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RELEX 1715
INTER-REP 133

NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Education in emergencies - presentation by Geneva Call

Following the meeting of the Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA) on 16 and 17 December 2025, 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.



The protection of education through humanitarian engagement of armed groups and de facto authorities (AGDAs)

Geneva Call
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COHAFA 17 December 2025





Our mission

In situations of armed conflict, Geneva Call, as a neutral, impartial and independent international humanitarian organization, endeavours to **strengthen the respect of humanitarian norms and principles by armed groups and de facto authorities**, in order to improve the **protection of civilians**.



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Operational presence
in 15 conflict zones



Diversity of armed groups



Governance by armed groups,
including during transitional
periods - fragmentation



Why do we need to engage armed groups and de facto authorities on the protection of education?

Exponential increase of armed groups of humanitarian concerns

- Consistently 400-450 armed groups during the last five years
- Most in Africa and the Near and Middle East

Attacks on education

- On the rise since 2021 - by more than 150%
- Corresponding increase in children out of school - vulnerable to recruitment

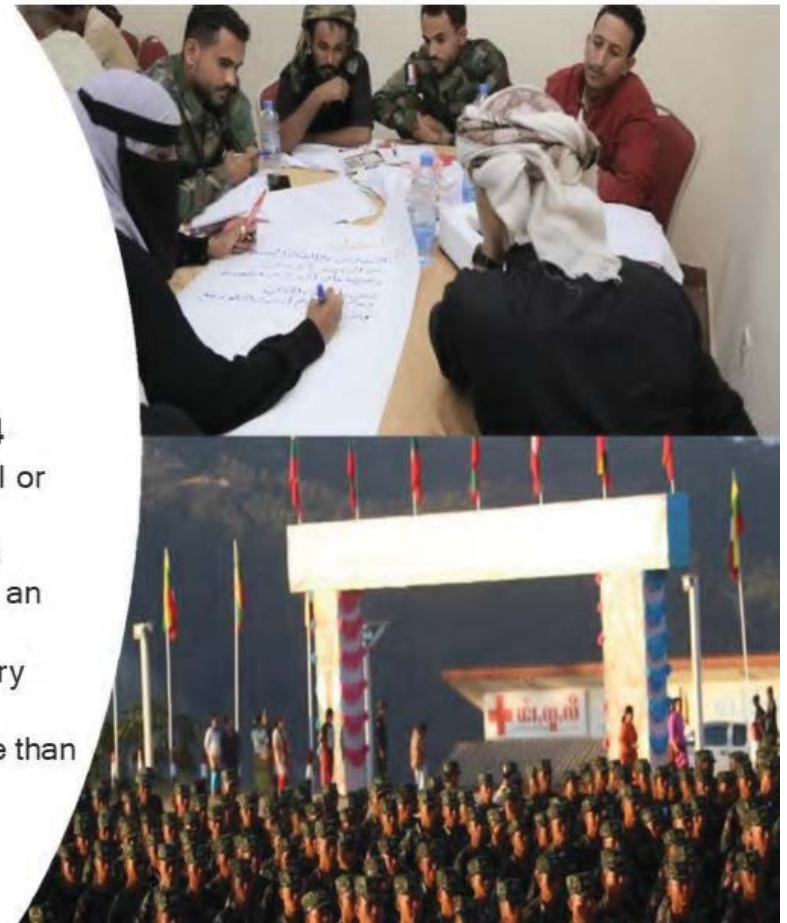
Expansion of territorial control by armed groups in 2024

- Increase of number of people living in areas under the full or partial control of armed groups: 204 million
- 74 million in areas under the full control of armed groups
- 25 of armed groups exercise exclusive territorial control, an increase of 10% compared to 2023
- 37% of armed groups exercise partial control over territory AGDAs
- 81% of AGDAs exercise full or contested control for more than four year



Education in such areas

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Geneva Call's approach to the protection of education

AGDA
engagement

- Ownership of norms to protect education with commitment tools with 31 Deed of Commitments signed on the protection of Education
- Change in behaviour

Community
engagement

- Multiply and localize AGDA engagement
- Tailored materials, e.g. Comic book for teachers

PROTECT
Children's access to
education



Evidence based engagement of AGDAs: Key insights from our 2024-2025 research

20 armed groups from DRC, South Sudan, Yemen, Iraq Syria and Myanmar

Importance attached to education: as a form of protection with cultural, social and religious dimensions

Fairly good knowledge and understanding of general IHL provision

Less familiar with practical operational steps under the Safe School Declaration

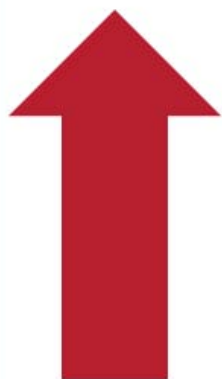
Structural gaps: identification of schools at risk, SOPs for vacating schools etc



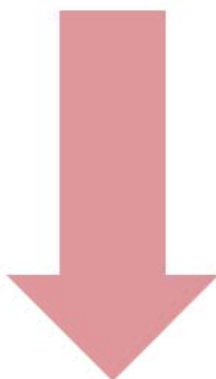
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Monitoring and Evaluation of AGDA engagement



Evaluate AGDA's commitments regularly to identify compliance gaps and build technical capacity.



Foster confidential dialogue to ensure accountability, and plan actions to improve compliance: Pause and reflect exercise

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Background

- **2024:** Assessed child protection compliance under the Deed of Commitment (DoC) with **3 armed groups (Thailand & Syria) on the protection of children**

Two approaches piloted:

- **External evaluation** using OECD/DAC criteria (Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, Sustainability, Coherence) an armed group from **Thailand**. with
- **Internal assessment by GC** of two armed groups from **Northwest Syria**.

Similar data collection methods:

- Internal **document review**
- **Direct observation** in AGDA-controlled hotspots
- Discussions with **AGDA leadership and/or political wings**
- Interviews with **rank-and-file members of AGDAs**
- interviews with **community members, local leaders/influencers**, and **NGOs** operating in these areas

Reflections



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