

Collective Voice, Shared Security: Women’s Organizations of Burma/Myanmar on Women, Peace, and Security Agenda



Rationale

This paper bears witness to the widespread atrocities, deepening levels of poverty, and intersectional insecurities against women, girls, and gender-diverse people across Myanmar/Burma five years after the brutal failed coup of February 2021. It centers on the lived experiences of women and girls to expose the brutal cost of inaction and the failure to uphold the promises enshrined in international law and global commitments to the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Agenda. This paper also bears witness to the proactiveness of women’s groups across Myanmar who are providing lifesaving humanitarian support and demanding accountability. They are calling on ASEAN Member States to meet their obligations under CEDAW, the WPS Framework consisting of UNSC 1325 and its sister resolutions, and uphold the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action (RPA) on WPS. This WPS case study, juxtaposes the ASEAN WPS RPA’s strategic objectives with the reality of WPS situation in Myanmar, revealing the urgent need to move beyond policy rhetoric toward concrete action.

Context

Five years after the failed coup of February 2021 in Myanmar, the junta has dismantled a decade of quasi-democratic transition and triggered nationwide resistance. Mass civil disobedience alongside a widespread armed confrontation between the military and Ethnic Resistance Organizations (EROs), newly formed People’s Defence Forces (PDFs), and Local Defence Forces (LDFs), each determined to dismantle the military and end the authoritarianism. By 2025, armed conflict had engulfed nearly two-thirds of the country[1] ranking it as the second most dangerous and violent country on the ACLED’s Global Conflict Index, after Palestine[2]. Myanmar’s military has perpetrated widespread armed offensives, systematic human rights violations, forced mass displacement, and grave sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), disproportionately affecting women and girls.

Now, over 3.6 million people in Myanmar are internally displaced[3] and nearly one-third of the population requires humanitarian assistance. The UN’s 2026 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan estimates that over 16 million people, including five million children, are in urgent need of life-saving assistance and protection[4]. Food insecurity in Myanmar is deteriorating, with over 400,000 children and mothers currently suffering from acute malnutrition. The World Food Program projects that approximately 12 million people in Myanmar will experience acute hunger in 2026, estimating emergency levels to reach at least one million people.

Myanmar’s economy has contracted sharply, with cumulative GDP losses exceeding 20% compared to pre-coup projections in 2019[6]. Formal employment has collapsed as businesses closed, foreign investment left, and persistent attacks by the Myanmar military on civilian sites proved a high risk of doing business, while electricity outages disrupt economic activities.

1. Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project. (2025). Conflict Index. ACLED. Retrieved February 14, 2026, from <https://acleddata.com/series/aced-conflict-index>
2. Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project. (2025). Conflict Index. ACLED. Retrieved February 14, 2026, from <https://acleddata.com/series/aced-conflict-index>
3. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. (2025, November 17). OCHA Myanmar humanitarian update: No. 50 [Situation report]. ReliefWeb.
4. Women’s League of Burma. (2026). Looking back on 2025: Burma’s political crisis and key highlights from the Women’s League of Burma and its member organizations.
5. [Pan American Times. (2025, December 18). “Almost invisible crisis”: UN urges world not to look away from Myanmar. Pan American Times.
6. World Bank. (2024, December). Myanmar Economic Monitor: Compounding crises: Special focus: International migration from Myanmar. World Bank.

In this context of structural violence carried out by the junta, economic contraction has resulted in many people, particularly young people and displaced communities, resorting to out-migration as a coping strategy[7]. While some reach safety, others are trafficked into scam compounds where exploitative conditions amount to crimes against humanity, including forced criminality, forced labour, and sexual abuse[8]. The Myanmar military and affiliated Border Guard Forces and militias profit from Myanmar's role as the epic-center of scam operations[9].

