



APPEL DE GENÈVE GENEVA CALL

PRESS RELEASE

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Burma/Myanmar: Two armed groups undertake not to use child soldiers: the first to sign *Geneva Call's Deed of Commitment* on children.

The Karenni National Progressive Party/Karenni Army (KNPP/KA) and the New Mon State Party/Mon National Liberation Army (NMSP/MNLA) from Burma/Myanmar are the first to sign Geneva Call's *Deed of Commitment for the Protection of Children from the Effects of Armed Conflict**. These signings are the culmination of dialogue with Geneva Call that began in 2010.

Both armed non-State actors (ANSAs) have existing policies prohibiting the recruitment of under-18s in their military wings. By signing this *Deed of Commitment*, the KNPP/KA and NMSP/MNLA are publically formalizing what they view as their responsibilities towards the protection of children in situations of armed conflict. They pledge to ensure under-18s are not recruited into or used by their armed forces. In addition, the *Deed of Commitment* includes a broader set of international obligations relating to the protection, rights and well-being of children affected by armed conflict and underlines the responsibility of the ANSAs to facilitate education and assistance for children in need of care in areas under their control. Signatory ANSAs also agree to cooperate in the monitoring of their commitment by Geneva Call.

"It is important for us to show that we are willing and able to comply with International Humanitarian Law. It is for this reason that in 2007, we made an initial agreement with UNICEF. But today we would like to go further in signing the *Deed of Commitment* of Geneva Call, and we need Geneva Call's help to continue along this path and implement our obligations on the protection of children in our country and for our people," said Khu Oo Reh, KNPP Secretary 1.

"We are honoured to sign the *Deed of Commitment* and look forward to co-operating with Geneva Call and other organizations to ensure that children enjoy the protection and assistance that they deserve," said Brigadier General Nai Layeh Gakaung, the Vice Chief of Staff of the MNLA.

Elisabeth Decrey Warner, President of Geneva Call, emphasized the importance of this commitment. "Throughout this conflict, children have paid a very heavy cost for the war. The decision today by these leaders of two armed non-State actors to put children at the top of their concerns and to give them a chance to live in better conditions should be commended. It is a very good example for other armed non-State actors. "

It is hoped that these signatures by the KNPP and NMSP will galvanize other ANSAs in Burma/Myanmar to make similar commitments.

Geneva Call is a humanitarian organization that engages ANSAs towards compliance with internationally recognized humanitarian standards in the conduct of war.

*The *Deed* can be downloaded at http://www.genevacall.org/resources/deed-of-commitment/f-deed-of-commitment/DoC_New/DoC_CANSA_EN.pdf

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