



PRESERVING HUMANITY ON ALL FRONTS

Geneva Call | Annual Report 2025



Photo on cover:

Luis Tato/AFP. Members of the M23 armed group sit on a pickup truck during a patrol as women carrying fruits walk past a market, following the takeover of the city by the M23 movement in Bukavu on February 18, 2025.

Foreword

As we look back on 2025, the global landscape was marked by deepening geopolitical fragmentation and an alarming erosion of respect for International Humanitarian Law (IHL) in every theatre of war.

Inter-state wars, alongside persistent non-international armed conflicts, intensified violence, while civilians continued to bear the heaviest consequences. In many contexts, the rules designed to limit the suffering caused by war were openly challenged, selectively applied, or disregarded altogether - often amid paralysis within key international bodies. The normalisation of violence against civilians, the destruction of civilian infrastructure, the use of advanced weapons technologies, and the shrinking space for humanitarian access reflected a troubling shift in the conduct of hostilities.

This Annual Report captures the volatility and complexity that defined the environments in which Geneva Call operated throughout the year. In numerous settings, armed groups and de facto and/or provisional authorities (AGDAs) expanded their territorial control, at times outpacing weakened state institutions. At the same time, humanitarian actors faced increasing constraints, including sharp cuts in their funding, insecurity - with high numbers of humanitarian workers killed throughout the year - access restrictions, and diminished international consensus around core humanitarian norms, compounded by a less effective multilateral response.

In the face of these developments, we remain committed to protecting civilians and preserving basic human dignity in conflict situations. Since its founding twenty-five years ago, Geneva Call has viewed IHL not merely as a legal framework, but as a practical and universal tool to protect civilians. Although IHL was frequently contested in 2025, we continued to see that it provided a shared language through which to foster dialogue with armed groups. In some contexts, this engagement revealed a paradox: certain armed groups demonstrated openness to applying humanitarian norms, even as overall adherence appeared inconsistent. Even where global consensus seemed fragile, humanitarian norms retained their relevance on the ground.

Throughout the year, we worked to promote broader understanding and application of IHL among AGDAs, and to strengthen community resilience. Our efforts focused on translating legal principles into operational realities, often by connecting IHL with customary, religious, or traditional norms that resonate locally. By grounding humanitarian norms in diverse value systems, we sought to reinforce the obligation of those bearing arms to respect the protection owed to civilians.

We remained guided by the conviction that engagement is possible - even in polarised and hostile environments. Experience continued to show that humanity can be found even among actors whose conduct raises serious concern. Incremental progress achieved through sustained dialogue and trust-building resulted in meaningful improvements for affected communities.

The progress described in this report reflects the dedication and courage of our global team working in complex and high-risk settings. It also reflects the commitment of our partners and supporters, whose trust and resources enabled us to sustain principled engagement at a time when such engagement was urgently needed.

In a period when confidence in international norms is under strain, strong governance and institutional accountability were more important than ever. Over the past year, we continued to strengthen our systems, policies, and oversight mechanisms to ensure transparency, effectiveness, and responsible stewardship of resources.

As Chair of the Board of Trustees and Director General, we are proud of the achievements of our teams under exceptionally challenging circumstances. At the same time, we are acutely aware of the scale of the task ahead. In a world where respect for humanitarian law cannot be taken for granted - and where its defence is increasingly shaped by fragmented power dynamics - our resolve to protect civilians in armed conflict remains firm.



Jean Keller
Chairman of the Board



Alain Délétroz
Director General

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2025: Navigating a fractured world

In 2025, the global landscape was marked by an exceptionally high level of armed conflict alongside significant shifts in the international order. While the number of violent events worldwide remained similar to 2024 levels, it was nearly double that of 2021¹, underscoring the persistence of violence as a defining feature of the period. This trend was characterised by both inter-state wars and enduring non-international armed conflict, often involving proxy actors backed by external powers.

At the same time, structural changes in the global order signalled a clear inflection point. These included a major shift in United States foreign policy, which has led to questions about the future shape of international cooperation.

U.S.–China strategic competition intensified, while divisions among major powers increasingly paralysed collective responses to crises, further fragmenting the international system.

Together, these developments further complicated the delivery of humanitarian aid. Reaching and assisting the world's most vulnerable people became even more difficult, as weakened multilateral action and constrained access limited effective response. As a result, many began to question the international community's

ability to manage an increasingly complex and contested world.

This complexity has been compounded by ongoing climate-related disruptions, which have further destabilised already fragile regions, including the African Sahel, the Middle East, and areas of Central and Southern Asia.

In Sudan, the long-running civil war continued with intense fighting across Darfur, Kordofan, and parts of central Sudan. The human cost has been enormous, with over 30 million people² or approximately two-thirds of the population, requiring aid, and acute food insecurity in multiple areas.

The war in Ukraine persisted into its fourth year, inflicting heavy civilian casualties and extensive damage to critical infrastructure. Military operations on both

sides have come at enormous cost, including widespread destruction of homes, energy facilities, and essential public services. The prolonged conflict has displaced millions and deepened humanitarian needs.

In Gaza, a glimmer of hope briefly emerged through renewed ceasefire efforts and discussions at the United Nations Security Council on pathways toward de-escalation, after the devastating impact of war, including countless casualties and extensive destruction. However, prospects for a lasting peace have dimmed, reflecting fragile political will and the absence of sustained consensus among key actors.

Meanwhile, in Syria, the fall of the Assad regime in December 2024 brought an end to over 13 years of brutal civil war. 2025 was marked by a broad regional and international consensus on the importance of engaging with the new transitional government and supporting the stabilisation of the country, and the President of the transitional government addressed the United Nations in person in New York. Nevertheless, Syrian society remains deeply fragmented as a legacy of the long and bitter conflict with localised violence and widespread inter-communal tension. At the same time, humanitarian needs are severe with millions requiring assistance.

¹ What's driving conflict today? A review of global trends, ACLED, 11 December 2025.

² Sudan, OCHA, 2025, <https://www.unocha.org/sudan>

Alongside these developments, conflict - often involving increasingly influential armed groups - continued to affect civilian lives across other regions of Africa, Asia and Latin America, underscoring both the breadth of global insecurity and the growing role of armed groups in shaping conflict dynamics, sometimes in contexts where state authority has weakened.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, the M23 armed group³ gained control of Goma and Bukavu, allowing it to consolidate and expand its control over several strategic areas in North and South Kivu, intensifying clashes with government forces and triggering new waves of displacement. In parallel, the activity of AGDAs remained high in Ituri province, with severe consequences for civilians.

Meanwhile in Myanmar, civilians faced widespread violence, including from aerial bombardment and village burnings, which drove displacement, with millions needing humanitarian aid. Protection risks included indiscriminate attacks, forced recruitment, landmines, arbitrary detention and restricted humanitarian access.

Challenges to fundamental humanitarian norms

Throughout 2025, a recurring and deeply concerning trend was the growing disregard for fundamental humanitarian norms. In several contexts, actions by States themselves



contributed to the erosion of respect for the principles of IHL, including the protection of civilians, humanitarian access, and the safeguarding of essential infrastructure - at times in contrast to the engagement of certain armed groups with these norms. Such dynamics risk creating asymmetries in compliance and weakening the normative framework that underpins humanitarian action.

When States are perceived to disregard these obligations, it undermines the credibility and universality of IHL and contributes to its increasing contestation. Combined with limited consensus among major powers and the reduced effectiveness of international mechanisms, this trend reinforces the need for sustained engagement with all parties to conflict to uphold the rules designed to limit the human cost of war.

In this context, Geneva Call continues to firmly believe in the essential role of humanitarian

norms and remains committed to promoting respect for IHL as a universal framework to protect civilians and limit the human cost of armed conflict. It does so by engaging directly with AGDAs through dialogue, formal commitments, and sustained follow-up. The organisation encourages armed groups to publicly commit to specific humanitarian standards through the Geneva Call Deed of Commitment (DoC) and Unilateral Declarations, while supporting their implementation through training, technical guidance, and integration into internal rules and command structures. It also monitors compliance and maintains regular engagement with armed groups, alongside outreach to communities and other stakeholders, to reinforce accountability and ensure that humanitarian principles remain relevant and operational across diverse and evolving conflict settings, ultimately contributing to improved civilian protection and a stronger sense of safety among affected communities.

³ Mouvement du 23 mars (M23).

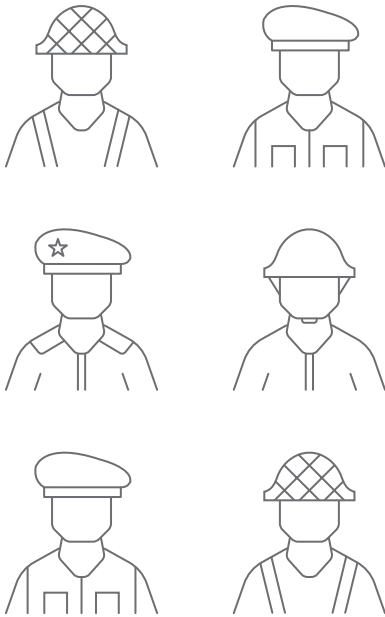
2025 in review

Geneva Call 2025: Scale of engagement and impact

186

Armed groups engaged

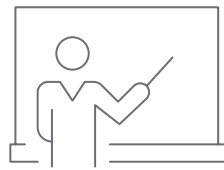
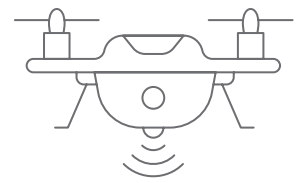
Across multiple conflict-affected contexts.



8,950

Drone operators

Estimated to benefit from practical guidance on IHL compliance in drone operations and the use of unmanned aerial systems.



6,500+

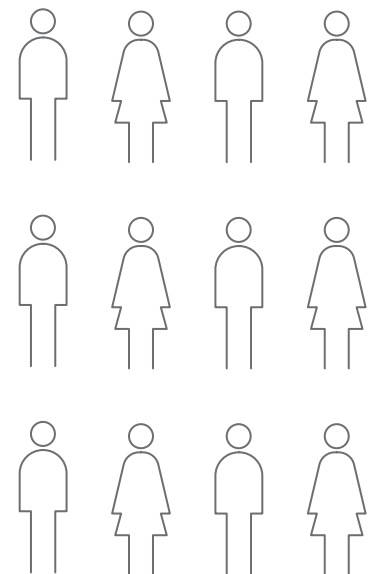
AGDA members

Trained on IHL and protection of civilians.

35 million

People*

Estimated to live in conflict-affected areas where armed actors engaged by Geneva Call are active or influential.



126

Local partner organisations

Engaged across Geneva Call's country missions to strengthen local ownership and translating humanitarian principles into context-specific practices.



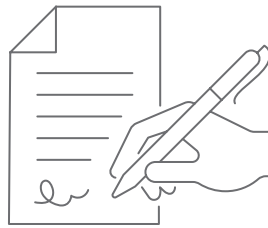
* Figures are indicative and derived from secondary sources (OCHA, IOM, ACLED, national statistics). The population estimate approximates the number of people living in areas where armed actors engaged by Geneva Call are active or influential, or who are affected by conflict at the time of reporting. It is subject to data limitations and should not be interpreted as programme reach, coverage, or attributable impact.

Advancing AGDAs compliance with humanitarian norms

15

New commitments secured

Strengthening AGDA's accountability to humanitarian principles.



44

Sustained dialogues facilitated

Ongoing engagement between armed actors, communities, and humanitarian actors to address protection concerns.

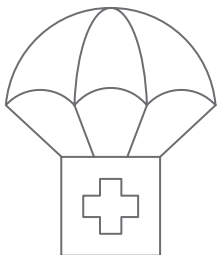


9

Comprehensive compliance assessments conducted

Systematic evaluations of adherence to commitments by armed actors, alongside routine monitoring of compliance.

Contribution to Protection Outcomes



9

Instances of major humanitarian access facilitated

Through engagement with armed actors to enable humanitarian assistance.

101

Community-based initiatives implemented

In partnership with communities and local actors to enhance protection of civilians.



14

Contexts integrating IHL into local norms

With religious, cultural, and community actors.

OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Throughout 2025, Geneva Call continued to engage with AGDAs and communities to address the protection needs of populations affected by armed conflict. These efforts were guided by the organisation's four-year strategy for 2024–2027, designed to ensure that Geneva Call remains flexible and responsive amid increasingly complex humanitarian environments.

In the second year of the strategy's implementation, Geneva Call further advanced the four core strategic objectives that shape its work.

First, the organisation continued to champion the application of IHL. Through sustained engagement, dialogue and training, Geneva Call sought to translate legal obligations into concrete practices for AGDAs that protect civilians and reduce suffering during armed conflict. Fifteen new written commitments were secured with armed groups across six countries (Myanmar, DRC, South Sudan, Sudan, Iraq, and Yemen). These commitments

reflect priority thematic areas based on context-specific risks, including famine and food insecurity, humanitarian access, environment and climate change.

Efforts also focused on ensuring that existing commitments are effectively implemented and monitored. In 2025, in addition to routine monitoring, Geneva Call conducted nine comprehensive reviews of existing commitments across several countries of operation, including Burkina Faso, DRC, Myanmar, Iraq, and South Sudan.

