



APPEL DE GENÈVE
GENEVA CALL

Annual Report on

REDUCING THE THREAT AND IMPACT OF LANDMINES

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Geneva Call | Appel de Genève

P.O. Box 334 | CH-1211 Geneva 4 | Switzerland

Tel +41 22 879 10 50 | Fax +41 22 879 10 51

www.genevacall.org

P.O. Box 334
CH-1211 GENEVA 4
SWITZERLAND
TEL: +41 22 879 10 50
FAX: +41 22 879 10 51
INFO@GENEVACALL.ORG

WWW.GENEVACALL.ORG

THANKS

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GENERAL OVERVIEW

This report highlights essentially the work carried out by Geneva Call on anti-personnel (AP) landmines in Asia. The report will in some areas connect the different issues/areas of focus of Geneva Call, such as the protection of children and the prohibition of sexual violence in armed conflict as these may also be entry points to dialogue on AP mines, or are in other ways interconnected through the armed non-State actors (ANSAs) that Geneva Call engages with. Information about Geneva Call's other engagements with ANSAs in other areas of the world on banning AP mines, and on other areas of focus, can be found at www.genevacall.org

2011 saw several developments in Asia, for example the successful conclusion of the Afghanistan assessment, and network building in Indonesia. Geneva Call's programmes in Burma/Myanmar, India, the Philippines and Pakistan have been revitalised with significant possibilities for movement forward in early 2012. The changes in circumstances were a result of developments in respect of the conflict situation in those countries and new funding opportunities. The details of developments in engagement are described by country below.

Geneva Call's expansion into other thematic areas that are relevant to situations of armed conflict—child protection, the prohibition on sexual violence, and promotion of international humanitarian norms—has aided in advancing its work on landmines as well. In one case, an ANSA in Burma/Myanmar which had expressed no interest in discussing landmine use with Geneva Call, demonstrated during the year a keen interest in discussing child protection. In the most recent meeting Geneva Call had with this ANSA, they then expressed openness to exploring the landmine issue, which is a real turning point in this engagement.

Research plays a large and indispensable role in Geneva Call's work. Desk research is primarily conducted by interns who volunteer their time to Geneva Call, and is complemented by field data collected by Geneva Call staff. Key research projects include profiles on the different ANSAs, conflict situation updates, and conflict assessments, all used for internal programme prioritization and planning. In addition, monitoring of media and other public reports is made on a regular basis to ensure signatory ANSA compliance with *Deed of Commitment* obligations. Over the course of 2011, there were no allegations of violations of the *Deed of Commitment* by any signatory ANSA. In the interests of transparency, Geneva Call is in the process of collecting formal compliance reportsⁱ from all signatories and hopes to put them online in 2012.

COUNTRY OVERVIEW

AFGHANISTAN

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) reported 3,021 civilian deaths in 2011, an 8% increase on 2010 which itself was a 25% increase on 2009. The vast majority of these deaths were attributed to the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) by ANSAs. There has also been significant recruitment and use of children as young as five in the armed conflict, including in suicide attacks.

Afghanistan's Taliban has made a number of statements on these matters. The Taliban's Code of Conduct for cadres insists they take all possible care to protect 'the common people' or face dire punishment. In 1998, following efforts by the Afghan Campaign to Ban Landmines, Mullah Omar,

then head of the Taliban, banned anti-personnel (AP) mines, citing the high casualties and horrible suffering caused among the civilian population.

In September 2011, the Taliban denied any recruitment of children into its ranks and the use of children in suicide missions, which had been reported in a press release by Human Rights Watch on 31 August 2011. The Taliban's southern Afghanistan spokesman, Qari Yousaf Ahmadi, stated that the Taliban had never attacked medical teams as long as their visits were coordinated.¹ Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid said insurgents had been instructed to let polio vaccinations take place, provided aid workers do not use Government facilities.²

Such statements suggest that there is some receptivity within the Taliban to enhancing protection of civilians in the conflict.

