



Women's Peace Network

Statement on the Burmese military's recent airstrikes in Sagaing Region

April 12, 2023

We, Women's Peace Network, strongly condemn the Burmese military's recent [airstrikes](#), on the morning of April 11, 2023, against civilians [commemorating](#) the opening of an administrative office in Pa Zi Gyi, a village in Kanbalu Township, Sagaing Region. The military [launched](#) bombs from its fighter jets against the civilians, and then gunfire from its Mi-35 helicopters against those escaping the bombings. This systematic and targeted attack destroyed the office's infrastructure, severely wounded dozens of civilians, and [killed](#) at least 100. The majority of the casualties are women, children, and the elderly; their charred and mutilated bodies [belong to](#) more than 30 children, including a six-month-old infant.

The aerial bombing of Sagaing Region marks a sharp escalation in the military's organized, brutal campaign against civilians in Myanmar since its attempted coup two years ago. It follows the military's recent [air and ground attacks](#), all of which burned down and destroyed civilian objects, maimed and murdered dozens of civilians, and forcibly displaced hundreds of thousands more to areas without any reliable access to safety, protection, or livelihoods. Such attacks include the military's deadly [airstrikes](#) on a concert in Kachin State, [massacre](#) in a Buddhist monastery in Shan State, and [rounds](#) of aerial bombing of Karen, Karenni, and Chin states – most recently in [Falam and Thantlang townships](#). The military is evidently committing atrocities of a growing number and intensity across Myanmar, many of which amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity according to the [United Nations \(UN\) High Commissioner for Human Rights](#), the [UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar](#), and the [Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar](#).

Particularly alarming is the devastating impact of the military's attacks on women, children, and other marginalized communities in Myanmar. This population is often at close proximity to civilian objects, such as homes, [schools](#), [clinics](#), and [churches](#), that risk being deliberately and indiscriminately attacked by the military. Mostly women, children, and the elderly, civilians who are forced to flee these areas are then left in Myanmar's growing areas of armed conflict; those who reach neighboring countries for access to protection and asylum [risk](#) detention and deportation. Such life-threatening conditions in turn leave this group at heightened risk of more brutalities, retraumatizing them with the Burmese military's arbitrary arrest and detention, deployment of human



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shields and landmines, torture, sexual and gender-based violence, and further rounds of raids, scorched earth campaigns, and airstrikes – both as civilians and as internally displaced persons.

Therefore, we call upon the international community to take immediate action to hold the Burmese military accountable for international crimes, and prevent the recurrence of atrocities in Myanmar.

Countries and governments must at minimum impose a comprehensive ban on all arms and aviation fuel supplies and sales to the military, as well as robust economic sanctions and financial penalties against the military and its businesses – especially the Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise.

Simultaneously, the UN Security Council must uphold its mandate, and Responsibility to Protect and Women, Peace, and Security agendas, to implement the above measures as a step towards addressing the various [shortcomings](#) of resolution 2669 (2022).

Under Indonesia's leadership, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) must also take measures beyond the Five-Point Consensus to effectively address the human rights and humanitarian catastrophe in Myanmar. Failure to do so will only embolden the Burmese military to further threaten regional security and stability.

We urge the international community to pursue concrete and comprehensive actions to protect the people of Myanmar and support their vision of justice, freedom, peace, and a truly inclusive federal democratic union.