



A Joint Statement from UNFPA and UN Women in Myanmar

25 November 2023

“UNITE! Invest to prevent violence against women and girls

As we mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on 25 November, women and girls across Myanmar have said sexual violence, harassment and early marriage are their top safety and security concerns¹ as the combined impacts of escalating armed conflict and multiple crises continue to heighten their vulnerability to violence.

Also on 25 November, is the beginning of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence which will run until 10 December under the global theme set by the UN Secretary-General’s UNITE campaign, **“UNITE! Invest to prevent violence against women and girls”**.

As the world marks the halfway point to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the urgency to end violence against women and girls has never been greater. Yet less than 0.2% of global Official Development Assistance is directed to gender-based violence protection, and women’s rights organizations remain severely underfunded.

Gender-based violence prevails in every corner of the globe – one in three women world-wide has been subjected to it. And in emergency settings – like that currently facing Myanmar – it soars. There are 9.2 million women and girls in Myanmar in urgent need of humanitarian assistance and almost half the population is living in poverty.² Displacement has surged over the last three years and there are now more than 2 million people internally displaced, of which 53% are women and girls.

These dire conditions have led to economic stressors including job loss, rising food prices and disrupted services. More children are being pulled out of school early and child marriage is increasing as families in crisis resort to forcing young girls to marry for perceived protection and survival. All of this – combined with deeply-rooted societal gender norms and inequalities – is aggravating tensions at home and increasing the incidence and risk of violence against women and girls, especially intimate partner violence³ which Myanmar women believe is the most common form of gender-based violence in their communities.⁴

Despite the dire situation, international aid to Myanmar is dwindling and only 0.68 per cent⁵ of it goes to women’s rights organizations. Collaborating with and sustaining funding for women’s

¹ Findings from focus group discussions conducted for 2023 Multi Sectoral Needs Analysis

² Myanmar Humanitarian Needs Overview, UN OCHA, January 2023, [available online](#).

³ Any form of physical, sexual, or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner.

⁴ Finding of focus group discussions conducted for the 2023 REACH Multi Sectoral Needs Analysis

⁵ OECD data 2021, [available online](#).



organizations and civil society organizations is critical as they play a vital role in ending and preventing gender-based violence by providing services on a local level, bolstering women's empowerment and reaching those at risk of being left furthest behind.

UNITE! Invest to prevent violence against women and girls

This is why, as we mark the beginning of this year's 16 Days campaign, we call for longer-term, flexible and accessible funding that directly supports women's rights organizations. We also call for funding that makes gender-equality a priority; supports gender mainstreaming; and funds gender analysis and research to inform evidence-based action.

All women and girls have the right to live a life free of violence and full of dignity. It is a fundamental human right. UN Women and UNFPA in Myanmar re-affirm that the United Nations Country Team is committed to stay and deliver gender-based violence prevention and response services with local partners to end violence against women and girls.

Let's All UNITE, Invest and ACT to End Violence against Women and Girls Now!

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About UNFPA

UNFPA is the United Nations sexual and reproductive health agency. UNFPA's mission is to deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled. UNFPA calls for the realization of reproductive rights for all and supports access to a wide range of sexual and reproductive health services, including voluntary family planning, quality maternal health care and comprehensive sexuality education.

About UN Women

UN Women is the United Nations entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.