The strides made in the WPS agenda over the last decade were abruptly dismantled following the Myanmar military's failed coup in 2021. The military's actions, which amount to international crimes, have subjected women and girls to widespread and multifaceted insecurity stemming from structural violence, sexual violence, and mass atrocities, manifested in airstrikes, artillery shellings, and ground offensives. Further, Rohingya women and girls face 'parallel systems of persecution', even after the 2017 mass atrocities, and are currently trapped between junta repression and the armed conflict between the Arakan Army and the junta in Rakhine State, as well as the Arakan Army's ongoing human rights violations and mass atrocities. Their marginalization reflects the intersection of ethnicity, religion, gender, and legal exclusion[10].

ASEAN RPA Protection Policy Pledge: Strategic Outcome 1

"Protection of the rights of women, young women and girls, including those of marginalised groups, in policies, practices and institutions related to peace and security, including the protection of women and girls from all forms of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in conflict, post-conflict, peacebuilding and humanitarian settings."

Reality: Myanmar's protection mechanisms have been dismantled. Widespread military offensives, mass displacement, systemic sexual violence, and environmental disasters pose unprecedented threats to the safety and security of women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals. This has resulted in unmet protection needs, felt acutely by ethnic nationalities women, including Bamar in the heartland. For instance, Rohingya women and girls who face intersectional discrimination, legal statelessness, and the ongoing threat of a 'second genocide'. The looming famine and the conflict between the Myanmar military and the Arakan Army has displaced an estimated 130,000+ Rohingyas in the last two years[11].

Faced with unprecedented challenges and multidimensional insecurity, women are cultivating indomitable resilience, developing solutions to address a huge protection vacuum, building collective care networks, and sustaining their communities from disintegration while finding paths to survival in the face of global inaction and regional willful neglect and complicity.

7. Consultation with women's rights organizations as part of M-WPS's 2025 WPS Forum September, 2025 and Amplifying Women's Voices to influence policy, January 2026
8. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2025). Inflection point: Global implications of scam centers, underground banking and illicit online marketplaces in Southeast Asia (Technical policy brief). United Nations.
9. Consultation with women's rights organizations as part of M-WPS's 2025 WPS Forum September, 2025 and Amplifying Women's Voices to influence policy, January 2026
10. Women's Peace Network. (2025, August 25). On the eighth Rohingya Genocide Remembrance Day [Statement]; Women's Peace Network. (2025, June 20). Statement on World Refugee Day [Statement]; Women's Peace Network. (2025, December 10). International Human Rights Day statement [Statement].
11. Same as above

Civilian women and girls bear the greatest impact: From 2021, an estimated 1,900 women have been killed by junta forces[12], including women activists, medics, and bystanders caught in indiscriminate airstrikes and artillery shellings[13]. These estimates are likely low, given the restricted access and communication blackouts. The junta continues to evade accountability for gender-based crimes (GBC), enabled by international indifference and inaction that borders on complicity. Concurrently, intra-group abuses within revolutionary forces are concealed to protect their reputation and cohesion, which undermines survivor-centered justice. Survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) face pressure to remain silent to avoid retaliation and stigma. Critically, they also remain silent due to a total loss of faith in the Myanmar's justice mechanisms, hijacked by the junta. In this void, intimate partner and domestic violence cases are frequently "resolved" through informal mediation or compensation rather than formal legal processes in junta-controlled areas[14]. In the liberated areas, despite limited resources and ongoing airstrikes, the resistance administration is working to establish GBV response mechanisms in close collaboration with women's groups and organizations. Yet, the most severe forms of GBV and CRSV have been reported in resistance-held territories where the Myanmar military has launched targeted offensives. In these operations, they have deployed systematic tactics to terrorize civilians and dishonor communities, including gang rape, forced nudity, rape followed by murder, and the deliberate burning of women to death to destroy evidence. In 2025, it was reported that seventy-one women were burned to death[15]. Despite many organizations documenting mass atrocities at this scale, there is very limited avenue for redress and justice, with minimal survivor support.

