorates under AnsarAllah.

Intervention and Impact

Since 2018, Geneva Call has worked to improve armed groups' compliance with IHL and civilian protection in Yemen. This is achieved through engagement with armed groups, building civil society capacity on humanitarian norms

and advocacy, and involving communities in protecting their rights. Geneva Call's approach follows a three-phase model: engagement with armed groups, capacity development for CSOs, and empowering communities. Engagement with armed groups focuses on awareness-raising and training on humanitarian norms, including foundational IHL training, a Training of Trainers (ToT) program for commanders, and thematic awareness sessions for armed groups and civilians.

Geneva Call also facilitated high-level engagements with armed groups on topical issues affecting civilian protection. These are informed by community consultations to align interventions with local humanitarian priorities. A key component of Geneva Call's work is civil-military dialogue through a joint responsibility mechanism (JRM), providing communities safe, direct channels to voice concerns with armed groups.

Despite challenges, Geneva Call has made significant progress in securing commitments from armed groups, particularly on child protection, child recruitment, and banning illegal checkpoint levies.

Geneva Call worked closely with local CSOs and community groups to ensure interventions are inclusive, community-driven, and protective. A key 2024 initiative was training Security Belt Forces

(SBF) on interacting with people with hearing impairments at checkpoints. The training, initiated at the SBF's request, was conducted in coordination with a CSO specializing in disability. Geneva Call's programs remain neutral and impartial, focusing on IHL education and avoiding political discussions. For impact and sustainability, Geneva Call works closely with UNOCHA, INGOs, specialized agencies, authorities, and communities.

Geneva Call has expanded operations in Yemen, reaching more areas and communities, including Aden, Lahj, Abyan, Hadhramut, West Coast, Shabwa, and others. Through its network, Geneva Call engages with armed groups, humanitarian organizations, and local authorities to ensure humanitarian access, civilian protection, and community safety.

Challenges

At various authority levels, bureaucratic hurdles slowed progress. However, Geneva Call's membership in INGO coordination structures improved communication with key government decision-makers. The worsening security situation has limited humanitarian access and raised operational costs. In response to underfunding, Geneva Call is diversifying partnerships to ensure continued support for its vital work in civilian protection.





AFGHANISTAN



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Context

Three years into the rule of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA), the country faces significant humanitarian challenges, including the protection of civilians. In 2024, international humanitarian funding declined, worsening an already dire situation. Reports from UN agencies suggest that humanitarian access was hindered by administrative hurdles, legal restrictions, and interference from authorities, with direct obstruction and delays in approvals causing major disruptions. The codification of the “Law on the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice” and other restrictive decrees has further marginalized women. In addition, women were banned from medical training, and the scrutiny by the de facto authorities (DFA) of the I/NGOs has become more stringent. Economic decline and sanctions faced by the country, and the exclusion of women from the workforce have further exacerbated food insecurity, affecting one third of the population.

Forced refugee returns from neighboring countries and climate-related crises have worsened resource conflicts. Despite these challenges, Geneva Call continues to advocate for equal humanitarian access for all.

Intervention and Impact

Since 2018, Geneva Call has engaged with the Taliban and IEA structures. In 2024, the organization worked with key IEA ministries, providing training and raising awareness on international humanitarian and human rights law. These sessions targeted the de facto police, commanders, and other frontline personnel, focusing on law enforcement, police checkpoint management and humanitarian access, contributing to improved civilian protection. Geneva Call also engaged religious scholars and decision-makers to interpret and promote humanitarian norms through Islamic teachings and collaborated with academic experts to incorporate international law principles into university curricula. At the community level, Geneva Call empowered local organizations and structures in promoting intra-communal dialogue and social cohesion.

Geneva Call’s major achievements include advocacy for the adoption of uniforms for police officers, enhancing identification and accountability, and improvements

in police conduct, leading to better treatment of civilians at checkpoints and detention facilities. Community feedback indicates improved respect for women and vulnerable groups, fewer incidents of violence, and smoother checkpoint processes. Some religious authorities increasingly supported humanitarian principles, incorporating them into sermons and academic discussions, strengthening advocacy for civilian protection and humanitarian access.