To reinforce accountability, Geneva Call facilitated eight confidential, structured compliance check and pause-and-reflect sessions with armed groups. These sessions enabled Geneva Call to systematically provide evidence-based feedback to armed groups, drawing on monitoring data, community perspectives, and inputs from relevant local stakeholders. They supported the identification of gaps and the development of concrete implementation plans to address key concerns of affected communities.

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Second, Geneva Call maintained a strong focus on the protection of civilians, particularly those most exposed to the consequences of violence. Special attention was given to women, children, and other marginalised or vulnerable groups whose rights and safety are frequently undermined in conflict settings.

Over 30 structured and sustained dialogues were facilitated over time with armed groups, communities, and relevant actors to address evolving protection risks. These iterative engagements contributed to nine negotiated humanitarian access initiatives, improving access to services and enabling the delivery of assistance in AGDA-controlled areas. At community level, over 100 initiatives were implemented in partnership with affected populations, strengthening local protection mechanisms, particularly for women, children, and other marginalised groups most at risk.

Geneva Call also strengthened the integration of gender and intersectional approaches through the development of its Global Gender Framework





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and Rapid Gender and Intersectionality Analysis tool. Targeted staff training enhanced the organisation's capacity to identify and address differentiated forms of civilian harm and to apply these insights in programme design and implementation, improving its ability to deliver more inclusive and context-responsive protection interventions. Overall, these efforts contributed to strengthened protection for civilians, including reduced risks and safer access to essential services.

Third, the organisation worked to reinforce the universality of humanitarian norms. At a time when international legal frameworks face mounting

political and operational pressure, Geneva Call continued to promote the shared values underlying humanitarian principles by integrating IHL into 14 new operational contexts. By connecting IHL with religious, cultural, and traditional norms that resonate locally, the organisation promoted broader acceptance of civilian protection standards.

Fourth, Geneva Call responded to evolving operational demands by pursuing a balanced and strategic approach to programming. As humanitarian needs expanded and operating environments became more constrained, the organisation sought to maximise the effectiveness of its resources

while maintaining principled engagement with armed groups.

Together, these priorities guided Geneva Call's actions throughout 2025, enabling the organisation to strengthen protection outcomes for communities affected by conflict while adapting to rapidly changing circumstances.

Over 100 initiatives were implemented in partnership with affected populations, strengthening local protection mechanisms.

Strengthening impact measurement and accountability

Following the adoption of its Strategy, Geneva Call established a global MEAL framework to ensure a coherent and robust approach to results measurement across all operational contexts. The framework is anchored in a standardised set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and a unified reporting system, enabling a shift from activity-based reporting to the systematic assessment of outcomes. This includes documented changes in knowledge, attitudes and practices among AGDAs, as well as their compliance with humanitarian commitments and related protection outcomes for civilians.

Evaluation practices combine established methodologies with context-adapted approaches. Core methods include the use of log frames, indicator tracking, document reviews and targeted analytical studies. Where feasible, internal evaluations and monitoring missions, including

headquarters-led technical support, are conducted to verify reported results and assess relevance, effectiveness, and implementation quality.

These approaches are complemented by methods designed to capture qualitative and context-specific insights, including outcome harvesting, tracer studies, compliance assessments, Most Significant Change exercises and stakeholder consultations. Where feasible, community perception studies further strengthen feedback loops and ensure that programme adjustments are informed by the experiences of affected populations.

Insights generated through the MEAL framework contribute directly to institutional learning and adaptive programming, strengthening the quality and responsiveness of interventions. The outcomes and impacts highlighted in this report, including the results presented in the “Intervention and Impact” sections for each country of operation, illustrate progress made during 2025.

Championing the application of IHL

Geneva Call continued to promote awareness of humanitarian norms and IHL among AGDAs and relevant stakeholders through training, as well as sustained and confidential dialogue. At the same time, it strengthened AGDAs’ technical capacity to comply with IHL and supported the adaptation of their policies and practices.

In 2025, Geneva Call’s humanitarian engagement reached 186 AGDAs across Eurasia, Africa, the MENA region, and Colombia.

In Sudan, Geneva Call engaged seven AGDAs through high-level meetings, structured dialogue, and IHL/IHRL trainings, reaching 450 officers, including 150 women. In Blue Nile, dialogue platforms convened communities and armed actors, directly benefiting 120 participants and supporting locally mediated solutions. **These efforts contributed to measurable improvements in civilian protection, with outcomes achieved in core conflict-affected localities hosting large internally displaced populations.**

In South Sudan, Geneva Call’s 2025 intervention contributed to improved civilian protection in some of the country’s most violence-affected areas. The intervention combined engagement with armed actors, community dialogue, and capacity strengthening to influence behaviour and reduce protection risks. Engagement with 664 members of armed groups led to the signing of four Unilateral Declarations.





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In **Ukraine**, Geneva Call combined frontline IHL training, policy engagement with the Ministry of Defence, General Staff, and Military Intelligence, and development of innovative digital learning tools. A major achievement was collaboration with the AFU's Unmanned Systems Forces Command to develop practical guidelines on IHL compliance in drone operations. The resulting advisory document was rolled out across units and integrated into training modules. In 2025, **an estimated 8,950 people were reached with this guidance on unmanned systems, with potential reach expected to exceed 100,000 across target audiences** as the guidance is further scaled.

In **Syria**, following the fall of the Assad regime in December 2024, the organisation re-strategised its approach, and **shifted its engagement toward the newly formed transitional government, with sustained**

dialogue established on how to support civilian protection and responsible conduct within emerging security structures. It continued its humanitarian engagement with de facto authorities in northeast Syria, including targeted training for security forces as well as CSOs on IHL and IHRL, alongside community engagement.

In **Afghanistan**, targeted training and dialogue on IHL and human rights law for de facto police officers and commanders contributed to improvements in law enforcement practices, particularly at checkpoints and in facilitating humanitarian access. **Evaluation findings indicate more predictable checkpoint procedures, reduced incidents of violence, and more respectful treatment of civilians, including women and vulnerable groups.** These changes are also reflected in detention practices, with reports indicating improved treatment

of detainees, including greater respect for the presumption of innocence, improved detention conditions, and clearer separation of minors from adults. Geneva Call partnered with 11 local organisations, including 6 women-led and 5 partially women-led entities, to implement community-level initiatives promoting social cohesion and awareness of humanitarian norms.



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In Myanmar, interventions focused on the operational application of IHL, including civilian protection, SGBV prevention, detention practices, child protection, and humanitarian access. An external evaluation found measurable improvements in knowledge and behaviour, with evidence of changes in practice. A member of an armed group reported ending executions of captured fighters, improving detainee treatment, ensuring dignified burial, banning underage recruitment, and introducing safeguards for women detainees.

In Thailand, Geneva Call strengthened the capacity of Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN) to implement its humanitarian commitments. These interventions contributed to concrete changes in BRN practices, including the group reinforcing its disciplinary code to sanction child recruitment, introducing stricter age verification, and integrating IHL into internal training. BRN also reported investigating incidents, applying disciplinary

measures, and revising its Code of Conduct to better align with international standards.

In the Sahel, Geneva Call focused on engaging self-defence armed groups on child protection, education, and respect for the principle of distinction between civilians and combatants, as well as its implications for social cohesion. **Four AGDAs were engaged, resulting in three unilateral declarations on child protection and education** and over seven dialogues with community leaders to promote best practices on the principle of distinction.

In the DRC, sustained humanitarian dialogue with armed groups resulted in **concrete commitments, with four unilateral declarations signed by armed actors, reflecting commitments to adopt practices more consistent with IHL and the protection of civilians.**

In Yemen, Geneva Call's interventions led to improved conduct, awareness, and application of IHL among armed actors, enhancing

civilian protection. Community dialogues fostered trust, prompted operational changes, and translated humanitarian principles into practice, contributing to greater safety and stability for conflict-affected populations.

Prioritising the protection of civilians

In Colombia, Geneva Call emphasised empowering communities to protect themselves. A structured capacity-building process reached 1,721 local leaders, and **monitoring data showed an average 83% increase in leaders' knowledge of IHL and humanitarian negotiation, rising to 90% among Indigenous and Afro-Colombian leaders.** These gains contributed to more informed and timely responses to protection threats at community level.

Community engagement was a priority in the Sahel. **More than 156 local leaders - including imams, village chiefs, women, and youth - were trained on civilian protection and developed action plans.** Geneva Call also secured concrete commitments on the protection of civilian infrastructure (water points, mobile clinics) and made it possible to secure humanitarian corridors in critical blockade zones.

At a community level in South Sudan, Geneva Call's intervention strengthened civilian agency and local protection mechanisms. Engagement with 713 community members and 125 officials increased confidence and capacity to raise protection concerns.





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In Iraq, engagement with more than 20 armed groups contributed to observable changes in practices affecting civilian protection. In several locations, armed actors took steps to reduce risks to civilians, including the evacuation of civilian infrastructure, facilitation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) returning to their areas of origin, and improved humanitarian access in previously constrained areas.

Cultivating the universality of humanitarian norms

Geneva Call's localization approach supports the universality of humanitarian norms by anchoring them in locally relevant systems, values, and actors. Country missions work with local NGOs, CBOs, CSOs, religious institutions, and community

leaders to strengthen local ownership and sustainability.

Approximately 126 local partner organisations are engaged across country missions to translate humanitarian principles into context-specific practices. The Friends of IHL Network (FoIHL) further amplifies this approach, with 13 members in Iraq, 10 in the Philippines, and over 150 organisations and influencers in Yemen. Through these partnerships, humanitarian norms are embedded in local structures, strengthening their acceptance and sustained application by armed actors and communities.

This approach is operationalised through partner-led initiatives, strategic partnerships, and sustained community engagement. Local partners design and implement protection activities through seed grants

and co-implementation, strengthening ownership and local leadership. In parallel, partnerships with religious, community, and national institutions reinforce local influence and support the institutionalisation of humanitarian norms. Engagement with communities, CSOs, and armed actors further promotes dialogue and the development of community-led protection mechanisms, strengthening resilience and shared responsibility for civilian protection.

In Afghanistan, engagement at the community level with religious scholars and decision-makers promoted humanitarian norms through Islamic teachings. As understanding of the compatibility between humanitarian norms and Islam increased, some religious leaders began incorporating these messages into sermons and community discussions, strengthening advocacy for civilian protection, social cohesion, and humanitarian access.

In the Philippines, Geneva Call's work contributed to strengthening local mechanisms to prevent and respond to violence linked to Rido (clan feuds) and other conflicts involving armed group members. Engagement with armed actors supported the uptake of customary norms for community protection. Evidence suggests these norms are being used to guide behaviour, mediate disputes, and reinforce commitments to civilian protection.

Gender and intersectionality

In situations of armed conflict, women and children remain among those most severely affected. They are frequently exposed to targeted violence, including sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and often face barriers to accessing essential services. These risks are particularly acute in areas under the partial or full control of AGDAs and may be further compounded by intersecting factors such as age, disability, socio-economic status, and ethnicity.

Geneva Call recognises the essential role women play in conflict prevention, peace negotiations, peacebuilding, and humanitarian access. Our work promotes women's participation and protection fully in line with UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security [S/RES/1325(2000)].

Consistent with our strategic objective to strengthen civilian protection - especially for women, children, and marginalised groups - Geneva Call applies a gender-sensitive

and context-specific approach across its programming. This includes conducting targeted assessments to better understand local gender roles and norms, the gendered power dynamics within AGDAs, and the differentiated impact of conflict on women and girls, including those who are displaced.

In Sudan, gender considerations were integrated across activities, with 35–45% female participation in civil society trainings and 150 trained female officers. Programming included modules on GBV and child protection, as well as women-led literacy and advocacy initiatives, leading to the formal inclusion of women's protection concerns in dialogue forums. In Ukraine, Geneva Call launched an intersectional gender assessment, beginning with a survey of gender focal points within partner units that received more than 300 responses. In Iraq, Geneva Call ensured the inclusion of women, including activists, humanitarian workers, and representatives of women-led organisations, in dialogue forums, creating safe spaces to raise concerns with armed groups.

Conflict sensitivity in Geneva Call's activities: a commitment to "do no harm"

Geneva Call's field missions systematically apply conflict-sensitive approaches to ensure that their programmes support peace, respond effectively to local conflict dynamics, and reduce the risk of unintended negative impacts on communities and stakeholders, while drawing on international best practices. These approaches include context analysis, risk assessment, stakeholder engagement, AGDA analysis, and adaptive MEAL methods.

In the DRC for example, conflict sensitivity required a careful analysis of local power dynamics when designing programmes, balanced consultation with communities to avoid any perception of bias, monitoring of risks of inadvertent legitimisation of armed groups during implementation, and regular assessments of unintended effects to prevent the escalation of tensions.

In Sudan, Geneva Call integrated conflict sensitivity throughout its engagement with AGDAs by ensuring impartial, needs-based programming that avoids legitimising or strengthening any party to the conflict. At the design stage, stakeholder and conflict analysis guide balanced engagement across affected areas, grounded strictly in IHL and civilian protection priorities. During implementation, structured humanitarian dialogue, dissemination sessions, and support for commitments are conducted transparently to prevent instrumentalization or political manipulation.



