APPEL DE GENÈVE
GENEVA CALL

**DEED OF COMMITMENT UNDER GENEVA CALL
FOR THE PROHIBITION OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE
IN SITUATIONS OF ARMED CONFLICT AND TOWARDS
THE ELIMINATION OF GENDER DISCRIMINATION**

We, the Karen National Union/Karen National Liberation Army, through our duly authorized representatives,

Concerned with the life-long physical, psychological and social impact that sexual violence has on victims, their families and communities, especially in situations of armed conflict, and the threat that it presents to human security and sustainable peace;

Affirming our determination to protect the civilian population and other persons no longer taking part in hostilities from the effects or dangers of military operations, and to respect their fundamental rights;

Confirming our obligation to treat all persons taking no active part in hostilities humanely and without adverse distinction;

Mindful that women, men, girls and boys can be perpetrators as well as victims of sexual violence, and *recognizing* that women and girls are particularly targeted and face additional risks;

Taking due account that international law prohibits all forms of sexual violence, and *recognizing* that acts of sexual violence may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide;

Resolved to play a role in ending impunity for sexual violence;

Recognizing that sexual violence is a form of cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment or punishment, and *accepting* that such treatment or punishment of any person cannot be justified under any circumstance;

Recognizing that international law requires respect for the principles of equality and non-discrimination;
Bearing in mind that policies and practices that discriminate on the grounds of gender, in particular those against women and girls, are conducive to other forms of violence;

Acknowledging the importance of participation and involvement of both women and men in decision-making processes at all levels;

Reiterating that international humanitarian norms apply to and oblige all parties to armed conflict;

HEREBY solemnly commit ourselves to the following terms:

1. TO ADHERE to an absolute prohibition of sexual violence against any person, whether civilian, member of State armed forces or member of an armed non-State actor.

2. TO TAKE all feasible measures towards effectively preventing and responding to acts of sexual violence committed by any person, in areas where we exercise authority.

3. TO ENSURE that persons deprived of their liberty are protected from sexual violence.

4. TO FURTHER ENDEAVOUR to provide victims of sexual violence with the assistance and support they require in order to address the impact of such violence. Towards this end, and among other things, we will encourage and facilitate:

   - access to services, including medical, psychological, social and legal services, in cooperation with humanitarian and development organizations where appropriate;

   - rehabilitation programmes and actions that facilitate social reintegration of victims;

   - the provision of reparations to victims.

   Confidentiality of the victim(s) of sexual violence will be ensured, to the extent possible and at every stage, including in the process of reporting, making investigations, taking disciplinary measures and providing assistance to victims.

5. TO FURTHER ENDEAVOUR, in addition to our obligation to treat all persons taking no active part in hostilities humanely and without adverse distinction, to eliminate any act or practice of discrimination between men and women in our policies and processes. Towards this end, we will take concrete measures to ensure, among other things, equal protection before the law, equal enjoyment of rights and remedies, equal access to health care and services and equal access to education.

6. TO FURTHER ENDEAVOUR to ensure increased participation and involvement of women in our decision-making processes at all levels.

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7. TO ISSUE the necessary orders and directives to our political and military organs, commanders and fighters for the implementation and enforcement of our commitment embodied in the present *Deed*, including measures for information dissemination and training. Commanders and superiors are responsible for their subordinates. In case of non-compliance, we will take all necessary measures for the immediate cessation of violations, initiate appropriate and swift investigations and impose sanctions that reflect the severity of the violation, in accordance with international standards, with a view to preventing their recurrence.

8. TO ALLOW AND COOPERATE in the monitoring and verification of our present commitment by Geneva Call and/or other independent international and national organizations associated for this purpose with Geneva Call. Such monitoring and verification include visits and inspections in all areas where we operate, the right to interview our members, possible victims and their family members without witnesses, and the provision of the necessary information and reports, as may be required for such purposes in the spirit of transparency and accountability.

9. TO TREAT this commitment as one step or part of a broader commitment in principle to the ideal of humanitarian norms, particularly of international humanitarian law and human rights, and to contribute to their respect in field practice as well as to the further development of humanitarian norms for armed conflict.

10. This *Deed of Commitment* shall not affect our legal status, pursuant to the relevant clause in common article 3 of the Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949.

11. We understand that Geneva Call may publicize our compliance or non-compliance with this *Deed of Commitment*.

12. We see the desirability of attracting the adherence of other armed actors to this *Deed of Commitment* and will do our part to promote it.

13. This *Deed of Commitment* complements, or supersedes, as the case may be, any existing unilateral declaration of ours on the prohibition of sexual violence and on the elimination of gender discrimination.

14. This *Deed of Commitment* shall take effect immediately upon its signing and receipt by the Government of the Republic and Canton of Geneva which receives it as the custodian of such *Deeds*.

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Done this 21st of July 2013

FOR THE KAREN NATIONAL UNION/KAREN NATIONAL LIBERATION ARMY

KWE HTOO WIN
General Secretary
Karen National Union

GENERAL JOHNNY
General Officer Commanding
Karen National Liberation Army

FOR GENEVA CALL

ELISABETH DECREY WARNER
President

TIM CARSTAIRS
Head of Communications and External Relations

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC AND CANTON OF GENEVA

ANJA WYDEN GUELPA
Chancelière d'Etat

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