Challenges

Restrictive policies on female NGO staff and the banning of women’s gatherings in contexts other than healthcare and religious education limit Geneva Call’s engagement with key stakeholders in promoting humanitarian norms. Frequent turnover of the DFA personnel in key positions requires repeated relationship-building efforts. Funding constraints are a significant concern, with humanitarian aid at an all-time low in 2024, affecting service delivery. Additionally, increased scrutiny of I/NGOs and bureaucratic obstacles, have complicated humanitarian operations. Despite these challenges, Geneva Call remains committed to protecting civilians through adaptive strategies and continuous dialogue with the DFA and communities.



MYANMAR



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Context

Myanmar is facing a complex crisis marked by ongoing conflict and severe humanitarian needs. Since the 2021 military coup, armed conflict has intensified between the Myanmar Military and various ethnic armed groups, as well as People's Defense Forces. This has led to widespread instability across the country. Over 19.9 million people, more than a third of Myanmar's population, are in urgent need of humanitarian aid. Civilians are at risk due to ongoing clashes, including aerial bombardments, and access to essential services is limited. Additionally, the introduction of the conscription law has led to mass displacement of youth, further destabilizing communities. Natural disasters, such as Typhoon Yagi in September 2024, have worsened the crisis, causing flooding and landslides that affected over 1 million people and exacerbated vulnerabilities. Despite efforts for peace through ASEAN's Five-Point Consensus, little progress has

been made. However, temporary ceasefires brokered by China in Shan State between the military and ethnic armed groups have reduced violence in certain areas. The situation is expected to worsen in 2025.

Intervention and Impact

Geneva Call has worked in Myanmar since 2006, focusing on engaging with Ethnic Revolutionary Organizations (EROs) to promote compliance with IHL and principles aimed at protecting civilians. Since 2021, Geneva Call has expanded its operations to include newly emerged armed groups across the country. In 2024, Geneva Call continued to advocate for compliance with IHL among multiple armed entities, emphasizing the protection of civilians and the promotion of humanitarian principles.

The organization has prioritized its engagement with EROs that have signed Geneva Call's Deeds of Commitment, in which they

publicly commit to safeguarding civilians. Geneva Call's engagement has focused on IHL principles, child protection, and the prevention of sexual violence. These efforts have led to positive changes, such as improved treatment of detainees (ensuring they receive three meals a day), informing civilians of impending attacks, and educating them on avoiding participation in violations. Training programs for civilian stakeholders have resulted in individuals taking actions to prevent human rights violations, such as refraining from killing civilians, avoiding landmines near civilian areas, and protecting non-combatants. These changes have been documented through midline and endline surveys conducted with trained stakeholders.

Challenges

Despite these successes, Geneva Call faces numerous challenges in Myanmar. The ongoing armed conflict, along with the new conscription law, has made humanitarian work more difficult. Banking restrictions and economic instability also pose significant obstacles, affecting the timely delivery of funds and the sustainability of operations. Nevertheless, Geneva Call continues its critical work in advocating for the protection of civilians and the adherence to humanitarian norms.



THAILAND

Context

Security concerns persist in Patani, southern Thailand, as evidenced by multiple bombing incidents that have resulted in casualties among security forces, BRN (Barisan Revolusi Nasional) members, and civilians. At the start of 2024, there was growing optimism regarding the peace process between the BRN and the Thai government. However, negotiations stalled by the third quarter.

Intervention and Impact

In 2024, Geneva Call continued to follow up on BRN's implementation of their Deed of Commitment on Child Protection. This included organizing activities to disseminate knowledge on limiting the use of victim-activated improvised explosive devices and the effects of explosives in populated areas. Geneva Call also supported the BRN to produce a booklet on limiting the use of victim-activated explosive devices and the effects of explosives in populated areas and implementing the Deed of Commitment on Child Protection, to be distributed and utilized by group members. In parallel, Geneva Call continued to engage civilian stakeholders to build their capacity to dialogue with armed actors and other stakeholders. A South-to-South CSO Humanitarian Exchange was facilitated between CSO representatives from the deep south

of Thailand and the south of the Philippines. The session began with context sharing between the two countries, focusing on practical experiences in humanitarian engagement. After the presentation, participants discussed the benefits of applying humanitarian norms, exchanging insights and tools between CSOs from both contexts. The program also explored CSOs' roles in humanitarian protection and peacebuilding, drawing from real experiences. Notably, MILF (Moro Islamic Liberation Front) representatives shared their humanitarian commitments and highlighted the crucial role of CSO engagement in protecting civilians during the peace process.

