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COVER NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
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To:	Delegations
Subject:	Non-state actors - presentation by Geneva Call

Following COHAFA meeting of 14 October 2024 (joint item with COTER), delegations will find in Annex the presentation made by Geneva Call¹².

¹ Appel de Genève / Geneva Call, identification number in the EU Transparency Register: 302979911822-71.

² This document contains a presentation by an external stakeholder and the views expressed therein are solely those of the third party it originates from. This document cannot be regarded as stating an official position of the Council. It does not reflect the views of the Council or of its members.

GENEVA CALL
Sahel



Enhancing Protection of Civilians
through Armed Actors
engagement

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14 October 2024

1. Context Evolution and Trends

- Intensification violence & methods warfare
- Involvement of civilians in hostilities in the form of self-defense groups
- Disinformation/social media = violence
- Political instability, attempt coup d'Etat and restrictions of civil liberties
- European diplomatic disengagement (- bilateral cooperation and funds)
- Spill over on coastal countries

2. Concerns on Protection of Civilians

- Over 2M displaced with limited access to services
- Communities targeted (associated to parties to the conflict – no principle of distinction)
- Humanitarians and local CSO face further restrictions - no access to populations under AGDA control
- Blocked localities/towns with limited access to services – dangerous farming = food insecurity
- Children recruited, public infrastructures misused/targeted
- Civilian casualties and gender violence possibly under-reported

Geneva Call – Sahel

3. Geneva Call response to PoC concerns

- Engagement authorities capital and local to advocate for humanitarian access
- Capacity building and advocacy on IHL with self-defense forces and authorities
- Awareness IHL common elements with Islam and local cultural norms with religious and community leaders
- Capacity building and protection dialogue between community leaders
- Results; over 12 schools operational thanks to the relocation of armed self-defense group sites, decreased target to communities, children age verification methods preventing recruitment, access to farming granted, humanitarian access negotiated

4. Enable the humanitarian response and enhance PoC

- EU/European Diplomatic engagement helps advocating for humanitarian & peacebuilding responses + accountability vs restrictive environment
- Funds towards supporting humanitarian assistance and also dialogue and advocacy activities enabling it
- Optimize West African States and Sahel links – prevent spill over effect (extremism or military regime)



Questions?

Thank you

