



Geneva Call Statement on Stockpile Destruction

Ninth Meeting of States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty Geneva, Switzerland

27 November 2008

Thank you Mr. President,

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate States Parties that have completed the destruction of their stockpiles in compliance with their obligations under the Mine Ban Treaty. Several armed non-State actors that have signed the Geneva Call *Deed of Commitment* have also made progress in this respect, and I am pleased to have the opportunity to report on this.

In May, the Polisario Front, with technical assistance from Landmine Action, destroyed 2'000 stockpiled anti-personnel mines in Western Sahara. This was the 3rd such stockpile destruction since the Polisario Front signed the *Deed of Commitment*. In total 8'642 anti-personnel mines have now been destroyed by this signatory movement, and we hope that it will soon finalise this process. In July, the Puntland authorities destroyed 48 anti-personnel mines in northeast Somalia. This is the first officially recorded destruction of mine stocks in Puntland, despite the volatile security situation and difficulties in securing donor support. This operation was undertaken by the Puntland Mine Action Centre, with technical support from Mines Advisory Group (MAG). In September, shortly after signing the *Deed of Commitment*, the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (PDKI) destroyed 392 stockpiled anti-personnel mines in northern Iraq. The operation was carried out by Norwegian People's Aid (NPA). It is the first destruction of anti-personnel mines by an Iranian armed group.

Two other signatory groups operating in Burma/Myanmar have also made progress. The Lahu Democratic Front has reported destroying 34 anti-personnel mines, while the Chin National Front/Chin National Army (CNF/CNA) has recently destroyed a stock of improvised explosive device (IED) components. Both groups carried out this work without any support or assistance from specialist mine action agencies.

In addition, two former signatory non-State actors, which have since become part of their national governments, recently completed the destruction of their stocks. In southern Sudan, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), now part of the Government of National Unity, destroyed 6'078 anti-personnel mines in March, thereby completing Sudan's obligation to destroy its stockpiles under the Mine Ban Treaty. In Burundi, the national government, led by the former signatory movement *Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie-Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie* (CNDD-FDD), destroyed 664 anti-personnel mines in March, just before its deadline. Of the mines destroyed, some were originally part of CNDD-FDD stocks.

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Mr. President, even if the numbers of mines destroyed is generally not high compared to States' stockpiles, these actions have to be considered as very positive. They do not only demonstrate the will of the signatories to comply with their undertaking, but prevent future use and victims. As in Iraq, these actions can also help States Parties meet their obligations to destroy all mines on their territory. Altogether, signatories to the *Deed of Commitment* have destroyed more than 16'000 stockpiled anti-personnel mines to date, alongside thousands of IED components and unexploded ordnance (UXO). In this process, Geneva Call and its partners have not spared any effort in supporting and monitoring these destruction operations. But we have also met many challenges. Some signatories were ready to destroy their stockpiles but delays in providing technical assistance as well as subsequent fighting resulted in the seizure of these stockpiles by other actors or the mine components being looted. In a few other cases, signatories have yet to provide details on their stocks and to proceed with their destruction. These challenges will be presented in more detail at a side-event on Friday 28 November. To conclude, we would like to thank partners and donors who have supported our work and to reiterate here the importance of Action #46 of the Nairobi Action Plan, which calls upon States Parties to support mine action efforts in areas under the control of non-State actors, particularly those which have agreed to abide by the Mine Ban Treaty's norms. Their continued support will be crucial to complete the destruction of all stockpiles held by non-State actors.

Thank you for your attention