To strengthen accountability and monitoring systems, Geneva Call conducted an external evaluation to assess the status of BRN's implementation and adherence to the DoC, as well as the effectiveness and impact of the commitment on civilian protection in the Deep South. The findings from this evaluation

were discussed with the group in a "pause and reflect" exercise — a structured and confidential discussion aimed at identifying actionable steps to enhance compliance moving forward. The BRN has strengthened its understanding of relevant norms and tools, integrating them into policies to reduce conflict-related violence. Notably, it has incorporated IHL provisions into its Code of Conduct, influencing military behavior on the ground. A dedicated committee was set up by BRN, which now oversees the implementation of the Deed of Commitment on Child Protection.

Challenges

The volatile security situation, with daily incidents of bombings and shootings, posed serious risks to personnel and activities. Additionally, environmental factors further complicated operations, with frequent flooding disrupting activities in some areas and landslides making access difficult in certain regions.





PHILIPPINES



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Context

The Philippines continues to face multiple armed conflicts and violent clashes. Despite claims of weakening CPP-NPA forces²⁰, hostilities persist. Meanwhile, some members of Dawlah Islamiya and BIFF²¹ have surrendered, signaling a decline in their strength.

While no direct clashes occurred between government forces and MILF-BIAF²², internal conflicts among MILF-BIAF members—often linked to family feuds (rido)—continued to cause violence and displacement in Bangsamoro.

The first BARMM²³ parliamentary election, originally set for early 2025, was postponed to October 2025—five months after the May national and local elections. The MILF has called for a slowdown in decommissioning active combatants to ensure parallel implementation

of all aspects of the peace agreement. Given historical election-related violence and the ongoing proliferation of firearms, delays in decommissioning raise concerns about increased violence, particularly involving MILF members in rido.

Intervention and Impact

In 2024, Geneva Call worked to refine the customary norms for protecting communities from rido (clan feuds) and local conflict through consultations with religious leaders and MILF commanders, officially endorsed by BARMM's Bangsamoro Darul Ifta (BDI) and the Peace, Security, and Reconciliation Office (PSRO). Various stakeholders, including MILF and MNLF representatives, described the initiative to codify the norms as unique and useful in influencing the conduct of feuding parties. The refined norms are seen to strengthen local ownership and promote greater buy-in, especially from other BARMM agencies and MILF units. Outside BARMM, Geneva Call provided capacity-building support to equip Indigenous People (IP) leaders and IP Organizations (IPOs) in conflict-affected areas with knowledge, skills, and

tools to advocate for violence prevention and build a culture of respect for humanitarian norms.

Geneva Call also supported four IPOs in Bukidnon and Agusan del Sur to develop and implement advocacy plans strengthening their communities' protection from armed conflict.

Commitment was obtained from the PSRO on proposed collaboration with Geneva Call to enhance their mechanisms and processes for preventing and responding to emerging local conflict involving armed group members, especially during the BARMM election period. This will focus on better integrating customary norms and other protection messages, along with improved dialogue and coordination with affected community stakeholders.

Challenges

These included the competing priorities of engaged stakeholders, specifically at leadership level, many of whom were focused on their involvement in the elections. To address this, Geneva Call engaged stakeholders at multiple levels. Additionally, the country continued to grapple with the effects of natural disasters.

²⁰ The Communist Party of the Philippines (CCP) and its armed wing, the New People's Army (NPA).