12. Women's League of Burma. (2025, October 31). Statement on the 25th anniversary of UNSC Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. <https://www.womenofburma.org/statements/statement-25th-anniversary-uns-c-resolution-1325-women-peace-and-security>
13. Assistance Association for Political Prisoners. Myanmar Women Under Oppressions. (2026, January 30).
14. M-WPS (2025), Situation Analysis of WPS Status Series, the 3rd Edition
15. Human Rights Myanmar. Sex-based violence in Myanmar (Submission to the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, human rights defenders, and others from civil society organizations) [PDF].
16. International Campaign to Ban Landmines – Cluster Munition Coalition. (2025). Myanmar/Burma country profile: Impact (2023). The Monitor. Retrieved February 14, 2026, from <https://www.the-monitor.org/country-profile/myanmar-burma/impact?year=2023#>
17. M-WPS Amplifying Women's Voices to Influence WPS Policy Making Consultation, January 21, 2026

Food security: In 2024, Myanmar had the world's highest number of new casualties from landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW)[16]. Women's organizations have documented numerous cases of women and girls losing limbs after stepping on landmines while searching for food in forested areas and near displacement sites[17].

Response networks: Pre-coup safehouse networks and referral systems have mostly ceased to function, with many shelters closed. Remaining shelters now operate clandestinely, making access much more difficult for survivors. Severe aid cuts by the United States, United Kingdom, and Sweden have limited services to short-term emergency assistance, with no options for long-term support. Shelters now operate with limited short-term funding amid threat to life, insecurity, and heightened surveillance.

Psychosocial, Medical and Legal Support Almost Non-Existent: Across Myanmar, psychosocial, medical, and legal services are nearly absent for survivors. High costs, biased, and profit-driven legal personnel make legal aid inaccessible. Survivors in remote areas and/or without internet access are excluded from available services, leaving them isolated and at risk of re-traumatization. Medical supply shortages, including sanitary napkins, further undermine essential goods delivery.

Conclusion: Myanmar's protection situation shows that policy commitments and the indicators for successful implementation of the RPA are off track at best. The junta's illegal attempt to seize power

is the source of insecurity as it is committing gender-based crimes (GBCs) amongst other war crimes and crimes against humanity with impunity. In a brazen display of complicity, pro-military women's machinery from Myanmar, operating as a propaganda arm of the junta, continues to represent the country in ASEAN bodies concerning women's and children's rights. This representation stands in stark contradiction to the reality on the ground, signals mockery to survivors and victims of CRSV, and entrenched impunity. Even within junta-controlled areas, the junta proxy women's groups neglect the mass scale women's rights violation, with women human rights defenders subjected to arrest, imprisonment, torture, and, in some cases, death during interrogation.

ASEAN RPA Participation Policy Pledge Strategic Outcome 2

"Women's full, meaningful and equal participation in institutions, organizations and decision-making processes related to peace and security, including in leadership positions."

Reality: Despite the junta's ongoing attempt to seize power through terror and continued illegal control over state ministries and other bureaucrats, women's political participation persists beyond formal structures, actively constructing a new Myanmar in the framework of federal democracy. From the outset of the Spring Revolution, women and gender-diverse individuals have played critical roles in defending human rights and democracy, resisting military tyranny, building a federal democratic union, and creating community-based protection systems.

Cost of Participation: Women have played significant roles in the revolution, taking on multidimensional roles ranging from non-violent civilian peacebuilders to female combatants, drone unit engineers, fundraisers, interfaith dialogue facilitators, frontline humanitarian responders, public service providers, and logistical coordinators. Their contributions are indispensable to Myanmar's struggle for federal democracy and justice. However, these roles come at an immense cost: some have lost their security and/or their lives, while others have left heavy burdens on their families in their absence. Yet they continue to participate and persist.

The Sham Election as an Attempt to Reinstate Military Rule: The recently concluded sham election must not be viewed as a pathway to political normalization or renewed democratic space, but as a way to reinstate military dictatorship under civilian guise[18]. Despite the junta's use of coercion, intimidation, and threats to force participation at the recent polls, people have responded with courage and clarity. Through peaceful protests, organized boycotts of the sham election, and the powerful act of refusing to vote, people have resisted the junta's coercion, and asserted their agency with courage in spite of the risk. The sham elections offer no pathway to end the crisis for three core reasons:

18. ALTSEAN-Burma. (2026, February 6). From sham to scam: Overview of Burma/Myanmar's fraudulent election (25 December 2025–31 January 2026) (BN 2026/2119). ALTSEAN-Burma.

