



**6th States Parties Meeting to the Mine Ban Treaty - Zagreb  
Statement of Geneva Call  
29 November 2005**

Madam President, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, dear friends,

Each year we have to ask ourselves the same question: What is the goal of the Ottawa Process? The answer is in the name of last year's review conference: "Towards a mine free world". And we ought to add, "towards a zero new mine victim world".

As has been recognized in each and every final document produced by the meetings of States Parties since Managua in 2001, these goals will only be achieved if all users, all actors, ban landmines. We know that today there are more armed non-state actors using mines than regular armed forces.

The need to engage armed non-state actors and the work done by Geneva Call in collaboration with national campaigns of the ICBL and other local NGOs is now widely recognized by states, inter-governmental organisations and UN agencies. We take this opportunity to thank you all for your support.

The very fact that there are 28 signatories to Geneva Call's Deed of Commitment represents progress. In addition, the recent decision of the Polisario Front to renounce the use of mines and to destroy its stockpiles very soon, and the statement made by the Deputy Prime Minister of Somalia, Mr. Hussein Aideed, a signatory of the Deed of Commitment, to hand over his mines for destruction, are concrete results of these engagements.

Follow-up is essential in order to prevent innocent civilians from becoming landmine victims. This is in fact the common goal of all of us gathered at this meeting this week, a common humanitarian goal, a common responsibility.

To achieve this noble objective, the involvement of everybody is necessary. We understand that mine action in internal armed conflict can be challenging for the

concerned governments, but room for progress and dialogue is possible. States have to facilitate or, at the very least, not obstruct the work undertaken. We invite all states to recognize that this is not a political issue; it is first and foremost a humanitarian one. We can start saving lives even before the conflict ends.

In a workshop organized 2 days ago on mine action in the midst of internal conflict, it was underlined, that a government which obstructs mine action on its territory, even when confronted with the presence of armed non-state actors, would not be in compliance with its obligations under the Mine Ban Treaty.

Madam President, dear Delegates, do you think that the population of a village threatened by mines will understand that no mine action is undertaken for political considerations? Their daily life is in danger. The future of their development is undermined. Political considerations should not, in any way, prevail over humanitarian concerns. Independently of who laid the mines or who is controlling the territory, it's our common responsibility to make all efforts to protect the civilians in a complementary way, governments and NGOs together, to universalize *quantitatively* or *qualitatively* the Mine Ban Treaty, as mentioned by Ambassador Jean Lint during the opening ceremony.

Supporting mine action in territory under the control or influence of armed non-state actors does not mean supporting armed non-state actors. And it is not because an armed group is being engaged that its legal status will change, as clearly stated in common article 3 of the Geneva Conventions.

Six years after the entry into force of the Mine Ban Treaty, we realize that there are new challenges that are not easy to resolve. Still, we have the responsibility to continue to work together, governments, UN agencies, European Union, ICRC, ICBL, the Geneva Center for Humanitarian Demining and civil society, in the same spirit which led to the adoption of the Convention banning anti-personnel mines.

I thank you for your attention

## Geneva Call

HEADQUARTERS  
P.O. BOX 334  
CH-1211 GENEVA 4  
SWITZERLAND  
TEL: +41 22 879 1050  
FAX: +41 22 879 1051

PARIS OFFICE:  
19 RUE BERANGER  
75003 PARIS  
FRANCE  
TEL/FAX: +33 14 272 5549

INFO@GENEVACALL.ORG  
WWW.GENEVACALL.ORG