Monitoring and evaluation rely on triangulated information, community feedback - including from women and marginalised groups - and verification of behaviour change to assess whether engagement reduces violations and improves civilian protection, while adapting activities to mitigate risks of unintended harm or exacerbating tensions.

To ensure a “do no harm” approach in a fragmented environment in South Sudan, we adjusted engagement strategies to account for continuous defections within groups.

From the outset of the project in Iraq, Geneva Call ensured that its engagement was conflict-sensitive and designed to avoid exacerbating tensions among stakeholders. During the design phase, Geneva Call conducted contextual and protection-focused analysis to identify armed groups to be engaged in 2025 and assess potential risks associated with engagement. Based on this analysis, Geneva Call carefully selected groups that were accessible for engagement and where dialogue could be pursued without undermining humanitarian principles or increasing tensions.

To ensure conflict-sensitive programming, Geneva Call also held meetings and consultations with a variety of stakeholders in Thailand. In the Philippines, engaging CSOs in discussions to analyse recent conflict dynamics, forecasted conflict hotspots, and major context updates, also contributed to ensuring conflict-sensitive programming.



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Advancing safety and security at Geneva Call

Building on the foundations laid in 2024, Geneva Call’s security risk management journey in 2025 was defined by resilience, resourcefulness, and a sharpened focus on what matters most: our people and our mission. In a year marked by financial constraints and an increasingly complex operating environment, the organisation doubled down on staff capacity, programme resilience, and business continuity, consolidating the systems built the year prior.

Perhaps the most telling measure of progress, however, came not just from within, but from beyond Geneva Call’s own walls. Our in-house HEAT training - launched in 2024 as a first for the organisation - reached four additional NGOs in 2025, turning a cost-efficient internal solution

into a sector-wide asset. Geneva Call delivered equivalent training at a fraction of market cost, offering partner organisations savings of over 90%. This shift from internal capability to shared capability is no accident: it reflects a growing conviction across the humanitarian sector that security knowledge should not be siloed, and Geneva Call is helping to lead that change.

Underpinning all of this is an approach that remains deliberately objective-centred and data-driven. In a year when many organisations struggled to maintain security standards under resource pressure, Geneva Call’s staff-centred progression model proved its durability - ensuring that security is not a compliance exercise, but a living system that evolves with the context. As 2026 approached with its own set of uncertainties, that foundation is more valuable than ever.



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INSTITUTIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Geneva Call's operational impact is made possible by solid institutional foundations. In fragile and politically sensitive environments, strong support functions are not ancillary - they are strategic enablers that safeguard access, ensure compliance, mitigate risk, and sustain long-term engagement.

Financial management, sustainability, and funding

In 2025, Geneva Call reinforced its financial architecture to ensure long-term sustainability and strategic agility. Through targeted capacity strengthening, the introduction of internal performance indicators to identify structural constraints, and the streamlining of financial monitoring and reporting systems, the organisation enhanced real-time oversight and decision-making.

This strengthened financial backbone directly supports field operations by ensuring predictable resource allocation, compliance with complex donor requirements, and responsible stewardship of funds in high-risk contexts.

Sustained, flexible engagement and predictable support remain essential to preserving the continuity, trust, and operational presence required to influence behaviour, protect affected communities, and deliver lasting humanitarian outcomes in complex and fragile environments.

Geneva Call's model - based on sustained engagement with AGDAs and affected communities - depends on continuity and institutional stability. Therefore, short funding cycles reduce efficiency and disrupt trust-building processes, while multi-year core and earmarked funding serve not only as financial

support, but as an enabler of durable humanitarian impact.

Despite a highly volatile global funding landscape, Geneva Call achieved full budget coverage in 2025, reinforcing its institutional credibility and the confidence placed in its governance and delivery model.

Digital transformation and IT security

Digital systems are central to operational effectiveness, accountability, and risk management. In 2025, Geneva Call advanced its digital transformation agenda through the rollout of integrated digital forms and automated workflows across HR, IT, finance, procurement, and travel.

These investments have streamlined administrative flows, improved data integrity, strengthened audit trails, and enabled faster, evidence-based decision-making

across headquarters and field operations.

Cybersecurity was further reinforced through upgraded protection measures, internal phishing simulations, and mandatory user training. In environments where information sensitivity can directly affect staff safety and programme access, digital security is a core element of organisational resilience.

The development and implementation of a global security ecosystem portal - integrating location management, incident reporting, and monitoring of minimum-security standards - further strengthens Geneva Call's capacity to manage operational risk proactively and coherently across contexts.

Workforce development, employee engagement, and wellbeing

Human capital remains Geneva Call's most critical asset. In 2025, the organisation continued to strengthen its people-first approach, with particular attention to staff wellbeing, duty of care, and the reinforcement of transparent, fair, and accountable people management systems. These frameworks clarify responsibilities and oversight, ensuring that recruitment and workforce management are conducted in a consistent and well-documented manner across the organisation. Strengthening these systems contributes to staff retention and engagement, organisational resilience, and Geneva Call's ability to operate in complex conflict settings.

HR policies were further updated to strengthen transparent, equitable, and accountable people management systems. By investing in structured workforce development and wellbeing, Geneva Call reinforces its ability to maintain experienced teams capable of sustaining long-term dialogue in complex conflict settings. In parallel, Geneva Call strengthened its safeguarding mechanisms across headquarters and field operations, aligning with emerging safeguarding standards in the humanitarian sector.

Through these initiatives, Geneva Call continued to invest in workforce development, staff protection, and consistent HR standards, strengthening the organisation's capacity to deliver its humanitarian mandate responsibly and effectively.

Relations with donors and partners

Strong institutional systems underpin trusted donor partnerships. The continued confidence of our institutional donors enabled Geneva Call to secure full budget coverage for 2025.

Multi-year core and earmarked contributions remain particularly strategic, providing the financial predictability necessary to sustain engagement in protracted contexts and adapt to evolving operational realities.

Our donors' support has been crucial to advancing our work this year, and we are proud of the strong, collaborative relationships we have built together. Beyond their crucial financial contributions, they have

actively facilitated and strengthened Geneva Call's advocacy efforts by co-hosting a series of roundtables throughout the year, focused on key thematic and regional priorities.

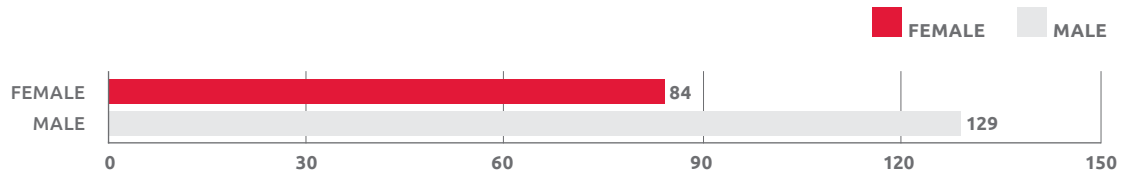
In November 2025, Geneva Call convened its Annual Conference, bringing together senior representatives from institutional donors and strategic partners. Participants reaffirmed their commitment to Geneva Call's mandate and strategic priorities for the coming year. The Conference opened with remarks from the Rt Hon Baroness Chapman of Darlington – Minister of State (International Development and Africa) in the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, who emphasised that as global defence expenditures rise, sustained support for initiatives promoting compliance with IHL is more critical than ever. The event concluded with remarks from H.E. Magnus Hellgren, Permanent Representative of Sweden to the UN and other International Organisations underscoring the essential role that principled engagement with AGDAs continues to play, even as humanitarian action faces growing challenges.

The continued confidence of our **institutional donors** enabled Geneva Call to secure **full budget coverage for 2025.**

HUMAN RESOURCES

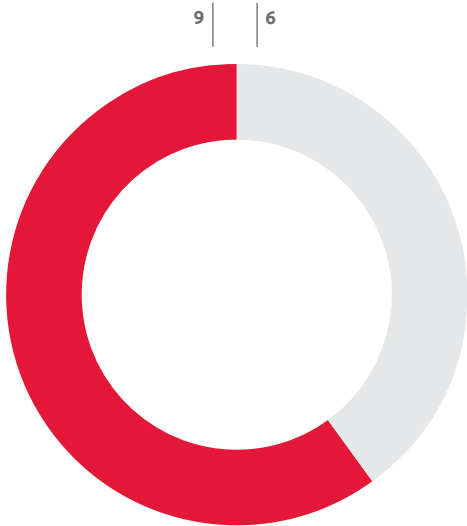
Note: As of December 31, 2025

Overall gender distribution

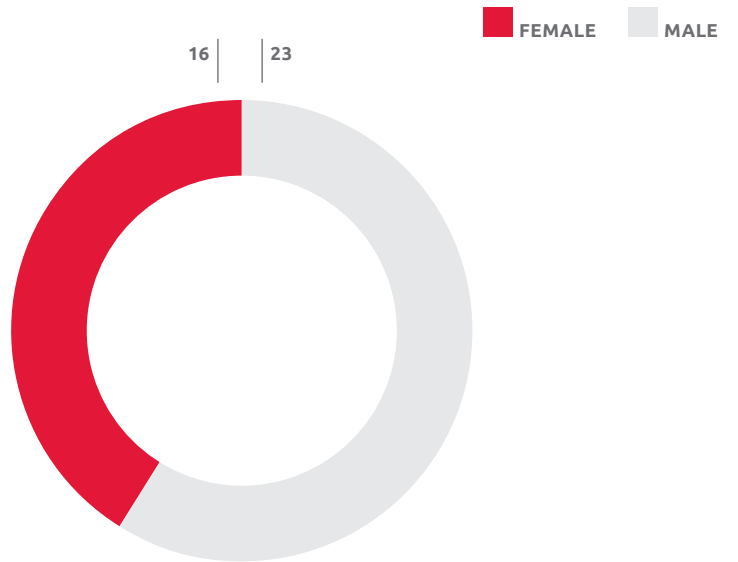


Applicants hired by gender in 2025

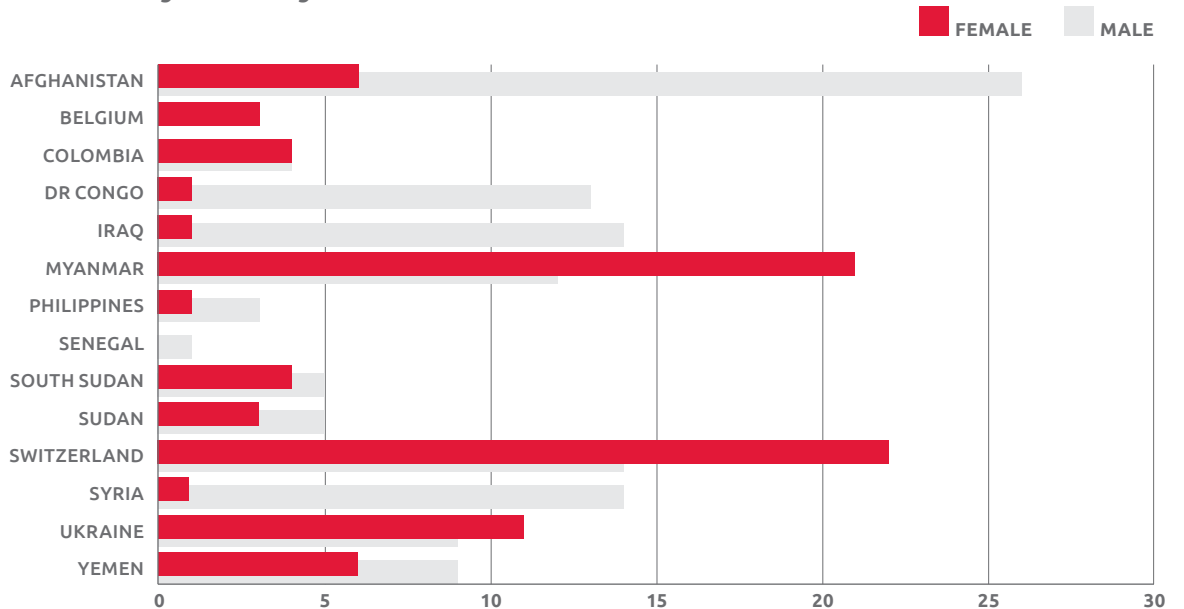
(HQ, Belgium and International recruitment only)



Leadership roles by gender



Gender distribution by country



Marking 25 years of protecting civilians: A moment to reflect



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In 2025, Geneva Call marked 25 years of engagement to protect civilians affected by armed conflict. Over this time period, Geneva Call's work has adapted and expanded to respond to evolving conflict dynamics and civilian protection needs while remaining faithful to our core mission: strengthening the protection of civilians through fostering lasting behaviour change by armed groups and de facto and/or provisional authorities.

From the prohibition of anti-personnel mines to comprehensive protection of civilians

From our very focused initial mission of addressing the indiscriminate harm caused by

anti-personnel mines, Geneva Call has broadened its thematic scope to address the most pressing humanitarian protection concerns that affect the daily lives of millions of civilians in conflict zones, from protecting children

against the effects of hostilities to preventing conflict-related famine. Geneva Call continues to focus on translating normative principles into operational realities, including by connecting international humanitarian norms with customary, religious, or traditional norms that resonate locally. Importantly, our comprehensive approach includes humanitarian access. Humanitarian engagement with armed groups has proven instrumental for securing humanitarian access both for humanitarian organisations to deliver aid and for civilians to safely access essential services, such as healthcare or education.

