



Burmese Women's Union

WEAPONIZING THE BODY:

*Conflict-related sexual violence as a tool of
war and oppression in Myanmar*



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



The Burmese Women's Union (BWU) wishes to express its profound gratitude to the many individuals and organizations (women and human rights organizations) whose invaluable contributions, dedication, and expertise were essential to the completion of this report.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report, led by the Burmese Women's Union (BWU), analyzes conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) in Myanmar from January 2024 to July 2025 across key conflict-affected regions. Documenting 88 cases, it exposes widespread, systematic sexual violence used as a weapon of war by multiple armed actors, the illegal Myanmar military and its militia.

Primary perpetrators include the illegal military junta, its militias (such as Pyu Saw Htee), military-appointed village leaders, some resistance forces, and civilians. CRSV takes the form of rape, gang rape, sexual harassment (online and offline), intimidation, torture, and exploitation. Survivors include women, girls, elderly, LGBTQIA+ individuals, and persons with disabilities. Survivors suffer severe physical, psychological, and social consequences, exacerbated by victim blaming, stigma, and ongoing threats.

Access to justice is severely constrained by military dominance, compromised judicial systems, ongoing conflict, and entrenched impunity. Resistance groups' justice efforts face limitations due to weak legal frameworks and internal accountability gaps. Civil society organizations experience security risks, funding shortages, and obstacles in documentation.

The report urges urgent measures: survivor-centered protection, effective accountability, stronger legal frameworks, and enhanced cooperation among the National Unity Government, ethnic resistance groups, civil society, and international partners. These steps are essential to uphold Myanmar's international obligations, prevent further CRSV, and support survivors amid the country's evolving conflict.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This study is aimed to achieve two primary objectives: (1) analyze the situation of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) in Myanmar, shedding light on its impact on survivors and the challenges they face in accessing justice, and (2) explore the challenges and limitations encountered by the organizations working with CRSV survivors, identify potential actions, and propose steps to effectively address CRSV amidst the ongoing conflict in Myanmar. This report focuses specifically on the CRSV data documented by the Burmese Women's Union (BWU) from 1st January 2024 to 31st July 2025, within five targeted areas: Sagaing, Magway, Bago, Ayeyarwady Regions, and Karenni State. During this period, the BWU documented a total of 88 cases of CRSV perpetrated by the Myanmar military and its militia, Pyu Saw Htee, military-appointed village chiefs, and, in some instances, civilians and some members of the People's Defense Forces in the conflict areas.

Qualitative research methodologies were applied for the data collection process. These methods included conducting in-depth interviews with survivors, family members, and witnesses using semi-structured interview guidelines, as well as holding a one-day online focus group discussion with organizations engaged in documentation and service delivery for survivors. The findings of this study confirm that survivors are subjected to intimidation and threats by the perpetrators both before, during, and after the incidents. Furthermore, the report highlights the severe impact on survivors, who suffer from mental health issues, loss of livelihood, and victim-blaming, with their families also negatively affected by these incidents. Access to justice remains significantly impeded, primarily because the perpetrators often belong to armed groups, including the illegal military junta and its militia, Pyu Saw Htee, resistance groups, and other influential individuals.

2.THE CONTEXT OF SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN MYANMAR

2.1. Definition of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV)

In the report of the United Nations Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence, “conflict-related sexual violence” refers to rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced abortion, enforced sterilization, forced marriage, and any other forms of sexual violence of comparable gravity perpetrated against women, men, girls, or boys that is directly or indirectly linked to a conflict. That link may be evident in the profile of the perpetrator, who is often affiliated with a state or non-state armed group.”¹ (Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Report of the United Nations Secretary-General, 2019). Conflict-related sexual violence in this research refers to rape, including gang rape, attempted rape, sexual exploitation, and sexual harassment in both online and offline in conflict settings. Those acts are directly or indirectly linked with conflict, and the survivors and victims are girls, women, and LGBTQIA+ in particular. The perpetrators are armed groups and actors (the military and its affiliated civilian authorities, such as Pyu Saw Htee, village leaders, as well as influential people who have a good relationship with the illegal military junta, resistance groups), as well as civilians. Some are supporters of the revolution in the conflict-affected areas.