²¹ Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF)

²² Moro Islamic Liberation Front- Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (MILF-BIFF)

²³ Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM)



Spotlight on Humanitarian Access



Context

In 2024, the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance reached a record high of 362 million. Humanitarian access and protection of humanitarian workers are essential prerequisites for both the delivery of life-saving assistance to those in need and the protection of humanitarian workers. However, active hostilities, violence against humanitarian workers, bureaucratic and administrative hurdles, and interferences in the implementation of humanitarian activities continue to impede humanitarian access to those in need, resulting in the delay or denial of humanitarian

assistance to millions of people, including in areas under AGDA control. The need to improve safe humanitarian access is underscored by the fact that 2024 was the deadliest year on record for humanitarian workers, mostly affecting local staff.

Our thematic approach

As part of Geneva Call's 2024-2027 Strategy, the organization prioritizes humanitarian access and protection of humanitarian workers, including by further developing our thematic approach. Drawing on field-based research on AGDAs' perceptions of humanitarian actors and assistance, Geneva Call directly

engages AGDAs on IHL norms designed to allow and facilitate safe humanitarian actions, but also humanitarian norms more generally, recognizing that in many instances different understandings of civilian protection and humanitarian principles play an important role in access constraints.

With a view to fostering long-lasting behavior, Geneva Call also seeks concrete commitments from AGDAs, including with unilateral declarations on humanitarian access or the Deed of Commitment on the Prevention of Starvation and Addressing Conflict-Related Food Insecurity, which includes provisions to

allow and facilitate humanitarian access as well as the protection of humanitarian workers. As a result of sustained engagement on food insecurity and humanitarian access, in 2024, the Congolese armed group NDC-R/Guidon (Nduma pour la défense du Congo-Rénové/Guidon) became the first signatory of the Deed of Commitment on the Prevention of Starvation and Addressing Conflict-Related Food Insecurity. Geneva Call also provides technical support for AGDAs to implement their commitments in practice, including by working

on checkpoint management, for example in Afghanistan or in Iraq where Geneva Call facilitated the removal of military barricades and easing checkpoint restrictions.

Finally, as part of its 2024-2027 Strategy, Geneva Call also facilitates dialogue and promotes coordination between humanitarian actors and AGDAs to improve humanitarian access, based on our multi-level approach to humanitarian engagement of AGDAs, with successful initiatives in 2024 in Colombia, the DRC, Iraq, Sudan, South Sudan and Yemen.

As part of Geneva Call's 2024-2027 Strategy, the organization **prioritizes humanitarian access and protection of humanitarian workers**, including by further developing our thematic approach.



Shaping Humanitarian Policies and Practices

In 2024, Geneva Call remained committed to shaping humanitarian policy and practices through a wide range of outreach efforts.

Geneva Call sustained its close partnership with the European Union—one of the world's key humanitarian actors. Through its Brussels office, Geneva Call engaged regularly with senior EU officials and member state representatives, providing insight into field-level protection concerns. Despite the institutional transitions following the 2024 EU elections,

Geneva Call remained an active voice in platforms such as the European Humanitarian Forum.

To address the growing number of civilian casualties and the mounting strain on international legal frameworks, Geneva Call partnered with the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP) to co-host a high-level conference

in Berlin in March 2024. The event gathered over 80 representatives from humanitarian, peacebuilding, and mediation organizations. Building on this momentum, follow-up roundtables in Geneva, Brussels, Berlin, and New York emphasized the need to localize protection concepts and create space to engage armed groups and de facto authorities in meaningful dialogue.

As continued multipolarization of international politics shaped the dynamics of conflict and humanitarian engagement worldwide, Geneva Call expanded its global outreach to engage a broader spectrum of international stakeholders across geographies and sectors. For instance, the organization brought protection of civilians and humanitarian principles into peace and security discussions at major forums in Munich, Rome, and Doha. This approach reflects Geneva Call's strategic commitment to ensure that humanitarian perspectives are considered in shaping international responses to conflict.

Marking the 75th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions, Geneva Call used this milestone to reaffirm the enduring relevance of international humanitarian law.

Marking the 75th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions, Geneva Call used this milestone to reaffirm the enduring relevance of international humanitarian law. In collaboration with the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and the ICRC, Geneva Call led or co-organized high-level advocacy events in Geneva and New York.