During 2011, encouraged by a number of stakeholders in Afghanistan which recognized that Geneva Call has a niche role to play in the country, and facilitated by the UN Mine Action Coordination Centre of Afghanistan (UNMACCA), Geneva Call conducted a field assessment in respect of all of its thematic areas, and is now seeking dedicated funding to launch the project based on feasible ways to engage Afghanistan's ANSAs on the protection of civilians, initially on AP mines and the protection of children within the armed conflict.

BURMA/MYANMAR

The Government newspaper, the *New Light of Myanmar*, recently wrote that 2011 would be the end of 'authoritarianism' in the country³. By the end of 2011, major changes had certainly begun in the country that could shape a new future, though fighting still continued in some areas.

By spring 2012, most ANSAs had agreed ceasefires or were at least engaged in talks with the Government. While very encouraging, these processes are at an early stage and set-backs and reversals are unfortunately still a possibility. For the time-being therefore, Geneva Call is continuing its engagement with ANSAs and monitoring the situation as it changes.

During 2011, Geneva Call met with nine ANSAs (New Mon State Party (NMSP), Karen National Union (KNU), Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP), Palaung State Liberation Front (PSLF), Chin National Front (CNF), Lahu Democratic Union (LDU), Pa'O National Liberation Organisation (PNLO), Shan State Army-South (SSA-S), and Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO)) and provided information, feedback and education on their obligations under IHL, specifically with regards to child protection and the use of AP mines. The engagements aimed to review ANSAs' policies and practices and internal regulations, and discuss practical measures to improve the protection of civilians in armed conflict. As part of this process, Geneva Call conducted three workshops with individual ANSAs and one workshop with four ANSA members of the umbrella organization United Nationalities Federal Council, which led to the drafting of a code of conduct reflecting groups' obligations under international humanitarian law (IHL).

As part of its obligation to support and monitor the *Deeds of Commitment*, Geneva Call works with local community-based organizations (CBOs) which provide valuable field support, ensure feedback to Geneva Call on violations or potential violations of norms, provide crucial field-level needs assessments and direct assistance to communities, as well as aid in the delivery of messages on international humanitarian norms. Geneva Call also provides these CBOs with information and

¹ Nordland, Rod. 2012. 'After Years of Decline, Polio Cases in Afghanistan Triple in a Year.' *The New York Times*. January 17. URL: <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/18/world/asia/after-years-of-decline-polio-cases-in-afghanistan-rise.html>

² Popalzai, Masoud. 2012. 'Afghan Taliban Support Polio Vaccination Campaign.' *CNN*. January 17. URL: http://articles.cnn.com/2012-01-17/asia/world_asia_taliban-polio-vaccinations_1_polio-vaccination-vaccination-teams-nigeria-and-pakistan?_s=PM:ASIA

³ "Burma says authoritarian era 'finished'" in *Democratic Voice of Burma*, 4th January 2012. <http://www.dvb.no/news/burma-says-authoritarian-era-finished/19449>, accessed 31st January 2012

training – in this regard two training sessions on humanitarian mine action for Karen and Karenni CBOs were conducted in partnership with the Committee for Internally Displaced Karen People and the Karenni Social Welfare Development Committee respectively in collaboration with DanChurchAid (DCA) and with the valuable input of a resource person from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD).

During one of these training sessions, the Karenni Army (KA) acknowledged the negative impact of AP mines and presented a new draft policy, developed through consultations with Geneva Call, to limit its use of AP mines by applying international standards. Recognizing that engagement with ANSAs and behavioural change is a long-term process Geneva Call will continue to engage them, seeking step-by-step improvements in the interests of protection of civilians.

The KNU and NMSP are other ANSAs that are reluctant to ban AP mines. Nevertheless Geneva Call continues to engage and in 2011 the KNU provided Geneva Call with a copy of its principles regarding AP mine use. The NMSP also adopted its new mine use policy during the year, developed following a workshop with Geneva Call in 2010. While the ANSA has not yet signed the *Deed of Commitment*, its policies conform to basic international standards, a considerable step forwards that will benefit civilians in its areas of operation.