1. Basic free, fair, and credible electoral standards were not met: Evidence points to the systematic weaponization of electoral systems and manipulation of voting machines and ballots, as well as voter coercion. For instance, junta's authorities spread fear that non-voters will be denied travel permits or arrested at airports. Nonetheless, at least 11 million people boycotted the polls. The junta responded with excessive violence and criminalization of dissent, charging at least 404 civilians, 80 of whom are women, under the Election Protection Law, with lengthy prison sentences[19].

2. Systematic Obstruction of Meaningful Political Participation: Leaders of major democratic political parties remain imprisoned or exiled, and ethnic minorities' parties are still barred from participation. Independent media and civil society actors operated under duress, threatened with prosecution under a draconian Election Protection Law, excluding 10.5 million (30%) eligible voters from polls more than half of whom are women[20].

3. Election Violence Undermines Legitimacy: During the six-week election period, 1,288 attacks including 308 airstrikes were recorded. Communities across the country confirm that an election conducted under bombardment, repression, and duress cannot claim legitimacy[21].

ASEAN, under the 2026 chairmanship of the Philippines, signaled deep concern, publicly stating that any election held without inclusive dialogue and cessation of violence would not be recognized as legitimate[22]. Women's groups of Burma/Myanmar welcome the decisive stance of ASEAN.

Women Continue to Fight for Political Space: Women's participation is not granted; they must stake their claim for space within male-dominated leadership circles that dismiss or instrumentalize women's rights. Systemic exclusion persists in political and peace-making processes, compounded by care burdens, insecurity, and discriminatory norms. Where participation exists, it is too often tokenistic.

ASEAN Sectoral Bodies Exclude Legitimate Voices: ASEAN sectoral bodies, such as the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC), consistently exclude survivors, activists, feminist leaders, and the people's government: the National Unity Government (NUG) of Myanmar. Representatives of Myanmar at these key policy-making bodies with the authority to advance WPS concerns are military-appointed bureaucrats and proxies of the junta. ASEAN sectoral bodies have never invited women survivors or leaders/peacebuilders from affected communities, such as the Rohingya, to brief on policy directions, nor consider their political proposals.

19. Same as above
20. Same as above
21. Same as above
22. ASEAN refuses to recognize Myanmar's military-run elections. Philippine Star. <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2026/01/30/2504369/asean-refuses-recognize-myanmars-military-run-elections>

Conclusion: As Myanmar's legitimate political institutions are not yet officially recognized by the international community, the junta continues to illegitimately claim power through militarization, force, and diplomatic deception. Unless ASEAN and the UN recognize Myanmar's legitimate ethnic governance structures and the people's government, the NUG, Strategic Outcome 2 will only remain aspirational and fail to generate meaningful action.

ASEAN RPA Participation Policy Pledge Strategic Outcome 3

“ASEAN sectoral bodies, institutions and member states play an active role in contributing to global, regional and national conflict prevention, and prevention of violence, disasters and other threats to peace and security, with the principles of the WPS agenda central to these activities.”

Reality: While women’s organizations and LGBTQI+ communities in Myanmar/Burma continue to mediate communal and intra-group tensions, mitigate health crisis, including mental health, alerting to the breakdown of cold-chain for vaccination of infants and young ones, humanitarian, environmental, and food insecurity crises, and reinforce gender-responsive early warning systems in low-resource and disaster-prone contexts, the junta has taken no meaningful steps to address the root causes of conflict, cease violence, and stop committing mass atrocities, nor demilitarize politics.