Engaging on governance

An estimated 204 million⁴ civilians live in areas under the full or partial control of armed groups. The daily reality of these people is shaped by the territorial control of armed groups performing quasi-governmental functions. In such situations, armed groups not merely participate in hostilities but also function as de facto governors, including in hybrid models together with local authorities. They maintain law and order, administer justice, or provide services. To respond to the protection risks in such situations, Geneva Call also engages AGDAs on governance issues to address the rule of law and law enforcement that directly impact civilians daily lives and fundamental rights. Our work with police forces in Afghanistan or our dialogue with the transitional government in Syria to define modalities for promoting responsible conduct are paradigmatic examples of this approach, in cases where armed groups shift to become transitional or de facto governments.

Evolving terminology for a changed landscape

Contemporary conflicts involve a broad variety of armed actors from classical insurgent movements to self-defence groups or community-based groups, many with complex links to state structures. To reflect this diversity and operational reality, Geneva Call has adapted its terminology from armed

non-state actors to armed groups and de facto authorities and/or provisional authorities. The term armed groups is closer to the terminology used in International Humanitarian Law, while the notion of de facto and/or provisional authorities reflects the exercise of quasi-governmental functions exercised by armed groups. Importantly, the term de facto and/or provisional authorities also captures our engagement with armed groups during the critical period of transition when they take control of territory, consolidate power, and establish new governance structures, including as transitional or de facto governments. These volatile periods, as seen in Afghanistan or Syria, require sustained engagement to ensure the protection of civilians as the political landscape shifts.

A broader stakeholder engagement model with an enhanced theory of change

While our core mission to protect civilians through fostering long-lasting behaviour change of armed groups and de facto and/or provisional authorities remains unchanged, Geneva Call engages a broader variety of stakeholders as reflected in our enhanced theory of change under our 2024-2027 Strategy. Importantly, working with affected communities has become paramount to empower them to advocate for their own protection and amplify Geneva Call's work for sustainable, locally grounded impact, including through the development of the friends of IHL networks across our missions for example in Yemen. To enhance this approach, Geneva Call has also developed training and dissemination



⁴ ICRC: 204 million people live in areas controlled or contested by armed groups, ICRC, 24 November 2025. <https://www.icrc.org/en/news-release/icrc-204-million-people-live-areas-controlled-or-contested-armed-groups>

Working with affected communities has become paramount to **empower them to advocate for their own protection.**

materials specifically tailored to engaging communities.

In parallel, Geneva Call has increased its engagement with state authorities, not for behaviour change, but to ensure the acceptance of our field missions and, in some instances, facilitate access to armed groups linked to states as a form of indirect engagement.

Translating this broader stakeholder engagement model in response to an evolving conflict landscape across diverse conflict settings has required significant organisational evolution. Geneva Call's **Policy, Research and Legal (PRL) unit has developed into a multidimensional unit with a strategic and operational function** that bridges global policy processes with field realities. Combining policy leadership on humanitarian issues, field-based research expertise, and legal support on International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law, PRL ensures organisational coherence while working directly with country missions. By integrating field-based research with policy development, supporting evidence-based advocacy, and ensuring that international humanitarian norms are translated into practical,

conflict sensitive dissemination and training materials, PRL enables Geneva Call to maintain consistent standards while remaining responsive to evolving conflict dynamics. This integrated model, connecting normative frameworks with operational implementation, has been essential for scaling impact while expanding thematically and engaging a broader variety of actors all while preserving the principled, evidence-based approach that defines Geneva Call's approach.

Field-based, agile and responsive

Over the past 25 years Geneva Call has transformed into a field-based organisation, leading to important adaptations in our engagement model when operational circumstances demand. This agile and responsive approach enables our field missions to address the most urgent protection challenges and translate international humanitarian norms into concrete realities, whether Geneva Call engages an insurgent group during active armed conflict or an armed group during a transitional period where they transition into governments. With the same agility, Geneva Call will continue to ensure that the protection of civilians will keep pace with the changing nature of armed conflicts, including by addressing how warfare evolves with modern technologies such as the use of autonomous weapons systems and artificial intelligence.

Testimonies from signatories of our Deed of Commitments, civil society representatives, and field colleagues consistently

demonstrate that progress is possible even in the most challenging environments when engagement is principled, sustained, and grounded in local realities.

Another important innovation in Geneva Call's approach has been the establishment of sustained dialogue forums bringing together AGDAs, community and civil society representatives. By fostering safe, direct exchanges on protection concerns, these mechanisms support practical solutions, reduce violations, and enhance social cohesion.

Looking forward

As Geneva Call reflects on a quarter century of action, it does so with profound gratitude. The organisation's achievements have been made possible through the dedication of its staff, the trust of communities, the openness of armed groups willing to engage, and the steadfast support of institutional partners and authorities, including those in Geneva, where the organisation was founded and continues to be anchored.

While challenges remain significant, the past 25 years have shown that change is achievable. Geneva Call remains committed to ensuring that humanity comes first in armed conflict - and to strengthening respect for humanitarian norms wherever they are needed.

The past **25 years** have shown that **change is achievable.**

Countries of operation 2025⁵



⁵ The country pages in the following section are listed by geographical area.



COLOMBIA

Context

In 2025, Colombia saw an escalation of its internal conflict, continuing a trend since 2018. On January 16, the ELN launched a major offensive against the EMBF⁶, causing the largest single mass displacement in the country's history, with over 64,000 people displaced. AGDAs operated in 60% of municipalities, affecting roughly 12 million rural residents.⁷ Humanitarian impacts were severe, including 150,000 people confined, 96,000 displaced⁸, a 190% rise in kidnappings, 270% increase in child recruitment, and rising landmine accidents and homicide⁹. Violence was concentrated along strategic corridors linked to illicit economies. Government negotiations and partial accords failed to curb the conflict.

Intervention and Impact

Operating under legal constraints that prohibit direct engagement with armed groups, Geneva Call maintained a strategy centred on strengthening community-based protection. In 2025, the organisation supported 60 conflict-affected rural communities within the "conflict arc" spanning Norte de Santander,

Arauca, and Nariño, a region with an estimated population of approximately 3.7 million people¹⁰.

Through this approach, **Geneva Call reached 5,287 people and strengthened the capacity of 1,721 local leaders who play a key role in community-level protection.**

Monitoring data shows an average 83% increase in leaders' knowledge of International Humanitarian Law and humanitarian negotiation, rising to 90% among Indigenous and Afro-Colombian leaders. These gains contributed to more informed and timely responses to protection threats at community level.

Geneva Call also partnered with the Norwegian Refugee Council, Première Urgence Internationale, the Catholic Church, and Caritas Colombia, including training 47 priests to strengthen local mediation capacity.

These results were achieved through structured training, practical protection measures, and continuous advisory support. The introduction of on-demand advisory services and multi-community protection committees improved coordination and



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enabled more timely responses to high-risk situations.

These capacities were applied in practice; in Nariño, supported leaders used humanitarian channels in response to a kidnapping, contributing to the release of an abducted individual through coordination with the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Challenges

In 2025, Geneva Call's main operational challenge in Colombia remained the inability to engage directly with armed groups, limiting its capacity to influence their behaviour and protect civilians. Despite advocacy under Law 2272 of 2022, authorisation has not been granted. Still, efforts continue, including raising awareness among presidential candidates ahead of the August 2026 election. Intensifying armed confrontations further constrained dialogue, as AGDAs consolidating or defending territory were less receptive to IHL discussions, and communities were cautious in engagement. Geneva Call prioritised intervention areas where civilian needs and protection opportunities could realistically be addressed.

⁶ National Liberation Army (ELN) and Estado Mayor de Bloques y Frentes (EMBF), a dissident FARC faction.

⁷ OCHA, Humanitarian Response Plan 2026

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Human Rights Watch, Colombia: entre guerra e impunidad – informe sobre violencia y derechos humanos, available at: <https://colombiasupport.net/2026/02/the-human-rights-watch-report-on-colombia>

¹⁰ DANE, Population projections and demographic statistics, available at: <https://www.dane.gov.co/index.php/estadisticas-por-tema/demografia-y-poblacion/proyecciones-de-poblacion>



SAHEL REGION

Context

The year 2025 marked a turning point in the Central Sahel, as the security crisis deepened into a broader geopolitical rupture that reshaped assistance and protection dynamics. National armies, supported by civilian auxiliaries and foreign partners, intensified military operations. Armed groups expanded their influence: JNIM¹¹ adopted siege tactics around key cities, while Islamic State affiliates escalated violence in Liptako-Gourma. These groups now act as de facto authorities, taxing populations and controlling resources. Civilians face extreme insecurity, with widespread violence, displacement, and school closures. As many as 31 million people required life-saving assistance, while aid became fragmented as Western support declined and new partners prioritised military and economic interests¹².

Intervention and Impact

Geneva Call began operations in the Sahel in 2018 in Mali, expanding to Burkina Faso in 2021 and Niger in 2022. As restrictions imposed by military regimes intensified, the organisation shifted from a country-based presence to a decentralised, multi-country model managed

from Dakar, Senegal, enabling continued engagement.

In 2025, Geneva Call engaged four self-defence armed groups (AGDAs) in the Central Sahel region, including two in Burkina Faso, one in Niger, and one operating across Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso. Engagement focused on child protection, education, and respect for the principle of distinction, including its implications for social cohesion and intercommunal conflict. This resulted in the signing and implementation of three unilateral declarations and seven dialogues with community leaders, promoting practices to better distinguish civilians from combatants.

In a context where direct engagement with armed groups is increasingly criminalised, Geneva Call adopted indirect and decentralised approaches. Through cross-border dialogue, awareness sessions in neutral locations, and networks of trusted mediators, the organisation maintained contact with complex and hard-to-reach armed groups, preserving space for humanitarian engagement.

Community engagement complemented these efforts. Geneva Call mobilised influential religious leaders to align



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humanitarian norms with local values and supported local partners operating under restrictive conditions with advocacy tools. A total of 156 local leaders - including imams, traditional chiefs, women, and youth - were trained on civilian protection and developed action plans. Partnerships with four local organisations further enabled sustained, low-profile engagement, strengthening locally driven protection efforts.

Challenges

In 2025, Geneva Call operated within a complex environment, characterised by a narrowing of the humanitarian space and an increasing integration of armed actors within local populations, notably through the emergence of self-defence movements. This fragmentation of command structures necessitated an adaptation of our protection strategies. The organisation responded by strengthening its neutrality, developing indirect technical dialogue, and deploying community awareness tools based on simplified commitments tailored to local realities.

¹¹ Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM)

¹² OCHA (2025), HNRO 2025: Over 31 million Sahelians need lifesaving assistance and protection. Available at: Sahel HNRO 2025 (ReliefWeb)



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Context

In 2025, the conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) intensified with the March 23 Movement (M23) expanding control over North and South Kivu, capturing Goma and Bukavu, and displacing civilians. Local “Wazalendo” groups supported the FARDC, complicating the security landscape. In Ituri, armed group activity, including CRP, CODECO, FRPI, and MAIC¹³, escalated intercommunal violence and attacks on civilians and infrastructure. Compared with 2024, violence increased, alliances fragmented, and humanitarian needs worsened. More than 5.3 million people were internally displaced, while 14.9 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance, compared to approximately 11 million the previous year¹⁴.

Intervention and Impact

Since 2014, Geneva Call has been active in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, engaging with 30 AGDAs, particularly in North Kivu and Ituri, to promote respect for humanitarian norms and protect civilian populations amid persistent armed violence,

displacement, intercommunal tensions, and attacks on essential infrastructure.

In North Kivu, Geneva Call’s engagement focuses on community-based armed groups with political and military influence, including M23, with whom operational engagement has been progressively developed, laying the foundation for a more formal and sustainable engagement. In this regard, it is important to highlight that Geneva Call has initiated interactions with M23 at different levels, leading to the establishment of a structured operational engagement framework. In Ituri, the intervention targets groups shaped by tribal and ethnic dynamics, particularly within the context of the historical Hema-Lendu conflict.

In 2025, sustained humanitarian engagement included 37 bilateral meetings and 26 training sessions, reaching approximately 780 members and leaders of armed groups. **This engagement resulted in concrete commitments, with four unilateral declarations signed**

by armed actors, reflecting commitments to adopt practices more consistent with IHL and the protection of civilians.

In parallel, Geneva Call strengthened the capacity of local communities to promote their own protection. A total of 61 communities in conflict-affected areas were engaged through awareness sessions, training, and dialogue, enhancing understanding of humanitarian norms, reinforcing early-warning mechanisms, and supporting locally led initiatives to prevent violence. Approximately 455,300 people are estimated to live in areas where Geneva Call operated in 2025¹⁵.

More than **5.3 million people** were internally displaced, while **14.9 million people** were in need of humanitarian assistance.

¹³ Wazalendo: the generic name for patriot groups in the DRC; FARDC: Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo; CRP: Convention for the Popular Revolution; CODECO: Cooperative for the development of Congo; FRPI: Patriotic Resistance Front of Ituri; MAIC: Mayi-Mayi militias.