Through information, education and training, Geneva Call is able to provide significant input at a very high level within the ANSAs. As described, many have changed or amended their codes of conduct, military rules, and so forth as a result. This will in turn lead to changed behaviours in the field and improved protection for civilians.

Humanitarian Impact of Landmines in Burma/Myanmar

In January 2011, Geneva Call published the report *Humanitarian Impact of Landmines in Burma/Myanmar*, together with its partner DCA. The report was promoted in early 2011 in Chiang Mai and Bangkok, in Geneva at the United Nations, in London at the Houses of Parliament, and in Brussels at the European Commission. Geneva Call hopes that the report will contribute to an increased understanding of the impact of mines in Burma/Myanmar and in raising the profile of the urgent need for mine action in areas controlled by ANSAs. The report has been one of Geneva Call's most well-received documents with 10,000 hits on its website in 2011.

INDIA

Three ANSAs operating in India are signatories to the *Deed of Commitment* banning AP mines: the Kuki National Organisation, the National Socialist Council of Nagalim and the Zomi Re-unification Organisation. There are numerous ANSAs in conflict with the Government or with each other in a several states across the country. There have been serious reports of violations of IHL, however due to difficulties with access to the country in 2011, Geneva Call was not able to engage directly with ANSAs.

Monitoring of compliance by signatories of the *Deed of Commitment* banning AP mines has thus been carried out remotely, and by requesting self-reporting on progress: two ANSAs reported during the year on their compliance with the *Deed* and Geneva Call's own monitoring has shown no cases of non-compliance in 2011, though AP mines and victim-activated IEDs appear to have been used by at least one non-signatory ANSA. Dialogue continues notwithstanding, and Geneva Call hopes it will be possible to engage further with groups operating in the country, on their obligations under IHL, where there have been reported increases in the use of AP mines and IEDs by ANSAs that are not signatories.

PHILIPPINES

Talks are on-going between one of the main ANSAs, the Moro Islamic Front (MILF)/Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF), and the Government of the Philippines. Government talks with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP)/New People's Army (NPA)/Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) reached an impasse in 2011. Several other ANSAs, including the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Movement (BIFM), which split from the MILF in 2010, continue to operate as do a number of other smaller armed groups. Geneva Call is carefully monitoring these actors as they are changing the conflict landscape. Since the verification mission that Geneva Call conducted in 2010 there have been no credible allegations against the MILF of AP mine use.

Geneva Call met with MILF during the year to discuss follow-up of the verification mission of the end of 2009, and continued monitoring of compliance with the *Deed of Commitment* banning AP mines has continued with all signatory groups.

VISION AND CHANGES FOR 2012

THEORY OF CHANGE

Following several recommendations from evaluations, Geneva Call has begun to research and implement a methodology for planning and evaluation known as Theory of Change as this will help provide more suitable monitoring and evaluation of progress in conflict environments. Geneva Call's initial Theory of Change with regards to advocacy on the AP mine ban is attached as Appendix I.

COUNTRY PERSPECTIVES

Geneva Call will gladly provide further details as required; however, below is a short synopsis by country in Asia of Geneva Call's plans for 2012.

Burma/Myanmar

The opening of talks towards a political solution between a number of ANSAs and the Myanmar Government has given new life and provided a unique opportunity to further landmine advocacy and mine action. As a result of Geneva Call's longstanding relationships with the ANSAs on this issue, it is providing advice to the ANSAs on how to incorporate mine action within the talks. In addition, Geneva Call has found itself in the position of being best placed to facilitate networking between organizations working inside the country and those doing cross-border work, specifically among civil society organizations.

India

Geneva Call is currently undertaking a detailed assessment of how to improve its work in India taking into consideration the challenges of lack of access and working with local partners. This is particularly relevant, as in early 2012, two ANSAs in the northeast that Geneva Call has been engaging with have indicated that they are now ready to sign the *Deed of Commitment* banning AP mines. Moreover there is a perception that opening up an engagement with the Naxalites might be feasible and add value.