Financial report

Expenditure (CHF)

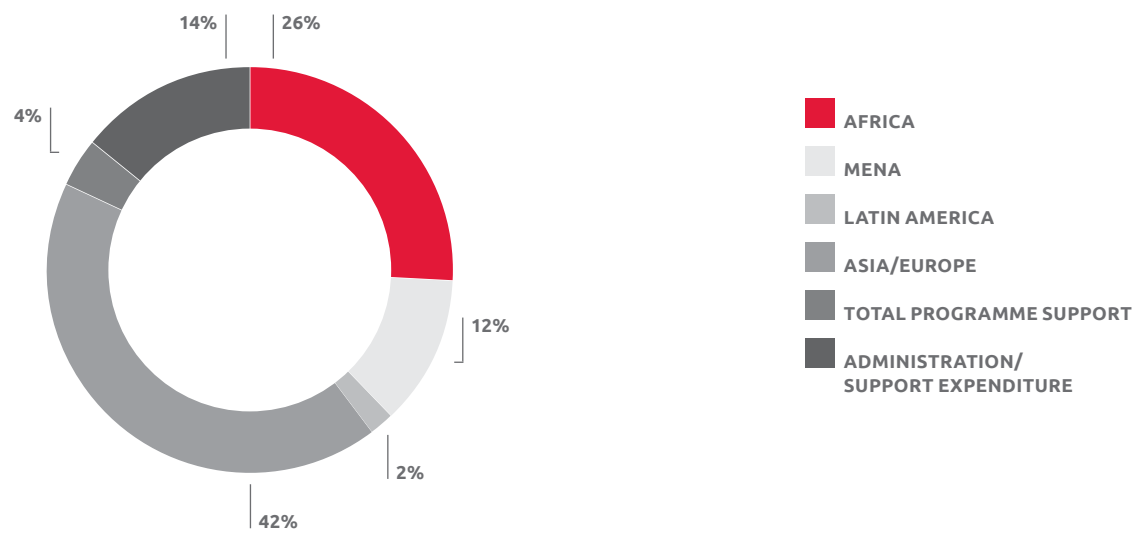
Geneva Call’s full financial statements, including the auditors’ report, can be found on www.genevacall.org/documents/.

