



Statement of Women's Forum for Peace CEDAW Alliance September 30, 2023



As a commemoration of International Peace Day, which falls on September 21, 2023, the CEDAW Alliance held the "Women's Forum for Peace" from September 19 to 20, 2023. The "Women's Forum" was attended by 230 women from different regions and women from alliance member organisations. The "Women's Forum for Peace" was held for the purpose of increasing women's participation in all decision-making levels and improving justice, responsibility, and accountability for violence against women through domestic and international mechanisms.


Myanmar has been through 70 years-long civil war, and the military has violated human rights and women's rights in different forms. The military has been extensively committing crimes, such as forced porter, murder, unlawful detentions and torture, and systematically using raping women, sexual violence, sexual exploitations, and conflict-related sexual violence as weapons in conflict-affected areas.

Although women and children have been continually suffering the brunt of the conflicts in successive eras, the meaningful participation of women in conflict resolution, political transitions, leadership, and decision-making has been relatively lower and remains a challenge.

In the Forum, we discussed peace and security-related challenges faced by women following the military takeover on February 1, 2021, the measures taken to respond to violence against women, efforts for justice issues, and actions and approaches taken for the responsibility and accountability of perpetrators.

Based on the discussions of women representatives from different regions involved in women and peace issues, we discovered that although, throughout the revolution movement, women have taken initiative and been participating in armed resistance, political resistance, diplomatic resistance, civic and other activities, fundraising, providing healthcare, IDP related emergency response and humanitarian assistance, programmes supporting political prisoners and their family members, psychosocial support, and responding a dramatically increasing domestic violence and sexual violence, their voices are still excluded from decision-making mechanisms in the current situation.

They also presented that women and children are not only facing acts of violence committed by the terrorist military but also different forms of violence committed by resistance forces. Concrete evidence shows that revolution forces have neglected and remained mute about women's issues, offering the pretext that raising such matters limits their capacity to manoeuvre resistance movements. Against the backdrop of the failure of existing judicial and justice mechanisms and the absence of functioning judicial systems initiated by resistance forces, it was discovered that different forms of sexual abuse and sexual violence against women have been increasing.



During the conflict, armed organisations, including the terrorist military and their sub-units, such as Pyusawthi and police forces, committed sexual exploitation against women; other armed forces, People Defence Forces, and Local Defence Forces, also committed sexual exploitation against women. It was also reported and discussed that some other armed organisations committed extortion by threatening with arms, and as the perpetrators are still enjoying impunity despite evidence against their sexual exploitation, the daily life and human security of women have become increasingly worrying.

Although women have sacrificially participated in different sectors of revolutions in different eras, not only has their participation not been acknowledged, but taking into consideration their voice and demands also still have been relatively weak despite women's participation being accepted in principle. Although women have participated in different sectors of the Spring Revolution, their involvement at the decision-making level has remained minimal.

Based on the discussions above, the Women's Forum for Peace profoundly urges and demands stakeholders, resistance forces, and the international community the following points;

National Unity Consultative Council

- To develop and implement policies and grand strategies based on the voices of the people from different sectors and relevant to the needs on the ground.
- To transparently share information and their activities deemed the general public have the right to access.
- To systematically comply with the thirty-percent minimum participation of women enshrined in the Federal Democratic Charter.
- To implement the road map prescribed in the Federal Democratic Charter in a timely manner.

National Unity Government

- To transparently and systematically resolve sexual violence cases committed by resistance forces under its command and control, enforcing interim laws.
- To put emphasis on women's issues as a priority and coordinate with civil society organisations.
- To allocate a Gender Responsive Budget as a specific budget as the National Unity Government.
- To enforce women's participation in leadership and all decision-making levels by the National Unity Government to realise a 'minimum thirty per cent quota for women'.

Resistance Forces

- To include policies of protection from sexual violence and sexual exploitation in the military code of conduct and to ensure compliance.
- To specifically allocate a Gender Responsive Budget by resistance forces and state consultative councils.
- To enforce women's participation in leadership and at all decision-making levels by resistance forces and state consultative councils to realise a 'minimum thirty per cent quota for women'.

International Organisations

- To impose economic and targeted sanctions and to effectively put embargoes on arms and oil against the terrorist military by international organisations.
- To speedily make efforts to bring international justice and take accountability for the violence and crimes committed by the terrorist military.
- To avoid coordination in the terrorist military's arms trade by Thailand, India, China, Russia, and Bangladesh.
- To directly coordinate with civil society organisations on the ground to effectively deliver humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons.
- To increase funds to support the emergency needs of women in a timely manner and to deliver directly to the respective organisation.