



Speech given by Mr Hichem Khadhraoui
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World Humanitarian Summit – High-level Leaders' Roundtable
Uphold the norms that safeguard humanity

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Mr President, Excellences, distinguished participants,

Let me first thank the United Nations and the Republic of Turkey for giving me the honour of delivering this statement during the World Humanitarian Summit.

This Summit is a unique opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to ensure respect for the norms that safeguard humanity. We all have a critical and complementary role to play to this end. Yet in times of armed conflict, there is another category of stakeholders that needs to be addressed.

Non-State armed groups are key actors in today's armed conflicts. They have a direct impact on millions of civilians and have responsibilities under international law. Therefore, efforts to assist and protect victims of armed conflict must address not only the conduct of States, but also that of non-State armed groups. As the UN Secretary General reminds us in his report, it is critical for humanitarian actors to engage with all parties to conflict to enhance their respect for international humanitarian and human rights law.

This is what my organization, Geneva Call, has been doing over the past 16 years. We have engaged non-State armed groups worldwide towards a better protection of civilians, in particular with regards to humanitarian mine action, child protection and the prohibition of sexual violence. It is a challenging but important task.

On the occasion of this Summit, I announce that Geneva Call makes the following commitments:

1. To further develop training sessions to 60 non-state armed groups on international humanitarian and human rights law, with a focus on humanitarian mine action, child protection and the prohibition of sexual violence.
2. To collect public individual commitments from non-State armed groups to respect norms of international humanitarian and human rights law and to monitor their implementation.
3. To promote to 35 non-State armed groups the implementation of the « Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict ».
4. To encourage non-State armed groups to refrain from using explosive weapons in densely populated areas.
5. To initiate dialogue with non-State armed groups on the protection of displaced persons and to explore engagement with them on the protection and respect of the medical mission
6. Finally, Geneva Call will report on its commitments and the outcomes achieved during the next follow up Summit meeting.

We believe that engagement with non-State armed groups is instrumental to enhance their accountability under international law. It is important that all parties to conflict know and respect the rules, so they remain fighters and not killers.