Women’s Under-Invested Role in Conflict Prevention: The most under-invested yet critical pillar of the WPS agenda in Myanmar is women’s role in conflict prevention. Despite airstrikes, arson attacks, and systemic sexual violence, women’s groups lead inter-ethnic and communal conflict prevention initiatives to strengthen collaboration and foster social cohesion. Some women’s alliances conduct awareness raising with PDFs to respect international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights principles during armed conflict, as well as integrate gender perspectives into codes of conduct and strengthen GBV response mechanisms.

Early Warning Systems: Women, organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) and LGBTQI+ are actively involved in establishing early warning systems, tailored to low-resource settings and high-risk areas, to alert communities of imminent airstrikes, GBV spikes, food insecurity, displacement, and PWDs inclusion in evacuation plans.

Prevention Through Continued Education: Educators continue to provide online and in-person learning despite ongoing airstrikes and ground attacks by the junta. Women’s organizations support women’s leadership development through schools, political empowerment trainings, exchanges, and dialogues, as well as nurturing young women leaders to assume leadership in their communities. Women’s organizations in border regions with Myanmar’s neighboring countries and in exile promote feminist leadership within their networks, reject patriarchy and militarism, and invest in movement-building.

ASEAN RPA Strategic Outcome 4

“Peace and security institutions, mechanisms and processes are successfully preventing SGBV.

Reality: Multiple forms of human rights abuses, including SGBV and CRSV are perpetrated predominantly by the Myanmar military and some armed actors. The Myanmar military junta is a longstanding perpetrator of SGBV and CRSV, its systematic and widespread use of rape as a weapon of war has been well-documented with mounting evidence, therefore repeatedly listed in the UN Secretary-General’s annual report on CRSV. The annex names parties credibly suspected of committing or being responsible for patterns of rape and other forms of sexual violence in situations of armed conflict[23].

23. Report of the Secretary-General on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence 2025 (S/2025/389) – Full PDF via the UN site: <https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/report/report-of-the-secretary-general-on-conflict-related-sexual-violence/SG-Report-2024-FINAL.pdf>

Sustained increase in GBV/CRSV: GBV and CRSV have risen at an alarming rate, directly linked to nationwide armed conflict, entrenched patriarchal systems, and most critically Myanmar military's deliberate weaponization of violence against women and the gender diverse community as a military combat tactic. CRSV has been a longstanding tactic used by the Myanmar military against ethnic minority nationalities and other civilians, with over one thousand documented SGBV cases, including CRSV, since the failed coup[24,25]. Many of these cases remain unreported due to stigma, fear of reprisals, and lack of safe reporting mechanisms[26]. While the Myanmar armed forces is the predominant perpetrator with decades-long blanket impunity, PDFs and other armed actors have also been implicated in violations against civilians, with higher GBV rates reported in high-intensity areas linked to militarization and displacement. Violations commonly occur during security checks, detention, and Myanmar military raids on villages[27]. Technology-facilitated GBV (TFGBV) is rising in tandem with women activists and journalists facing intense surveillance, online harassment, coercion, threats, intimidation, and arrests.

Women Actors Provide Multifaceted Prevention: The junta is an active perpetrator of widespread and systemic SGBV. To fill this gap, women's organizations are leading multifaceted fronts in SGBV prevention efforts in the resistance-controlled areas, such as through awareness-raising and GBV response system strengthening within local governance structures and among women in the security sector. They provide ethical, survivor-centered case management support to strengthen systematic and effective responses to SGBV, with a particular focus on security institutions, including home affairs and police departments. Also undertaken are documentation, legal aid, counseling, psychosocial support, safe shelter provision, and emergency assistance. Survivors of unsafe migration, trafficking, and violence, including women, children, and human rights defenders, are supported to access health services, SRHR information and care, and livelihood opportunities, recovery, and dignity[28]. Women's organizations are filling critical SGBV prevention gaps; however, they do not have adequate resourcing or formal accountability power, hence the services they are able to provide are limited.