¹⁴ OCHA (2025), *Democratic Republic of the Congo – Global Humanitarian Overview*. Available at: <https://humanitarianaction.info/document/global-humanitarian-overview-2026/article/democratic-republic-congo-4>

¹⁵ Based on OCHA ADM2 population data (HDX) (<https://data.humdata.org/dataset/cod-ps-cod>). The estimate reflects populations in intervention areas across Masisi, Rutshuru, Lubero, parts of Walikale, and selected areas of Ituri Province, derived from demographic and monitoring data.



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Together, these efforts contributed to improved interactions between armed actors and communities and to a more protective environment for civilians in areas of engagement. They also fostered trust and acceptance for humanitarian work in sensitive contexts. This is illustrated by the release of two humanitarian workers kidnapped by an AGDA in North Kivu, which enabled the continuation of INGO activities in the same area.

Challenges

Geneva Call faced volatile security, fragmented armed groups, and limited resources in North Kivu and Ituri. To maintain impact, it used flexible planning, strengthened local dialogue, monitored leaders closely, expanded awareness efforts, and leveraged localisation and partnerships to gradually extend coverage, including high-need areas like South Kivu.

Geneva Call **strengthened the capacity of local communities** to promote their own protection.



SUDAN

Context

In 2025–2026, Sudan’s civil war between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF) remained uncontained, with intense fighting across Darfur, Kordofan, and central regions. The RSF captured key towns, triggering mass displacement and reported atrocities, while drone and artillery strikes killed civilians. Tribal militias and armed groups further fragmented the conflict. Over 30 million people required aid¹⁶, with famine or near-famine conditions, disease outbreaks, and blocked humanitarian access worsening protection risks, including trafficking and forced recruitment. Economic collapse, flooding, and displacement compounded the crisis. Ceasefires failed, peace talks stalled, and international actors increased funding while urging end to hostilities.

Intervention and Impact

Geneva Call expanded its engagement in Sudan in 2025, scaling up structured programming in Blue Nile State to strengthen compliance with International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and International Human Rights Law (IHRL) among armed groups and de facto authorities (AGDAs). The intervention was adapted to evolving conflict dynamics, access constraints, broader protection risks, and the heightened threat of gender violence, particularly for women and girls in displacement affected and insecure settings. In Blue Nile, engagement focused on SPLM-N/Agar-controlled areas in Kurmuk, Bau, Damazine, and Wad El-Mahi. Nationally, activities extended to Kassala, Gedaref, Gezira, and selected areas in Darfur where engagement remained feasible.

Across these areas, Geneva Call engaged seven AGDAs through high-level meetings, structured dialogue, and IHL/IHRL trainings, reaching 450 officers, including 150 women. In Blue Nile, dialogue platforms convened communities and armed actors. 255 CSO representatives and community leaders (45% women) were trained through ToT and cascade workshops.

These efforts contributed to measurable improvements in civilian protection in Blue Nile. Monitoring and endline data show perceived safety increased from 2.5 to 4.1 (out of 5), with 80% of respondents reporting reduced tensions in relation to programme activities. Field reports from Kurmuk, Bau, and Wad El-Mahi corroborate these findings, indicating fewer incidents of harassment and improved respect for civilian infrastructure. In Bau, dialogue platforms facilitated negotiated humanitarian access and mediated land disputes.

These outcomes were achieved in core conflict-affected localities hosting large internally displaced populations. IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) data from December 2025 estimate approximately 256,000 IDPs across key

“The discussions on **humanitarian access and food security** helped us reassess how checkpoints operate and how we interact with **civilians and aid actors,**”
said a Field Commander, JEM¹⁷ (Training Session, Kassala, 2025)

¹⁶ OCHA, *Sudan Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025*. Available at: <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/sudan/sudan-humanitarian-needs-and-response-plan-2025-overview>

¹⁷ Justice and Equality Movement (JEM)



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programme areas, including Bau, Ed Damazine, Al Kurmuk, and Wad El-Mahi¹⁸, indicating that improved protection conditions were realised in settings with high exposure to conflict and displacement-related risks.

At community level, 255 leaders (45% women) strengthened their ability to engage armed actors on protection concerns, including through dialogue and mediation. Emerging local initiatives suggest increased community ownership of protection efforts. Additional support included Training of Trainers for 55 civil society leaders and eight community workshops. Coordination with ICRC, NRC, OCHA, HAC, and state authorities enabled sustained access and operational continuity.

Challenges

In 2025, Geneva Call faced a volatile security environment marked by escalating clashes, drone attacks, shifting territorial control, which limited access to AGDAs and communities, disrupting dialogues. Activities moved to safer areas, partner-led delivery expanded, coordination with HAC, UNDSS, humanitarian actors

intensified. Political polarisation constrained inter-faction dialogue, shifting engagement to bilateral formats. Bureaucratic delays were mitigated through pre-clearance meetings and improved coordination. Adaptive programming, localisation and relationship-building sustained operations and protected humanitarian space.

“Continued engagement with Geneva Call has clarified our **obligations under IHL and strengthened our internal accountability.** Commanders now better understand the **consequences of violations,**”

said a Senior Political Representative of SPLM-N/Agar¹⁹ (IHL/DoC Workshop, Damazine, 2025)

¹⁸ IOM, Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) Sudan – IDP Master List, 31 December 2025. Reported IDPs include: Bau (102,422), Ed Damazine (121,865), Al Kurmuk (21,115), and Wad El-Mahi (10,456). The estimate reflects civilians living in areas of armed group influence and is indicative, not a measure of programme beneficiaries.

¹⁹ Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North.



SOUTH SUDAN



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Context

The conflict landscape in 2025 was marked by a significant deterioration in the political transition, bringing South Sudan closer to large-scale civil war. The Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) was on the brink of collapse following the house arrest and indictment of First Vice President Riek Machar, which heightened tensions within the unity government. Fighting intensified between state forces and SPLM/A-IO factions²⁰ amid growing fragmentation and ethnic mobilisation. Humanitarian needs reached record levels, with widespread killings, sexual violence, forced recruitment, and restricted aid access. Flooding, economic crisis, and acute food insecurity compounded suffering, while international partners maintained sanctions and prioritised humanitarian stabilisation.

Intervention and Impact

Geneva Call's 2025 intervention contributed to improved civilian protection in some of South Sudan's most violence-affected areas, including Jonglei, Upper Nile, and the Pibor Administrative Area. These regions are central to a crisis affecting 9.3 million

people in need nationwide and are marked by escalating violence and fragmentation of armed actors.

The intervention combined engagement with armed actors, community dialogue, and capacity strengthening to influence behaviour and reduce protection risks. Engagement focused on six high-impact armed groups and community protection forces, including SPLM/A-IO, NAS, Murle forces, Gelweng, the White Army, and elements of SSOA. These actors are central to conflict dynamics driving recurrent violence and displacement, with an estimated 198,000 people displaced in Jonglei and Upper Nile²¹.

Engagement with 664 members of armed groups led to the signing of four Unilateral Declarations and the development of three policy commitments. Post-signature monitoring indicates early behavioural change, including reduced civilian interference during seasonal movements and decreased occupation of civilian infrastructure in some areas.

At community level, Geneva Call's intervention strengthened civilian agency and local protection mechanisms. Engagement with 713 community members and 125 officials increased confidence

and capacity to raise protection concerns. Training 254 civil society actors and engaging 335 participants in dialogue established early warning and mediation mechanisms, contributing to reduced tensions. Six SGBV-focused workshops and neutral dialogue platforms further strengthened protection and accountability.

Challenges

In 2025, fragmentation and frequent defections within groups such as the SSPDF and SPLM/A-IO undermined centralised command, limiting the impact of high-level commitments and weakening compliance among splinter factions and allied militias. To address this, we shifted from primarily top-level advocacy to training mid-level commanders, reaching 342 armed group members to strengthen frontline understanding of IHL despite shifting loyalties. Partnerships provided access to splinter groups. To mitigate risks of being perceived as granting AGDAs political legitimacy, we maintained transparency with 125 government officials and emphasised neutrality. All our messaging focused strictly on the humanitarian consequences of war and the legal obligations of all "parties to the conflict," successfully decoupling protection from politics.

²⁰ Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army-in-Opposition (SPLM/A-IO).

²¹ OCHA, *South Sudan Humanitarian Snapshot (May 2025)*: <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/south-sudan/south-sudan-humanitarian-snapshot-may-2025>



UKRAINE

Context

In 2025, the war between Russia and Ukraine intensified significantly, with civilian casualties rising 31% from 2024 and 70% from 2023, making it the deadliest year of the conflict according to the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission (UNHRMM). The surge was largely driven by expanded drone warfare, including ‘first person view’ (FPV) drones at the frontline and large-scale Russian aerial assaults on cities such as Kyiv, Dnipro, and Lviv. Attacks on energy and water infrastructure during the harsh winter of 2025/26 left thousands without basic services. Despite strong international backing, U.S. policy shifts and stalled peace talks failed to alter a largely static frontline. Geneva Call engaged 16 Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU) target units under an MoU with the Ministry of Defence.

Intervention and Impact

Geneva Call has operated in Ukraine since 2018, initially engaging autonomous armed groups involved on both sides of the conflict and with the de facto authorities in the self-proclaimed ‘people’s republics’ in Donetsk and Luhansk. By 2025, its work had evolved to focus on 16 target units within the AFU, while continuing to engage a broader range of units to maximise the impact of its IHL programme. Its approach combined frontline IHL training for soldiers and commanders, policy engagement with the Ministry of Defence, General Staff, and Military Intelligence, and the development of innovative digital learning tools.

These digital tools, branded “Code of Warriors of Light,” included an online IHL library, the interactive “Laws of War Bootcamp,” which consists of the E-Learning platform, practical web application and the gamified first-person app “Decisions Under Fire,” designed to simulate battlefield decision-making under pressure. Promotion occurred through military education networks and social media outreach.

A major achievement was collaboration with the AFU’s Unmanned Systems Forces Command to develop practical guidelines on IHL compliance in drone operations. The resulting

advisory document was rolled out across units and integrated into training modules. **In 2025, an estimated 8,950 personnel benefited from this guidance on unmanned systems, with potential reach expected to exceed 100,000 across target audiences as the guidance is further scaled.** As drone warfare now accounts for a significant share of combat operations, these efforts contribute to strengthening IHL compliance in a high-risk domain for civilians.

Engagement with commanders also contributed to changes in practice. Follow-up exchanges provide evidence, supported by programme monitoring data, that IHL principles were recalled and applied in operational contexts. While monitoring remains constrained in a high-intensity conflict setting, these findings point to early signs of positive change, suggesting reduced protection risks for civilians in areas where these units operate.

Challenges

In 2025, Geneva Call faced major challenges in Ukraine. Intensified hostilities drove attacks on civilian infrastructure and left thousands without electricity, heat, or water during a harsh winter. Access to 16 target AFU units was constrained by deployments, limited downtime, redeployments, and commanders’ reluctance to release them for training away from combat zones.





LEBANON

Context

In 2025, Lebanon remained deeply affected by the aftermath of the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, which left communities in the South, Beqaa, and Beirut's suburbs struggling with damaged infrastructure, protracted displacement, and a fragile ceasefire. These challenges unfolded against a wider regional backdrop - the crisis in Gaza, new waves of displacement from Syria, and military operations that have eroded respect for international

humanitarian norms. Together, these dynamics continue to shape how communities in Lebanon perceive armed conflict, international law, and their prospects for protection.

Intervention and impact

Geneva Call's work in Lebanon is rooted in sustained engagement with communities living in areas where armed groups and de facto authorities play influential roles. In contexts where conflict is structural and long-standing, communities often develop informal protection practices

that can either support resilience or risk reinforcing instability. Throughout 2025, Geneva Call focused on better understanding these practices, raising awareness of rights under international humanitarian norms, and strengthening the ability of communities to advocate for their own protection, including in their interactions with armed actors. To support this, Geneva Call worked closely with humanitarian actors and community representatives - including members of the previously launched Friends of IHL Network - to map existing protection practices and local dynamics, laying the groundwork for programming that strengthens community resilience, supports rights-based advocacy, and reinforces social cohesion amid recurring tensions.

Challenges

Operating in a volatile environment required continuous adaptation to shifting security conditions. At the same time, discussing international norms with communities that have witnessed repeated violations - often without accountability - meant navigating a clear legitimacy gap. Addressing this challenge required grounding our engagement in widely accepted cultural and local norms, while remaining firmly anchored in the international frameworks essential to effective civilian protection.





SYRIA

Context

In 2025, Syria entered a new phase, marked by widespread optimism, following the fall of the Assad regime in December 2024. Efforts to consolidate authority under new national structures progressed significantly, nevertheless the regional and domestic security outlook remains challenging. Syrian society has been deeply fragmented by fourteen years of bitter conflict. Localised violence and inter-communal tension persist. Humanitarian needs are severe with 16.5 million people²² requiring assistance amid displacement, economic collapse, and exposure to diverse protection risks. Internationally, Syria's long-standing political isolation was ended with the lifting of sanctions and resumption of global diplomatic engagement with the transitional government with issues of reconstruction, civilian protection, refugee returns, minority rights and inclusive security arrangements at the forefront.

