



GENEVA CALL  
APPEL DE GENÈVE  
LLAMAMIENTO DE GINEBRA

**Statement Made by Aik Long Kham Mwe,  
Chairman and General Secretary of the Lahu Democratic Front (LDF),  
on the Occasion of Signing the Deed of Commitment to Ban Landmines Held**

16 April 2007 - Geneva

Thank you Ms Elisabeth Reusse-Decrey, President of Geneva Call, and Mr Claude Bonard, Secretary General of the Canton of the Chancellery of the Republic and Canton of Geneva, for inviting the Lahu Democratic Front (LDF) to come to Geneva to sign the *Deed of Commitment* banning landmines in this historic room.

According to the Thai and Lahu Development Centre census in the year 1999 there are approximately 450,000 Lahu's living in Burma in the area from the Salween River to the tri-border area of China-Lao-Burma. Most are farmers and stay in the highlands. They are peace loving people. However, due to the poor economic situation in Burma they have carried out security duties for the SPDC and have joined the United Wa State Army and Shan State Army-South.

In the past, we, the LDF, had few soldiers. We did not want to use landmines, but we felt we had to use them to protect our people from the SPDC so that they would not come and disturb us. We always tried to let our people know not to go to the dangerous areas. Still, some animals and young children were injured by the mines we laid. In 2006 alone, 12 children and some animals were injured by landmines, while two Lahu from other areas visiting our villages were killed by these mines.

Following discussions with Geneva Call in November 2006, the LDF decided to ban anti-personnel mines. Up to this time, the LDF actively laid mines to protect the villages and our own camps. We planted around 200 landmines, and have a stockpile of 300-400 anti-personnel landmines, which we now plan to destroy. We will also start clearing immediately the mines that we've planted. We know that using landmines is not a good thing, and have all decided to abide by the ban.

We will do our best to advocate to other armed Lahu groups to also stop using anti-personnel mines. As well, we will use our position within the National Democratic Front (NDF) to encourage other armed opposition groups to ban anti-personnel mines.

Thank you