Conclusion: The ASEAN RPA calls on ASEAN Member States to invest in robust national prevention frameworks with clear accountability mechanisms and adequate resource allocation. In Myanmar's current context, however, the military junta's actions directly undermine the RPA's prevention objectives. Since Myanmar's sovereign authority was unlawfully disrupted through the failed coup by the military junta with a long record of violating international law, and as the global community, including ASEAN, has yet to formally recognize the people's legitimate representatives, including the NUG and emerging federal political and governance bodies, they are unable to deliver on the prevention objectives. Hence, ASEAN's RPA prevention outcomes remain fundamentally failing in Burma/Myanmar.

24. Women's League of Burma. (2025, October 31). Statement on the 25th anniversary of UNSC Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. <https://www.womenofburma.org/statements/statement-25th-anniversary-uns-resolution-1325-women-peace-and-security>
25. Women's League of Burma. (2026). Looking back on 2025: Burma's political crisis and key highlights from the Women's League of Burma and its member organizations.
26. safeGVBReporting (2024, February). Trends analysis: Conflict-related sexual violence in Myanmar—Biannual assessment, Edition 2/2023 (1 July to 31 December 2023)
27. M-WPS Amplifying Women's Voices to Influence WPS Policy Making Consultation, January 21, 2026
28. Women's League of Burma. (2026). Looking back on 2025: Burma's political crisis and key highlights from the Women's League of Burma and its member organizations.

ASEAN RPA Relief and Recovery Outcome 5

“The needs of women and girls are met in relief and recovery processes at regional, national and local levels and women have equal and meaningful participation in these processes, including in positions of decision-making and leadership.”

Reality: Since the 2021 failed coup, Myanmar has faced cascading disasters while the military has systematically weaponized humanitarian aid. In this context, large-scale aid channeled through the junta never reaches the communities most in need. Women-led and civil society networks including ethnic community-based organizations, despite being sidelined by major donors, deliver gender-responsive, life-saving support.

Climate Vulnerability in Myanmar: Myanmar ranks as the second most climate-vulnerable country globally and has very weak disaster-preparedness mechanisms[29]. Since the 2021 failed coup, Myanmar has endured two major cyclones (Cyclone Mocha [2023] & Yagi [2024]), along with severe flooding that devastated regions already affected by conflict. In 2025, a catastrophic 7.7-magnitude earthquake struck central Myanmar, killing at least 4,000 people, injuring up to 11,300, damaging infrastructure, displacing communities, and constraining access to clean water and health services. **Obstruction of Relief and Recovery by the Military:** Disaster response efforts are obstructed by the military’s weaponization of aid delivery through administrative controls, checkpoints, supply confiscation, and violence against aid workers; a well-rehearsed strategy in the junta’s playbook of terror[30]. This pattern reflects the military’s long-standing “four cuts” strategy, which collectively punishes communities by cutting off food, funding, intelligence (including internet and phone access), and recruits in order to isolate EROs and PDFs from local support[31].

Donor Bypass and Disproportionate Burden on Women and Girls: Major donors such as China[32] bypassed ethnic health organizations, women’s organizations, and civil society groups by channeling aid directly to the junta. These CSOs and women’s groups have long been critical players in providing humanitarian assistance to underserved areas with the greatest needs. Consequently, China’s \$137 million in earthquake relief aid in April 2025 became a tool to influence the junta rather than reaching the people in need. Women and girls bear disproportionate burdens in these crises, including increased unpaid care work, heightened exposure to GBV in overcrowded shelters, and reduced access to reproductive health services following global aid cuts, particularly USAID funding cuts[33].

Women’s Groups as Lifesaving Humanitarian Backbone: In this perilous context, women’s groups represent a critical component in an invisible web of complex humanitarian ecosystem operating across different regions to deliver relief. Though modest in scale, it is nonetheless lifesaving and consistent, and ensures aid delivery to communities remains responsive to local needs as well as gender responsive. They mobilize intricate support networks, provide humanitarian relief where international aid has failed to reach highly marginalized and vulnerable groups, such as civil disobedience movement members in severely affected, resistance-held areas. Regional feminist funds also provide vital, flexible, and lightweight resources, grounded in local trust and knowledge, to meet the needs of affected communities.