Intervention and Impact

Geneva Call had been active in Syria since 2012, maintaining sustained engagement with armed actors, de facto authorities, and communities, particularly in the northeast



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and northwest. Following the fall of the Assad regime in December 2024, the organisation was required to fundamentally re-strategize its approach in 2025. The formal dissolution of Syrian National Army-affiliated groups in January 2025 - Geneva Call's primary interlocutor in Northwest Syria for the last decade - voided existing Deeds of Commitment and Unilateral Declarations.

Engagement shifted toward the newly formed transitional government, with sustained dialogue established with the Ministries of Interior and Defence to define modalities for promoting civilian protection and responsible conduct within nascent security structures.

In northeast Syria, engagement with local authorities and

relevant institutions continued, although at a reduced level due to uncertainty regarding future governance arrangements.

Across Syria, Geneva Call engaged with transitional government representatives, humanitarian actors, civil society organisations, and community representatives to identify key issues and areas of intervention.

Challenges

In 2025, Geneva Call rapidly expanded its presence to Damascus and newly accessible areas. This expansion was challenging due to initial funding restraints. Geneva Call has complied with the recently established registration process for NGOs, and is awaiting formal approval.

²² 2025 Humanitarian Response Plan



IRAQ

Context

In 2025, Iraq's security environment remained volatile due to unresolved internal issues compounded by regional tensions involving Iran, the United States, Israel, and instability in Syria. The government experienced difficulty controlling the situation involving multiple actors relating to the future of PMF amidst rising pressure from external actors²³, while threats from ISg²⁴ remnants and tensions involving PKK²⁵-affiliated groups heightened border and regional security concerns.

Community tensions were further exacerbated by the reintegration of ISg-affiliated families, sectarian divisions amongst Iraqi Sunnis, Shiite, Kurds, and other minority groups, combined with politicised displacement dynamics. Geneva Call engaged a range of armed actors, including PMF, Tribal PMF, Yazidi groups, PKK-affiliated and other relevant groups, facilitating dialogue to address challenges and grievances reported by civilians in dialogue platforms. Not only did Geneva Call engage AGDAs and affected communities but also facilitated dialogue with state authorities to address outstanding issues in certain localities such as Sinjar.

Intervention and Impact

In 2025, Geneva Call sustained engagement with 20 armed groups across key areas of Iraq, maintaining dialogue in complex environments where armed actors remain active or influential²⁶. These areas, covering priority governorates including Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Nineveh, and Salah al-Din, are estimated to host over 4 million civilians²⁷.

This engagement contributed to observable changes in practices affecting civilian protection. In several locations, armed actors took steps to reduce risks to civilians, including the evacuation of civilian infrastructure, facilitation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) returning to their areas of origin, and improved humanitarian access in previously constrained areas.

In Sinjar, Geneva Call's facilitation contributed to the evacuation of a football stadium by the YBS and its transfer to local authorities for community use, demonstrating a concrete shift in the use of civilian infrastructure. Dialogue among Yazidi armed groups also progressed, supporting greater coordination in a fragmented environment.



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In Kirkuk, engagement contributed to the return of 53 families to areas where conditions had previously prevented safe return. In Salah al-Din, Geneva Call facilitated discussions involving senior PMF representatives, including leadership and intelligence personnel, alongside the Iraqi National Security Apparatus, local civilians, and returnees from Al-Hol camp. These discussions focused on supporting reintegration and enabling safe IDP returns, resulting in commitments by PMF and local authorities, in the presence of affected populations, to implement measures facilitating these processes.

Challenges

Regional tensions, elections, and funding-related staffing challenges required Geneva Call to adjust activities in Iraq. Consultations with field commanders and Baghdad authorities ensured effective engagement with armed groups. By June, additional funding restored full staff capacity, allowing planned interventions to resume successfully.

²³ Popular Mobilisation Forces

²⁴ Islamic State

²⁵ Kurdistan Workers' Party

²⁶ Target locations included district and subdistrict areas in Kirkuk, Salah al-Din, Anbar, Diyala, Nineveh and Sinjar.

²⁷ Based on OCHA Iraq – Subnational Population Statistics (COD-PS) dataset (HDX).



YEMEN

Context

In 2025, Yemen's prolonged conflict between Ansar Allah and the Internationally Recognised Government (IRG) persisted, with active frontlines, stalled peace efforts, and ongoing tensions. Late 2025 saw a rise in tensions accompanied by shifts in territorial presence and control. The STC's movement into eastern areas contributed to a more fluid and uncertain landscape, prompting increased attention to how these developments might influence the broader balance of power and security dynamics. Civilians faced worsening conditions and serious protection risks, including displacement, poverty, restricted movement, and food insecurity. Humanitarian operations were hindered by insecurity, funding shortages, and access constraints. With millions in need²⁸, the crisis remained severe, driven by economic collapse, failing services, and deeply divided political ideologies blocking progress toward peace.

Intervention and Impact

Since beginning operations in Yemen in 2018, Geneva Call has focused on promoting IHL and strengthening civilian protection

through engagement with armed actors and local communities. In 2025, Geneva Call engaged seven armed groups, including five key actors and their affiliates, across conflict-affected governorates such as Aden, Lahj, Abyan, Al Dhala, Shabwa, Hadramout, Taiz, Marib, and the West Coast. Within these governorates, Geneva Call operated in selected districts hosting an estimated 5 million residents and internally displaced persons²⁹.

Interventions combined engagement with armed actors, community dialogue, and civil society capacity strengthening, focusing on civilian protection, prevention of forced displacement and famine, humanitarian access, and risks related to landmines. Mechanisms such as the "Friends of IHL" network and Joint Responsibility Mechanism enabled sustained dialogue between armed actors and communities.

Engagement reached 1,000 members of armed groups and de facto authorities (AGDAs). **Monitoring data and post-training assessments indicate improved understanding of IHL and its application**



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in operational contexts, including at checkpoints.

At community level, around 500 civil society and community members strengthened their capacity to raise protection concerns and engage armed actors. Community feedback and follow-up monitoring indicate improved communication channels, increased reporting of protection issues, and documented instances where engagement contributed to changes in behaviour by armed actors.

Challenges

In 2025, Yemen faced worsening humanitarian and security conditions due to funding cuts, shrinking aid access, and renewed conflict. Geneva Call adapted by strengthening risk mitigation, expanding partnerships, and enabling continued engagement despite rising challenges, restricted movement, and an increasingly volatile environment.

²⁸ In 2025 approximately 19.5 million people required humanitarian assistance. The crisis has been driven by years of conflict, economic collapse, and the breakdown of public services with 4.8 million people displaced across the country. United Nations Yemen Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025, January 2025, and UNHCR Yemen Populations and Financial Overview 2025.

²⁹ Yemen Population Estimates dataset, Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX), based on projections from the Central Statistics Organization. <https://data.humdata.org/dataset/yemen-population-estimates>. This figure reflects the scale of the context in which Geneva Call operates and does not represent direct beneficiaries.



AFGHANISTAN

Context

Five years into the rule of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA), the country faces a complex crisis marked by overlapping pressures: rising humanitarian needs amid unprecedented refugee repatriations from neighbouring countries, natural disasters, and economic hardship; weak governance; and collapsing humanitarian funding, all undermining civilian protection. In 2025, the United Nations warned that Afghanistan experienced its sharpest surge in malnutrition on record. Enforcement of the Law on the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice (PVPV Law) and related decrees further excluded women from secondary and higher education, public life, and income generation. Humanitarian access remains restricted.

Intervention and Impact

Since 2018, Geneva Call has engaged the Taliban and later the IEA, expanding its presence in 2025³⁰ to Herat, Farah, Paktiya, Khost, and Paktika, extending coverage to approximately 5 million people³¹. While the intervention does not directly reach all individuals, it targets duty bearers whose practices

affect civilian populations, creating conditions for broader effects, including improved law enforcement, detention practices and more accountable policing.

Through targeted training and dialogue on IHL and human rights law for de facto police officers and commanders, **Geneva Call contributed to improvements in law enforcement practices, particularly at checkpoints and in facilitating humanitarian access.** Evaluation findings³² indicate more predictable checkpoint procedures, reduced incidents of violence, and more respectful treatment of civilians, including women and vulnerable groups.

These changes are also reflected in detention practices, with reports indicating improved treatment of detainees, including greater respect for the presumption of innocence, improved detention conditions, and clearer separation of minors from adults.

At the institutional level, there are signs of gradual standardisation of practices. Strengthening accountability and professional conduct within the de facto police has been a key focus for Geneva Call. The rollout of police uniforms, promoted

Afghanistan experienced its **sharpest surge in malnutrition** on record.

by the Ministry of Interior and increasingly visible since 2025, has supported clearer identification of personnel and may contribute to more accountable interactions with civilians.

At the community level, engagement with religious scholars and decision-makers promoted humanitarian norms through Islamic teachings. As understanding of the compatibility between humanitarian norms and Islam increased, some religious leaders began incorporating these messages into sermons and community discussions, strengthening advocacy for civilian protection, social cohesion, and humanitarian access.

To address rising tensions between returnees and host communities, Geneva Call

³⁰ Prior to 2025, activities were limited to Kabul, Parwan, Nangarhar, Kunar, Kunduz, Balkh, Bamiyan, and Kandahar.

³¹ OCHA Humanitarian Data Exchange (2025), Afghanistan Subnational Population Statistics, based on UNFPA population estimates. Available at: <https://data.humdata.org/dataset/79484094-6e4a-4fbd-9152-66b42a9b32e0>

³² Based on endline evaluation data, including household surveys, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and testimonies from communities and stakeholders across multiple provinces.



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facilitated dialogue platforms bringing together community leaders, religious figures, and returnee representatives. These forums supported non-violent dispute resolution and identified practical solutions related to housing, employment, education, and healthcare, helping to reduce tensions and support reintegration. Complementing this, despite contextual constraints, Geneva Call partnered with 11 local organisations, including 6 women-led and 5 partially women-led entities, to implement community-level initiatives promoting social cohesion and awareness of humanitarian norms.

Challenges

The operating environment in Afghanistan remained highly constrained. A very limited

humanitarian space restricted engagement, including efforts to anchor the protection of civilians within International Humanitarian Law. This was further complicated by perceptions of double standards among Western actors, at times undermining the credibility of IHL-based advocacy.

Restrictions on gatherings and women's participation also limited outreach. Geneva

Call adapted by strengthening partnerships with religious leaders and local organizations to sustain dialogue and promote the compatibility of humanitarian norms with Islamic principles.

At the same time, a broader financial crisis in the humanitarian sector, combined with donor fatigue, made it increasingly difficult to secure funding for protection-focused work.

About multi-stakeholder workshops on social cohesion:

“These **workshops** created a rare opportunity where we could openly discuss **social cohesion, community challenges, and possible solutions** around one table in a **respectful environment.**”

(Qari Dadi Allah, Dpt. Information and Culture Kunduz, 18-19 Nov 2025)



MYANMAR

Context

In 2025, conflict in Myanmar remained highly fragmented, with the Myanmar Military fighting a broad coalition of resistance actors, including People's Defence Forces and Ethnic Armed Organisations. Resistance groups controlled substantial rural territory, providing local governance and services, while the State Security and Peace Commission retained urban strongholds and airpower. Violence, including aerial bombardments and village burnings, continued to drive displacement.

Humanitarian needs intensified, with 21.9 million people in need due to conflict, displacement, and natural disasters, including a March 2025 earthquake. Protection risks included indiscriminate attacks, forced recruitment, landmines, arbitrary detention, and restricted humanitarian access.

ASEAN's³³ Five-Point Consensus remained largely unimplemented, and no inclusive national dialogue occurred. China brokered temporary ceasefires in northern Shan State to stabilise borders and protect trade routes. Targeted sanctions from the United States, European Union, United Kingdom, and Canada restricted the Myanmar Military with regards to procuring arms, dual-use goods,

and jet fuel. The International Court of Justice case brought by The Gambia against Myanmar on Rohingya genocide allegations remained ongoing, with provisional measures to prevent genocide and preserve evidence.

Intervention and Impact

Geneva Call has engaged Armed Groups and De Facto Authorities (AGDAs) in Myanmar since 2003. In 2025, shifting frontlines and access constraints led to a focus on AGDAs controlling border areas. This remains critical as many people live in areas affected by armed groups. According to Myanmar's 2024 Population and Housing Census, insecurity and access constraints prevented full data collection in some areas. As a result, an estimated 19.1 million people live in areas that cannot be fully assessed. This estimate provides a broad indication of scale and does not imply confirmed AGDA control.³⁴

Interventions focused on the operational application of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), including civilian protection, SGBV prevention, detention practices, child protection, and humanitarian access. Geneva Call delivered targeted trainings, awareness sessions, Deeds of Commitment monitoring, and community engagement,



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supported by social media outreach and technical advisory to partners. Gender was integrated throughout, including support to AGDAs to develop gender-sensitive policies.

An external evaluation found measurable improvements in knowledge and behaviour, with evidence of changes in practice. A member of an armed group reported ending executions of captured fighters, improving detainee treatment, ensuring dignified burial, banning underage recruitment, and introducing safeguards for women detainees.

At community level, support to a women's rights organisation increased reporting of violations and enabled engagement with armed group leadership. In one case, this led to protection for survivors and follow-up monitoring. These changes indicate improved compliance with IHL and reduced risks for civilians.