Pakistan

The Sustainable Peace and Development Organization (SPADO) and Geneva Call will research, produce and disseminate a report on the humanitarian impact of landmines in Pakistan. It is envisioned that this report will provide concrete recommendations to all parties of the conflict in addition to civil society, I/NGOs and the international community on how best to address the landmine problem in the country. It will also provide Geneva Call with the necessary messages to engage ANSAs on this issue.

Philippines

Together with its local partner, the Institute of Bangsamoro Studies, Geneva Call will proceed with the further dissemination of the mine ban commitment to MILF members as per recommendations from the 2009 verification mission. It is expected that further dissemination will help ensure continued compliance.

TRAINING TOOLS

Geneva Call has produced during the year a series of training kits on its thematic approaches towards ANSAs: ban on AP mines, prohibition of sexual violence in armed conflict, protection of children from the effects of armed conflict, and international humanitarian law (IHL). These kits have been compiled by subject experts in coordination with an adult education expert, and are made up of a reference manual, a training manual with guidelines for trainers, exercises, specific scenarios and role plays for ANSAs, and a set of powerpoint slides in each case. The kits are in modular form and have been designed specifically for use with ANSAs, and address ANSA obligations, but also the specific contexts and circumstances in which they operate. The *Deeds of Commitment* are presented and discussed in detail, as are other step-by-step approaches in accordance with IHL. Care has been taken to not duplicate existing material, for example as used by ICRC. Geneva Call staff has also received training from an adult education expert, and this capacity development work will continue through 2012.

The landmines module was first used in March 2012 with the KNLA and proved to be highly successful. The entire set of modules as far as the trainee-visible parts are concerned, has been translated into French, Spanish, Burmese, Karen, and will shortly be commenced in Arabic. Other translations will follow as required. This project has been financed primarily by the European Humanitarian Office (ECHO), but naturally the resulting material will be used in Geneva Call's activities around the world, and thus outputs and outcomes from this development are relevant to all Geneva Call's donors.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Geneva Call's initiative to embrace the Theory of Change approach is based on a need to continually assess, re-plan/re-position/re-think its activities due to conflict change, the flexible attitudes of ANSAs, the situations and circumstances that ANSAs operate in, significant scope for change throughout the lifetime of a project and beyond through the lifetime of the relationship with the ANSA. Geneva Call's decision is also based on the need to respond to or adapt to institutional donor requirements, and to show impact and results mapped over time in a way that the donor can understand their contribution. Thirdly, as it begins to prepare a communications strategy towards a wider public, Geneva Call has a need to be able to express its impact and achievements in a way that is more accessible and understandable to non-specialists, considering that to change behaviours (of ANSAs) is a long-term process in a world where people expect a rapid impact, food delivery, rapid response to emerging human rights issues, etc.

To this end, Geneva Call is in the process of enhancing its monitoring and evaluation capacity. In addition to moving away from a logframe approach towards a Theory of Change evaluation methodology, Geneva Call will hire one or several external consultants with expertise and experience in evaluating projects being undertaken in conflict situations, notably where ANSAs are present, to support the process of further building internal capacity in planning, monitoring and evaluation.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

In 2011, the organization began a process that would bring all accounting and finance services in-house under a new Head of Finance & Administration. A full evaluation and renewal of existing processes was carried out including planning, budgeting and donor proposal standards. Internal auditing systems and procedures are being revised, notably with regards to purchasing, invoicing, approvals and payments. A needs analysis was conducted and led to the procurement of an Enterprise Resource Planning tool (Microsoft NAV) which was put in place in 2011 and implemented starting January 2012.

Starting with its 2010 accounts, Geneva Call adopted the SWISS GAAP RPC, a set of accounting standards in line with IAS norms. 2011 accounts have been audited and approved by the Foundation Board of Geneva Call, and are enclosed in English.

ⁱ Signatories of the *Deed of Commitment* self-report on their compliance with their obligations, in addition to Geneva Call's role in monitoring, and if necessary verification.