29. Valentina and Flower. (2024). Navigating barriers to women’s participation in policy spaces intersecting with environmental peacebuilding in Myanmar. European Institute of Peace.
30. Progressive Voice. (2025, December 9). Briefing paper: The Myanmar military junta’s weaponization of humanitarian aid (2021–2025). Progressive Voice.
31. Progressive Voice. (2025, December 9). Briefing paper: The Myanmar military junta’s weaponization of humanitarian aid (2021–2025). Progressive Voice.
32. Ramos, M. (2025, April 15). Which countries are helping earthquake-hit Myanmar? Context.
33. Myanmar-Women, Peace and Security (M-WPS), Consultation with women’s rights organizations as part of M-WPS’s 2025 WPS Forum September 2025, and Amplifying Women’s Voices to influence policy, January 2026

Conclusion: Myanmar’s experience starkly shows that ASEAN WPS RPA Strategic Objective 5 is completely off track. The military junta’s conduct directly contradicts the RPA’s call for ASEAN Members to deliver systematic and inclusive women’s leadership in formal planning and gender-responsive relief and recovery efforts.

Recommendations

1. Protection

- ASEAN should ensure its Member States make concrete efforts to fulfill the commitments enshrined in the WPS Agenda, UNSCR 1325 and its sister resolutions, and the ASEAN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women by enabling ASEAN CSOs working on WPS issues to establish an ecosystem that supports survivor-centered services, ethical documentation, and safe referral pathways within Myanmar and across the region. This ecosystem must be adequately resourced through dedicated WPS funding allocations and designed to provide specialized healthcare, psychosocial support, assistive devices, and accessible information in diverse formats (including Braille, sign language, and easy-to-read materials) to ensure inclusion of women and girls with disabilities.
- Undertake a comprehensive review and amendment of the RPA on WPS to ensure it moves beyond an aspirational and symbolic framework and becomes fit for purpose in addressing the region’s evolving challenges, as illustrated by the Myanmar crisis. The revised RPA should incorporate concrete accountability and justice pathways, establish resourced implementation mechanisms, and mandate disability-inclusive standards, including accessible GBV reporting systems, inclusive emergency warning dissemination, and targeted resource allocation to address the intersecting risks faced by women and girls with disabilities in contexts of militarization and displacement.
- The donor community, anti-GBV actors, and WPS champion countries should support the development of practical protection plans that ensure broader coverage, improved resourcing, and alignment with the WPS framework and the CEDAW General Recommendation 30. Such plans should explicitly include disability-responsive budgeting, provision of specialized and accessible services, and coordination frameworks that guarantee inclusive outreach, communication accessibility, and tailored protection measures for women and girls with disabilities.
- ASEAN regional cooperation should be strengthened to provide legal, medical, and psychosocial support, as well as visa and administrative assistance, to survivors from Myanmar of GBV and trafficking in persons who are seeking protection and access to justice, including displaced populations. Regional mechanisms should ensure that cross-border referral systems, shelters, justice processes, and information-sharing protocols are fully accessible and equipped to respond to the specific needs of survivors with disabilities, including access to assistive devices and accessible communication formats.

2. Participation

- **Reject Junta Representation in ASEAN.** Immediately bar all junta-appointed representatives from all ASEAN sectoral bodies, including thematic, ministerial and summit levels, as well as ACWC and AICHR. Allowing military envoys to occupy Myanmar's seat while democratic actors are silenced demonstrates ASEAN's complicity in the junta's crimes against the people of Myanmar. Instead, institutionalize structured consultations and engagement with women leaders from Federal units, EROs, and CSOs including the direct participation of women with disabilities within ASEAN's Myanmar-related policy mechanisms and platforms to inform policy decisions.
- **End "Non-Political Representation" Practices.** Halt the practice of inviting so-called "non-political representatives" that, in effect, enable junta participation, legitimizing and shielding its mass atrocity campaign from accountability. Instead, coordinate with Myanmar's WPS partners and relevant actors to establish safe participation pathways, including cross-border consultations.
- **Expand flexible and direct funding mechanisms.** Increase flexible funding for Myanmar women's organizations (not affiliated with the Junta) engaged in peacebuilding, mediation, and governance initiatives with long-term support as a way to ensure full and meaningful participation.