Challenges

Intensified airstrikes, artillery shelling, and shifting frontlines increased risks. Rapidly changing conflict dynamics further complicated operations, as AGDAs splintered, merged, or dissolved. Security risks were compounded by a major earthquake in early 2025, followed by landslides and monsoon flooding.

³³ Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

³⁴ Myanmar Department of Population, 2024 Population and Housing Census: Provisional Results: https://dop.gov.mm/sites/dop.gov.mm/files/publication_docs/2024_provisional_result_eng.pdf



THAILAND

Context

Violence against civilians in Thailand's Deep South increased in 2025, highlighting urgent protection needs and stalled peace talks. There were 608 incidents and 523 casualties, a 7.6% rise from 2024, with a surge early in the year.³⁵ Civilians ("soft targets") made up about 55% of casualties. Attacks involving explosives became frequent, with 141 bombings and growing targeting of checkpoints, raising civilian risks. Civilians were affected both as collateral damage and direct targets, including shootings aimed at religious leaders, government personnel, and Thai Buddhists.

Intervention and Impact

Geneva Call's Thailand programme engaged the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN) in a context where hostilities with the Royal Thai Government continue to affect civilians in the Deep South. Approximately 2.4 million people live across Yala, Pattani, Narathiwat, and parts of Songkhla, with an estimated 830,000 residing within 5 km of organised violence incidents³⁶.

In 2025, Geneva Call strengthened BRN capacity to implement its

humanitarian commitments. This included a workshop to review and refine the implementation plan of the Deed of Commitment on Child Protection, and training on International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and child protection for members of the BRN's DoC committee and women's division. Practical tools such as age verification and identification of legitimate military targets were emphasised. Geneva Call also introduced measures to mitigate civilian harm, including safer use of explosive devices, and conducted consultations with civil society and the Malaysian Government Facilitator to ensure conflict-sensitive engagement.

These interventions contributed to concrete changes in BRN practices. Representatives reported disseminating guidance on limiting victim-activated explosive devices and strengthening internal coordination on



civilian protection. The group reinforced its disciplinary code to sanction child recruitment, introduced stricter age verification, and integrated IHL into internal training.

BRN also reported investigating incidents, applying disciplinary measures, and revising its Code of Conduct to better align with international standards. Additional measures included advising civilians to avoid proximity to military targets and promoting respect for religious sites.

Challenges

Geneva Call's Thailand Programme faced challenges mainly related to participant safety amid a changing context. To mitigate risks, it carefully managed travel and security, especially for activities with BRN representatives abroad, leading to some delays or postponements due to safety and travel concerns.

"We remain strong in following the rules and principles of IHL, especially humanitarian principles, as it is aligned with the Quran."

BRN representative

³⁵ Monthly data published on the Deep South Watch Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/deepsouthwatch/>) and data obtained from their dashboard (<https://deepsouthwatch.org/>).

³⁶ ACLED (2025); population estimates based on provincial data.



PHILIPPINES

Context

In 2025, while clashes between government forces and armed groups in the Philippines decreased, communities remained affected by violence. Based on ACLED data, an estimated 3.1 million people lived within 5 km of organised violence involving rebel groups³⁷, including ongoing CPP-NPA³⁸ clashes and concerns over child recruitment. In BARMM³⁹, armed groups contributed to local violence, Rido (clan feuds), and election-related tensions, worsened by political disputes and delays in the peace process. The MILF⁴⁰ suspended decommissioning 14,000 fighters until state compliance with the 2014 peace agreement, sustaining risks of election-related violence ahead of proposed September 2026 elections.

Intervention and Impact

In 2025, Geneva Call's work in BARMM contributed to strengthening local mechanisms to prevent and respond to violence linked to rido and other conflicts involving armed group members.

Engagement with armed actors, including the Moro

Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), supported the uptake of customary norms for community protection. These norms, endorsed by key BARMM institutions, were applied by armed actors and communities, improving their relevance and acceptance, particularly among groups less responsive to formal legal frameworks. **Evidence suggests these norms are being used to guide behaviour, mediate disputes, and reinforce commitments to civilian protection.**

At an institutional level, support to response mechanisms improved coordination and capacity to address local violence. Crisis Response Action Teams (CRAT) reported more systematic responses to incidents, earlier identification of escalation risks, and increased inclusion of women in prevention and response processes. From July to December, CRAT teams responded to at least 32 incidents of local violence, addressed 23 emerging risks of escalation, and led or supported 54 conflict prevention and peace advocacy activities.



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Civil society actors also demonstrated increased capacity to mediate disputes and raise awareness, contributing to improved reporting and local resolution of conflicts.

These changes are significant in a context where, at least 494,000 people live within 5 km of incidents involving armed groups, with up to 2.3 million potentially exposed⁴¹.

Challenges

In the Philippines, Geneva Call navigated leadership transitions in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) and repeated election postponements by strengthening engagement with new leaders and local actors. This approach helped secure their commitment and reinforced preparedness to prevent and respond to potential election-related violence.

Following a long-standing engagement in the country, Geneva Call has also initiated an assessment to progressively wind down its presence, with a focus on ensuring that robust national capacities are in place to sustain efforts and achievements over the long term.

³⁷ ACLED Conflict Exposure, accessed on 6 March 2026. 'Rebel groups' as defined by ACLED.

³⁸ The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its armed wing, the New People's Army (NPA).

³⁹ Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

⁴⁰ Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

⁴¹ ACLED (2024–2025)

International policy and advocacy

Geneva Call's international advocacy continued to highlight several core priorities. These include the need to address the growing number of civilians living outside state-controlled areas and therefore reliant on the conduct of armed groups and de facto authorities. The organisation underscores the importance of sustained, principled dialogue with such actors, grounded in humanitarian norms. It also emphasises that meaningful behavioural change is achievable through trust-building and long-term engagement. Finally, Geneva Call continues to advocate for the relevance and applicability of International Humanitarian Law in all contexts.

The European Union remained one of the most important partners for Geneva Call's international engagement. In 2025, through its Brussels presence, the organisation and EU institutions had a series of sustained interaction which reflected a strong convergence between Geneva Call's operational approach and the

Union's evolving priorities in humanitarian action, conflict prevention, and the protection of civilians. This alignment was reflected in shared commitments to uphold International Humanitarian Law (IHL), reinforce respect for International Human Rights Law (IHRL), and promote principled engagement in fragile and conflict-affected settings.

Geneva Call's work resonated with the EU's integrated approach to external conflicts and crises, as well as its growing focus on civilian protection and access in complex environments, including areas beyond state control.

Collaboration with European civil society networks remained an essential channel for contributing to policy discussions and collective advocacy. Through its engagement with VOICE and EPLO, Geneva Call helped advance shared priorities at EU level. This included a contribution to VOICE's magazine highlighting the organisation's work on misinformation and disinformation in conflict settings—an issue increasingly prioritised in EU policy frameworks—thereby illustrating both the added value of civil society partnerships and a common commitment to addressing information-related risks that directly affect humanitarian access and the protection of civilians.

High-level engagement further reinforced this strategic alignment. Geneva Call co-hosted, together with Commissioner Hadja Lahbib, Equality; Preparedness and Crisis Management, a high-level event during the United Nations General Assembly in New York focused on the importance of International Humanitarian Law in contemporary conflicts. This engagement provided an opportunity to reaffirm the centrality of IHL in



Collaboration with **European civil society networks** remained an essential channel for contributing to **policy discussions and collective advocacy.**

global humanitarian action and to strengthen dialogue between EU leadership and humanitarian actors.

Engagement with the European Parliament constituted another important milestone. A dedicated hearing with the Committee on Development (DEVE) and the Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI) offered a timely platform to reiterate the fundamental importance of IHL and IHRL in a global geopolitical context where these norms are increasingly challenged. The exchange contributed to reinforcing awareness among policymakers of the need to safeguard humanitarian principles and ensure their consistent and universal application.

Geneva Call's commitment to strengthen respect for International Humanitarian Law extended to our support to the Global IHL Initiative with contributions from an operational perspectives to the workstream on the protection of healthcare, bringing field experience from working with AGDAs into this global policy process to ensure that the recommendations account for the diversity of armed

actors who shape humanitarian challenges in practice.

These priorities and partnerships were also reflected in the events marking Geneva Call's 25th anniversary. High-level gatherings in Geneva, attended by municipal, cantonal, and federal authorities, and in Brussels, hosted under the auspices of the Permanent Mission of Germany to the European Union, provided an opportunity not only to reflect on past achievements but also to reaffirm the continued relevance and future direction of Geneva Call's humanitarian engagement in a rapidly evolving global landscape.

Diplomatic dialogue and engagement

In 2025, a series of abrupt shocks contributed to a sharp rise in geopolitical tensions, reaching levels rarely seen in recent years. In this increasingly complex and fragmented environment, engaging a broad range of stakeholders remains essential to advancing humanitarian objectives and ensuring access to vulnerable populations.

In this context, sustained diplomatic engagement is critical to fostering understanding, acceptance and concrete political support for Geneva Call's mission. By maintaining and expanding dialogue with states and international partners, the organisation seeks to ensure that its protection efforts are recognised and supported at the highest levels.

In 2025, particular emphasis was placed on engagement with major global powers, notably China and India, whose influence on



international affairs continues to grow. Geneva Call participated in the Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi, facilitating exchanges with senior officials and regional experts. Dialogue with China advanced significantly through a working visit by a Geneva Call delegation to Beijing, which enabled the identification of concrete avenues for strengthened collaboration with Chinese institutions on humanitarian engagement.

A series of abrupt shocks contributed **to a sharp rise in geopolitical tensions.**