Expenditure

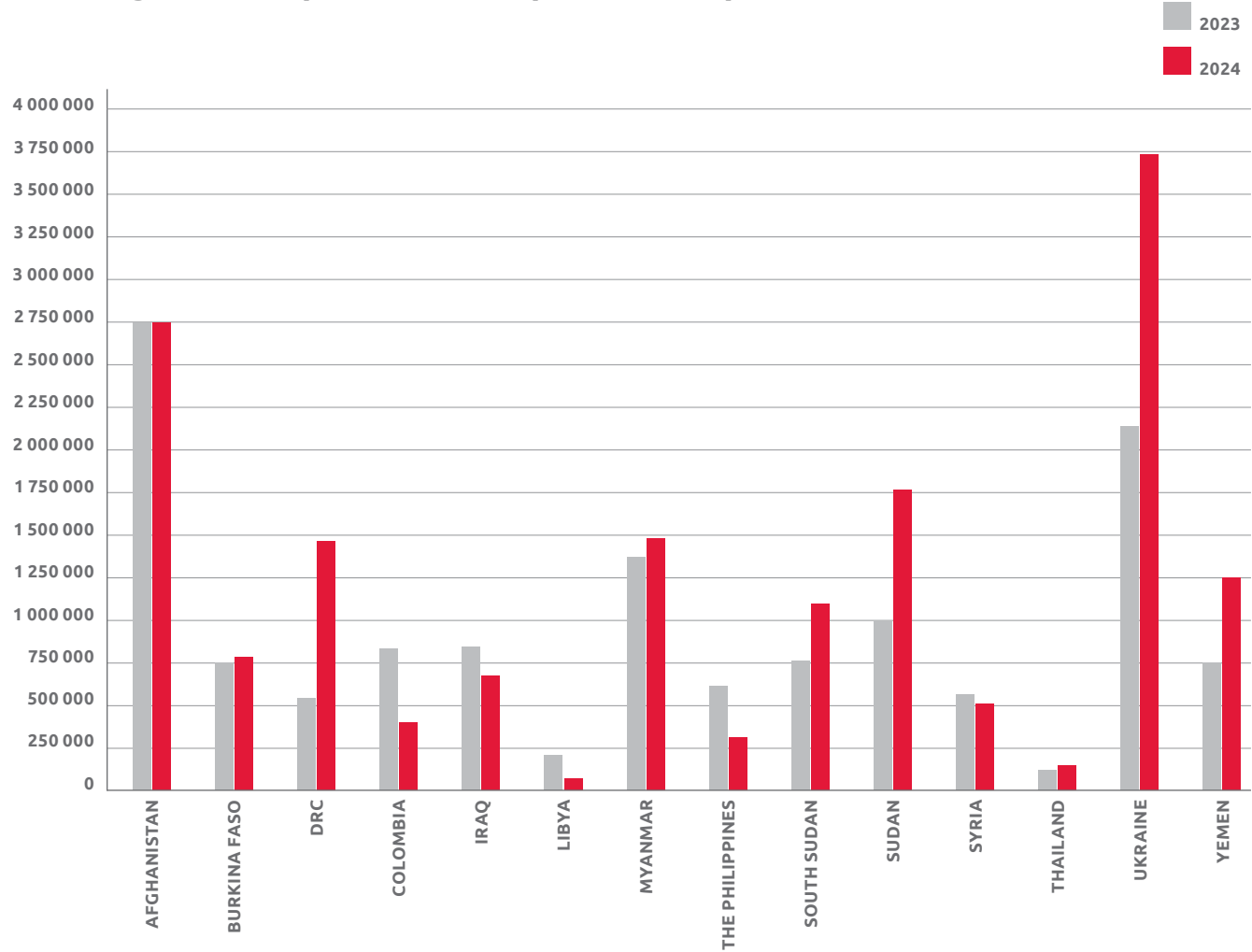


REGIONS	COUNTRIES	GRAND TOTAL
Africa Sahel	Burkina Faso	778,186
	Total Africa Sahel	778,186
Africa Great Lakes & Horn of Africa	DRC	1,459,077
	South Sudan	1,097,559
	Sudan	1,754,455
	Libya	62,153
	Total Africa Great Lakes & Horn of Africa	4,373,245
	TOTAL AFRICA	5,151,430
MENA	Iraq	666,232
	Syria	500,920
	Yemen	1,239,937
	TOTAL MENA	2,407,089
Latin America	Colombia	391,970
	TOTAL LATIN AMERICA	391,970
Asia/Europe	Afghanistan	2,731,956
	Myanmar	1,472,236
	Philippines	308,104
	Thailand	142,810
	Ukraine	3,719,718
	TOTAL ASIA/EUROPE	8,374,824
Programme Support	PRL	769,394
	TOTAL PROGRAMME SUPPORT	769,394
PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE		17,094,707
ADMINISTRATION/ SUPPORT EXPENDITURE		2,862,807
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURE		19,957,514

