



Women's Peace Network

Statement on the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict | June 19, 2023

This International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, we, Women's Peace Network, reaffirm our solidarity with victims and survivors of conflict-related sexual violence by urging the international community to pursue actions in line with their calls for justice and accountability.

In Myanmar, international inaction on bringing justice and accountability is fueling the commission of sexual violence in conflict. After decades of [perpetrating](#) crimes against humanity, war crimes, and genocide across the country, and over two years [since its attempted coup](#), the Burmese military is now [committing](#) atrocities with increasing frequency and intensity against civilians. These atrocities continue to facilitate the military's commission of sexual violence because they put the crime's target population in Myanmar – women, girls, LGBTQ+ and other marginalized groups – at greater risk of it. Impunity is thus what is emboldening the military to commit sexual violence in conflict, thereby preventing its elimination.

While it is urgent to hold the Burmese military accountable, it is also important to condemn the [commission](#) of sexual violence in Myanmar by [other actors](#) involved. Eliminating conflict-related sexual violence means bringing justice to all its victims and survivors. Our calls for justice are rooted in our principled mission, particularly for the rights and freedoms of ethnic and religious minorities in Myanmar. Many of them, who are victims and survivors of the Burmese military's sexual violence, are now at risk of a recurrence of atrocities in the country and, as refugees and asylum seekers, further abuses for seeking safety and protection abroad. From Rakhine State to Bangladesh, ethnic Rohingya survivors of the military's sexual violence are facing retraumatizing [conditions](#) that threaten their survival – and that of their community as whole.

We emphatically refuse to break our principles for justice, and ask the international community to do the same. We call upon countries and governments to immediately pursue actions to end all forms of impunity in Myanmar. These actions must include the referral of the situation of Myanmar to the International Criminal Court, the issuance of more economic sanctions targeting the Burmese military and its related businesses, and a full ban on all arms and aviation fuel sales to the military. The United Nations Security Council must enforce its Chapter VII of the UN Charter to pursue further actions to



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uphold its mandate, as well as Responsibility to Protect and Women, Peace, and Security agendas. ASEAN must fulfill its potential of genuinely bringing peace and stability to Southeast Asia beyond simply relying on its [failed](#) Five-Point Consensus.

Throughout these processes, the international community must consult with all communities that have been affected by conflict-related sexual violence and other atrocities in Myanmar. These consultations should entail the direct provision of financial and material assistance to these victims and survivors, including to civil society – especially women's groups and human rights defenders – supporting them. Centering on the voices, perspectives, and agency of the affected communities is crucial to ensuring that any action taken for them will be meaningful, effective, and just.

We urge the international community to finally pursue concrete and comprehensive actions to eliminate sexual violence in conflict across Myanmar.