3. Prevention

- **ASEAN promotes policy coherence.** Align people-centered economic development, security frameworks, climate adaptation, and engagement strategies with Myanmar's ethnic and federal political entities of the people's revolution, as well as the WPS community.
- **ASEAN elevates Burma/Myanmar women's leadership.** Recognize, amplify, and resource women leading community-level dialogue and prevention initiatives by directly supporting women's organizations implementing these programmes and initiatives.
- **Implement community-level evacuation plans** for airstrikes and natural disasters that specifically account for the mobility and communication needs of persons with disabilities.
- **ASEAN member states, donors, and WPS advocates to advance women's role in prevention of conflict and GBV/CRSV.** Engage Myanmar's women-led community networks, including emerging political and governance bodies with women's departments, ERO women's wings, and peacebuilding networks as a concrete strategy for conflict prevention.
- **ASEAN's humanitarian efforts, including through the AHA Centre, and the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action (RPA)** on WPS must be both gender-responsive and disability-inclusive by incorporating disability-disaggregated data, directly consulting organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), ensuring aid reaches women with disabilities in hard-to-reach areas of Myanmar, and allocating dedicated budget lines for their protection and empowerment in conflict settings.

4. Relief and Recovery

- Recognize and support independent women-led, community-based responders, including locally led mechanisms channeling through borders.
- Ensure ASEAN humanitarian coordination frameworks, efforts, and projects include women's departments from EROs, federal units, women's organizations, ethnic community-based organizations, and civil society groups as equal partners.
- Ensure aid mechanisms do not inadvertently reinforce conflict dynamics that favor armed actors or exclusion.
- ASEAN's humanitarian efforts, including through the AHA Centre, and the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action (RPA) on WPS must be both gender-responsive and disability-inclusive by incorporating disability-disaggregated data, directly consulting organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), ensuring aid reaches women with disabilities in hard-to-reach areas of Myanmar, and allocating dedicated budget lines for their protection and empowerment in conflict settings.

This WPS position paper is endorsed by 43 organizations and networks working for Myanmar, including one organization working for persons with disabilities that prefers to remain anonymous.

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|---|---|
| 1. A New Burma | 23. Network Documentation–Burma |
| 2. Action Committee for Democracy Development | 24. New Myanmar Foundation |
| 3. ALTSEAN Burma | 25. Political Prisoners Network Myanmar |
| 4. Blood Money Campaign | 26. Progressive Voice |
| 5. Blooming Padauk | 27. Politics for Women Myanmar |
| 6. Equality Myanmar | 28. Sisters to Sisters |
| 7. History Carriers | 29. Sitt Nyein Pann Foundation |
| 8. Human Rights Defenders and Promoters | 30. Southern Initiatives |
| 9. Human Rights Educators Network | 31. Southern Youth Development Organization |
| 10. Human Rights Foundation of Monland | 32. Ta'ang Women's Organization |
| 11. Htoi Gender Group | 33. The Ladies Organization |
| 12. Itthiya Foundation | 34. The Space |
| 13. Karen Human Rights Group | 35. Thint Myat Lo Thu Myar |
| 14. Karen Peace Support Network | 36. Women Alliance Burma |
| 15. Karenni National Women's Organization | 37. Women Advocacy Coalition Myanmar |
| 16. Kyae Lak Myay | 38. Women's Organization of Political Prisoners |
| 17. Let's Help Each Other | 39. Women of Political Prisoners |
| 18. Magway Region Human Rights Network | 40. Women Lead Resource Center |
| 19. Metta Campaign | 41. Women's League of Burma |
| 20. Myanmar National Organizing Committee | 42. Youth Empowerment |
| 21. Myanmar Women in Media | |
| 22. Myanmar Women, Peace and Security | |

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