Operating Expenditure



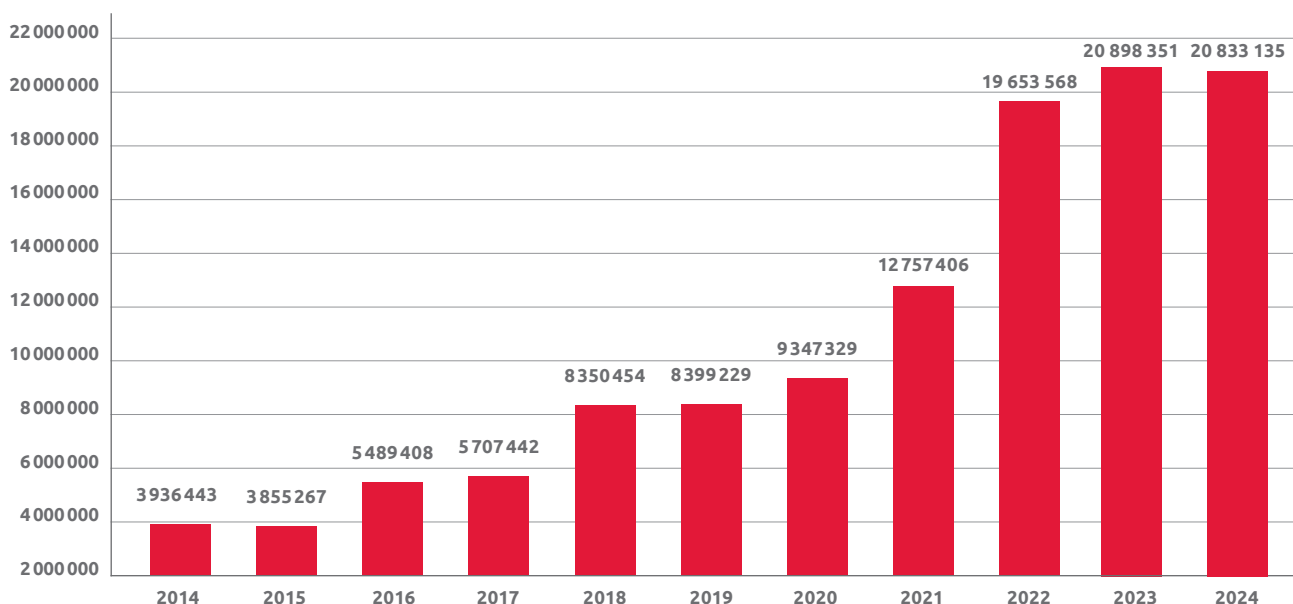
Field Programme Expenditure Comparison 2023/2024



Balance sheet (CHF)

	2024	2023
Cash and cash equivalent	6,903,406	5,237,799
Current accounts	149	7,301
Receivables from donors	2,113,842	3,451,279
Other receivables	1,369,207	1,109,026
Prepayments and accrued income	1,069,569	407,795
CURRENT ASSETS	11,456,174	10,213,200
Fixed assets	-	-
NON-CURRENT ASSETS	-	-
TOTAL ASSETS	11,456,174	10,213,200
Payables due to suppliers of goods and services	447,692	368,610
Other liabilities	175,346	188,714
Accrued expenses	883,044	616,097
CURRENT LIABILITIES	1,506,083	1,173,421
Restricted Funds	2,975,613	5,253,130
OPERATING FUNDS	2,975,613	5,253,130
Organisational fund balances		
- Initial unrestricted funds	50,000	50,000
- Net surplus/(Deficit)	3,263,354	2,154,575
- Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	2,185,334	1,108,779
- Unrestricted Funds	1,475,790	473,294
TOTAL ORGANISATIONAL FUND BALANCES	6,974,478	3,786,648
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND ORGANISATIONAL FUND BALANCES	11,456,174	10,213,200

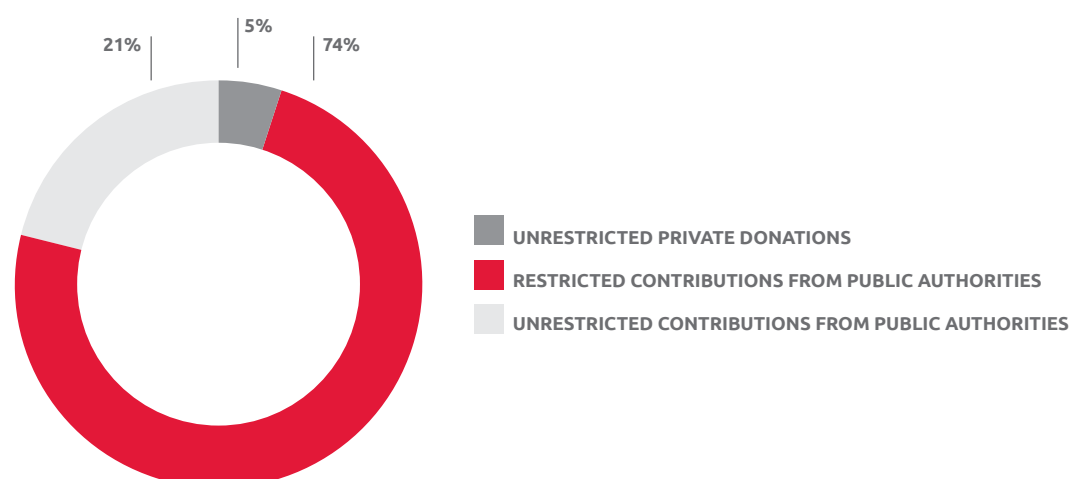
Evolution of Geneva Call income 2014 - 2024 (CHF)