Financials

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

Expenditure



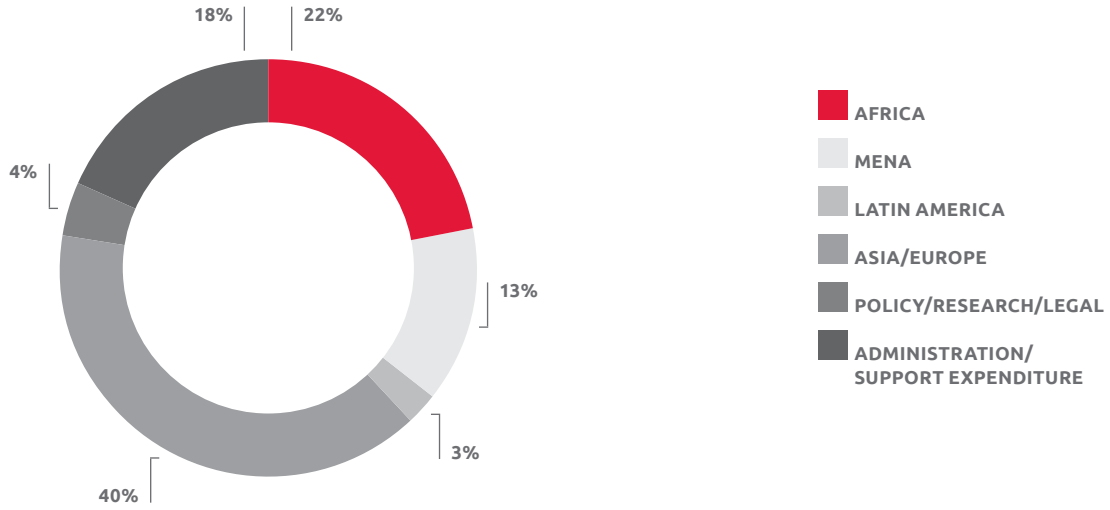
ADMINISTRATION/
SUPPORT EXPENDITURE

PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE

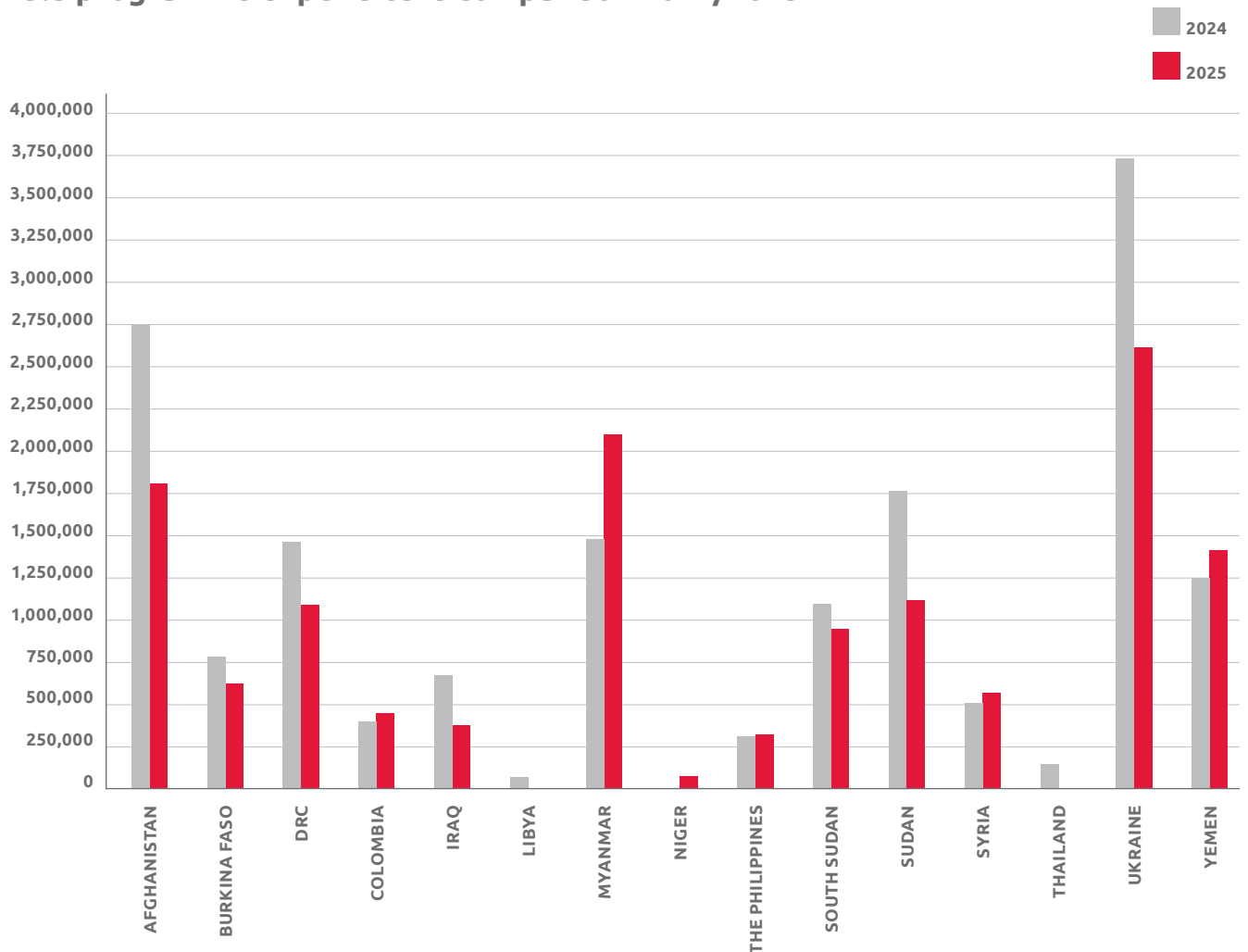
Expenditure (CHF)

REGIONS	COUNTRIES	GRAND TOTAL
Africa Sahel	Burkina Faso	625,960
	Niger	75,490
	Total Africa Sahel	701,450
Africa Great Lakes & Horn of Africa	DRC	1,089,997
	South Sudan	944,011
	Sudan	1,118,032
	Total Africa Great Lakes & Horn of Africa	3,152,040
	TOTAL AFRICA	3,853,490
MENA	Iraq	388,001
	Syria	571,695
	Yemen	1,413,130
	TOTAL MENA	2,372,826
Latin America	Colombia	450,579
	TOTAL LATIN AMERICA	450,579
Asia/Europe	Afghanistan	1,806,761
	Myanmar	2,099,581
	Philippines	319,729
	Ukraine	2,693,490
	TOTAL ASIA/EUROPE	6,919,560
Programme Support	PRL	730,981
	POLICY/RESEARCH/LEGAL	730,981
PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE		14,327,437
ADMINISTRATION/ SUPPORT EXPENDITURE		3,172,812
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURE		17,500,249

Operating expenditure



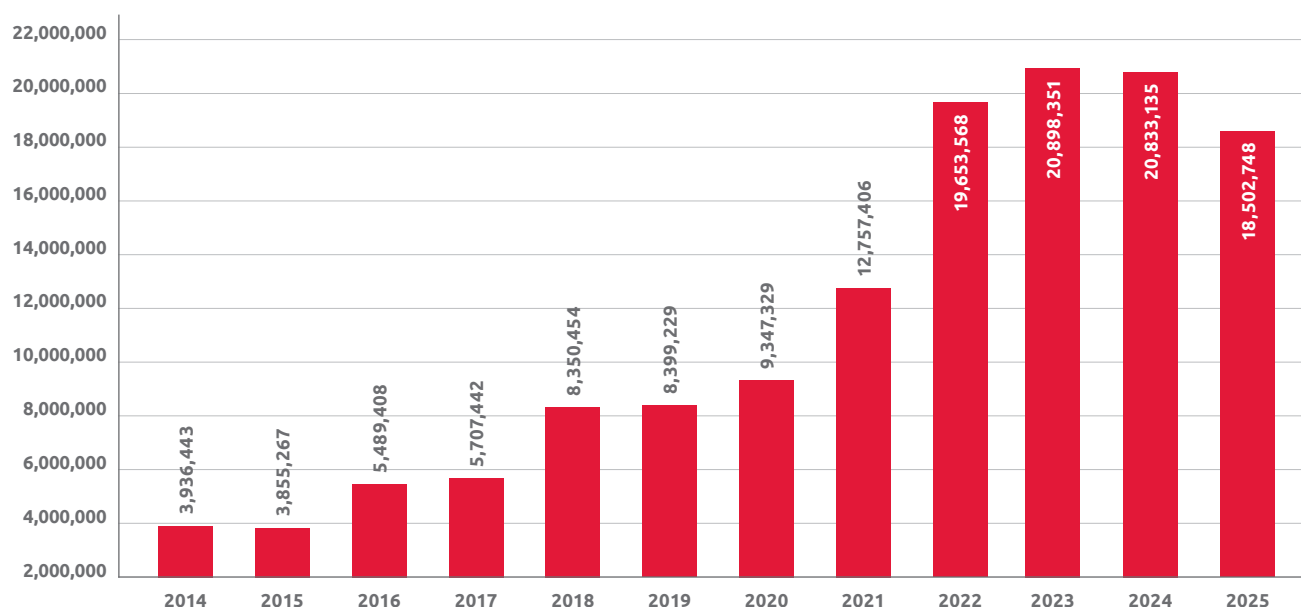
Field programme expenditure comparison 2024/2025



Balance sheet (CHF)

	2025	2024	2023
Cash and cash equivalent	9,735,592	8,021,740	5,237,799
Current accounts	5,127	149	7,301
Receivables from donors	737,422	2,113,842	3,451,279
Other receivables	272,096	250,873	1,109,026
Prepayments and accrued income	318,959	1,069,569	407,795
CURRENT ASSETS	11,069,196	11,456,174	10,213,200
Fixed assets	-	-	-
NON-CURRENT ASSETS	-	-	-
TOTAL ASSETS	11,069,196	11,456,174	10,213,200
Payables due to suppliers of goods and services	609,627	447,692	368,610
Other liabilities	81,163	175,346	188,714
Accrued expenses	585,381	883,044	616,097
CURRENT LIABILITIES	1,276,171	1,506,083	1,173,421
Restricted Funds	1,887,506	2,975,613	5,253,130
RESTRICTED FUNDS	1,887,506	2,975,613	5,253,130
Organisation capital			
- Initial capital	50,000	50,000	50,000
- Free capital	5,448,687	3,263,354	2,154,575
- Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	904,716	2,185,334	1,108,779
- Tied capital	1,502,116	1,475,790	473,294
TOTAL ORGANISATIONAL CAPITAL	7,905,519	6,974,478	3,786,648
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	11,069,196	11,456,174	10,213,200

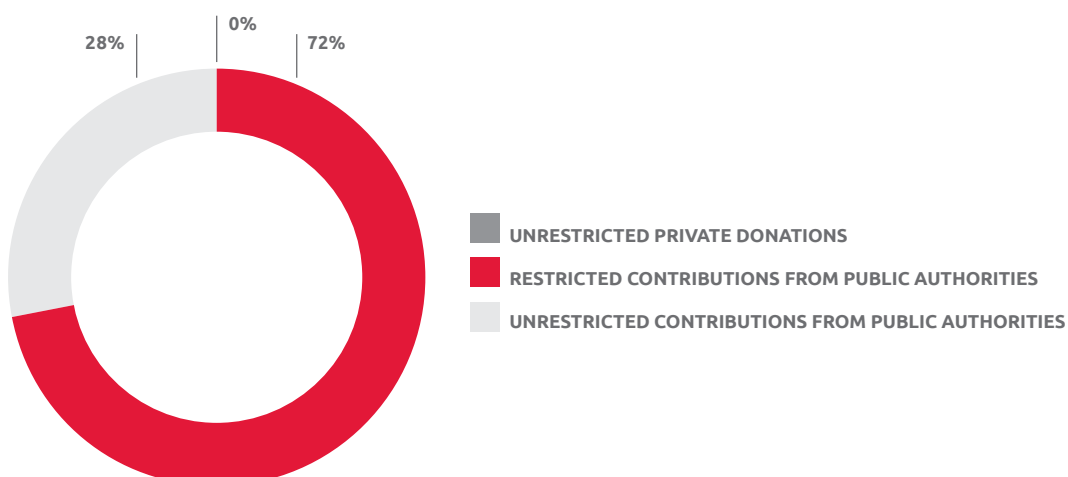
Evolution of Geneva Call income 2014 - 2025 (CHF)



Statement of operations (CHF)

	2025	2024	2023
CONTRIBUTIONS			
Contributions received from private foundations/donors			
- restricted	-	-	-
- unrestricted	6,537	1,015,850	107,408
Contributions received from public authorities/non-governmental organization			
- restricted	12,425,941	14,267,730	16,776,979
- unrestricted	5,172,091	4,380,198	2,913,097
Other contributions unrestricted	898,179	1,169,357	1,100,866
TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS	18,502,748	20,833,135	20,898,351
OPERATING EXPENDITURE	17,500,254	19,957,517	18,053,012
Project expenditure	14,172,899	16,902,597	15,185,149
Administrative expenditure	3,043,034	2,754,749	2,593,421
Fundraising expenditure	284,321	300,172	274,442
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURE	17,500,254	19,957,518	18,053,012
ALLOCATION/USE OF FUNDS	-477,229	-1,949,576	1,373,966
OPERATING RESULT	1,479,723	2,825,193	1,471,373
FINANCIAL RESULT	-576,022	-634,812	-349,097
Financial expenses	-157,008	-231,016	-155,219
Financial income	67,270	30,159	-
Net exchange (loss)/gain	-486,284	-433,955	-193,878
Exchange gain			
EXCEPTIONAL RESULT	1,015	-5,047	-13,497
Prior years income	3,110	-	7,733
Prior years expenses	-2,095	-5,047	-21,230
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR	904,716	2,185,334	1,108,779
SURPLUS FROM CURRENT OPERATIONS	904,716	1,185,334	1,108,779
EXCEPTIONAL DONATION TO INCREASE OUR ORGANISATIONAL FUNDS	-	1,000,000	-

Sources of funding



Our Donors and Supporters

Geneva Call expresses its deep gratitude to its donors and partners for their continued trust and commitment, which remain the cornerstone of its ability to protect civilian populations in armed conflict.

The past year has been marked by significant shifts in the global funding landscape, including budget reductions and increasing pressures on humanitarian and development resources. In this challenging context, sustained donor support has been more critical than ever, not only to maintain ongoing operations, but also to ensure that protection efforts continue in some of the most complex and under-resourced environments.

Thanks to this support, Geneva Call has been able to adapt, prioritise, and continue delivering impact where it matters most. Unrestricted funding has been particularly essential in enabling the organisation to remain agile, absorb financial shocks, and respond to rapidly evolving conflict dynamics. At the same time, earmarked contributions have allowed for targeted, context-specific interventions that address urgent protection needs across regions and thematic areas.

We sincerely thank our donors for their invaluable contributions and encourage their continued support at this critical time.

For unearmarked contributions

- The governments of Austria (Austrian Development Agency), Finland (Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Centre for Peace Mediation), Ireland (Department of Foreign Affairs), Liechtenstein (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Norway (NORAD – Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation), Spain (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union & Cooperation), Sweden (Sida-Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency), Switzerland (Federal Department of Foreign Affairs - Peace & Human Rights Division), and the City and Canton 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), Luxembourg (Ministry of

Foreign & European Affairs), Norway (NORAD – Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation), and the European Commission ECHO via partnerships with Diakonia).

For earmarked (programme/project) contributions

- The governments of Australia (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade), Canada (Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade & Development - Fund For Local Initiatives), Finland (Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Centre for Peace Mediation), France (Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Europe-Crisis and Support Center), Germany (Federal Foreign Office-S03 & S09), Ireland (Department of Foreign Affairs), Norway (Ministry of Foreign Affairs & NORAD), Switzerland (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation & Federal Department of Foreign Affairs; and Peace & Human Rights Division) and Canton of Geneva, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office - including in consortium with Non-violent Peaceforce International).
- The European Commission (i) ECHO via partnerships with Norwegian Refugee Council and Terre des Hommes Italy; (ii) FPI; and (iii) INTPA including via a partnership with the Berghof Foundation.



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Other support

Geneva Call is thankful to the Lutheran World Federation, the Hans Wilsdorf Foundation, the Municipality of Chêne-Bougeries and its other private donors.

Support us

As needs continue to grow and the operational environment becomes more constrained, maintaining, and where possible,

strengthening, the donors' support to Geneva Call's mission is vital. Continued investment in Geneva Call's work ensures that engagement with armed actors, community-based protection efforts, and broader protection ecosystems can be sustained and further developed.

Geneva Call remains fully committed to transparency, accountability, and delivering measurable protection outcomes.

It stands ready to continue working in close partnership with its donors to navigate current challenges and uphold humanitarian principles where they are most at risk.

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