Statement of operations (CHF)

	2024	2023
CONTRIBUTIONS		
Contributions received from private foundations/donors		
- restricted	-	-
- unrestricted	1,015,850	107,408
Contributions received from public authorities/ non-governmental organization		
- restricted (a)	14,267,730	16,776,979
- unrestricted (b)	4,380,198	2,913,097
Other contributions unrestricted	1,169,357	1,100,866
TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS	20,833,135	20,898,351
OPERATING EXPENDITURE	19,957,517	18,053,012
Project expenditure	16,902,597	15,185,149
Administrative expenditure	2,754,749	2,593,421
Fundraising expenditure	300,172	274,442
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURE	19,957,518	18,053,012
ALLOCATION/USE OF FUNDS	-1,949,576	1,373,966
OPERATING RESULT	2,825,193	1,471,373
FINANCIAL RESULT	634,812	349,097
Financial expenses	231,016	155,219
Financial income	30,159	-
Net exchange loss/(gain)	433,955	193,878
Exchange gain		
EXCEPTIONAL RESULT	-5,047	-13,497
Prior years income	-	7,733
Prior years expenses	5,047	21,230
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR	2,185,334	1,108,779
SURPLUS FROM CURRENT OPERATIONS	1,185,334	1,108,779
EXCEPTIONAL DONATION TO INCREASE OUR ORGANISATIONAL FUNDS	1,000,000	-

Sources of funding





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Geneva Call is pleased to highlight its progress in protecting civilian populations during armed conflicts while successfully managing organizational growth.

This achievement has been made possible through the invaluable support of donors and partners, whose contributions enable the organization to sustain and expand its humanitarian efforts. Their support comes in various forms, each playing a vital role in advancing Geneva Call's mission.

Unrestricted funding ensures the organization can maintain essential operations and respond swiftly to emerging needs, while earmarked funding allows for targeted interventions and enables tailored programs addressing both thematic and regional priorities. Both types of funding are crucial to its success and Geneva Call remains committed, alongside its donors and partners, to upholding humanitarian principles and protecting vulnerable populations worldwide. We sincerely thank our donors for their generous contributions, which make our vital work possible:

For unearmarked contributions

- The governments of Finland (Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Centre for Peace Mediation), Norway (Ministry of Foreign Affairs & NORAD), Sweden (Sida-Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency), Spain (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union & Cooperation), Switzerland (Federal Department of Foreign Affairs - Peace & Human Rights Division), and the City of Geneva.

For earmarked regional and thematic contributions

- The governments of Canada (Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade & Development - Global Affairs Canada), Germany (Federal Foreign Office-S08), Italy (Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation-through the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining), Liechtenstein (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Luxembourg (Ministry of Foreign & European Affairs), Norway (Ministry of Foreign Affairs & NORAD), and the European Commission ECHO via partnerships with Diakonia).

For earmarked (program/project) contributions

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- The European Commission (i) ECHO via partnerships with Norwegian Refugee Council; (ii) FPI; and (iii) INTPA including via a partnership with the Berghof Foundation.



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Geneva Call relies on the generosity of its donors to continue protecting civilians in conflict-affected areas and upholding humanitarian

principles. Your support—whether through unrestricted funding, thematic contributions, or project-specific aid—enables us to respond swiftly to crises, implement impactful programs, and adapt to the evolving needs of vulnerable populations. By partnering with us, you play a vital role in strengthening humanitarian action and ensuring that those affected

by armed conflicts receive the protection and assistance they need. Together, we can make a meaningful difference—join us in our mission today.

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