2.2. The Landscape of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence before the Military’s Attempted Coup

Myanmar is a country with prolonged armed conflict between the illegal military Junta and ethnic resistance organizations that struggle for self-determination and ethnic equality. During these conflicts, the illegal military junta has committed grave human rights violations such as killing, including mass killing, arbitrary arrests, arson of villages, sexual violence against women and girls, gang rape, sexual torture, abduction, and other forms of sexual violence. The illegal military junta has a long track record of using rape and sexual violence as a weapon of war with complete impunity, especially in ethnic areas, for decades. During the “Four Cuts Operation” conducted by the military in Shan State, women and girls were subjected to various forms of sexual violence, including rape. According to the report “License to Rape” by the Shan Human Rights Foundation (SHRF) and Shan Women’s Action Network (SWAN), 173 incidents of rape and other forms of sexual violence were committed by the illegal military junta in Shan State between 1996-

¹ United Nations (2019). Conflict related sexual violence report of the United Nations Secretary General. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/report/conflict-related-sexual-violence-report-of-the-United-Nations-Secretary-General/2019-SG-Report.pdf>

2000.² That report, however, only covers Shan State. Other ethnic and conflict areas, such as Kachin, Chin, and Mon States, also reported CRSV cases committed by the illegal military junta.

In every conflict setting, systematic sexual violence against women and girls is used as a weapon of war by this illegal military institution. The 2014 report by the Women's League of Burma, "Same Impunity, Same Patterns," documented 104 incidents of sexual violence under Thein Sein's quasi-military government. However, this report could not cover the entire country, and many incidents were underreported due to security concerns and social stigmatization rooted in traditional and cultural norms.³ In one striking case, on February 19, 2015, two Kachin volunteer teachers were severely tortured, gang-raped, and murdered by military troops in Northern Shan State. Religious leaders, civil society organizations, and women's groups submitted petitions to the President calling for an independent investigation to seek justice for the victims and their families, but the illegal military junta obstructed these efforts. It has been over ten years, and yet the perpetrators continue to enjoy impunity.

The Rohingya crisis in 2017 marked one of the worst crises as the illegal military junta carried out a genocidal campaign against the community in Rakhine state. More than 800,000 Rohingya fled to seek refuge in neighboring Bangladesh. Hundreds of Rohingya women and girls were targeted by sexual violence carried out by the illegal military junta soldiers and the Border Guard Police. The incidents happened in public spaces, even in front of the survivors' families and children, houses, and the illegal military junta detention centers. Most of the incidents involved physical injuries caused by the perpetrators, such as being beaten with guns, sticks, wire, and kicking in the stomach and head. After being raped, many women and girls were murdered by the perpetrators.

When it comes to seeking justice in conflict settings, the survivors and victims of CRSV have historically encountered significant challenges. The perpetrators, specifically armed actors, often threaten, intimidate, and retaliate against the survivors and family and community members to deter them from reporting the abuse. This has been the major impediment for survivors to access justice. Meanwhile, the impunity enjoyed by these perpetrators is further entrenched

² Shan Human Rights Organization (2021). Executive summary of license to rape. Retrieved from https://shanhumanrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Licence_to_rape-English.pdf

³ Women's League of Burma (2014). Same Impunity Same Pattern. Retrieved from https://www.womenofburma.org/sites/default/files/2018-06/2014_Jan_SameImpunitySamePattern_English-final.pdf.

and enables them to continue committing more sexual violence in conflict settings and other ethnic areas.

2.3. Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Since the Military's 2021 Illegal Coup Attempt

Historically, the illegal military junta has systematically perpetrated conflict-related sexual violence in ethnic and conflict areas, particularly targeting ethnic minority women and girls. Nevertheless, the landscape of conflict-related sexual violence perpetrated by the illegal military junta over the past four years has become prevalent nationwide. Following the illegal military junta's attempted coup in 2021, not only women and girls but also people of all genders are at risk of conflict-related sexual violence. The illegal military junta routinely commits conflict-related sexual violence, including at police stations, prisons, interrogation and detention centers, and military checkpoints. Arbitrary abduction, sexual assault, rape, gang-rape, torture, forced marriage, sexual enslavement, and killing are nationwide; therefore, the risk of encountering CRSV has reached its peak. According to the Women's League of Burma (WLB), the incidents and causes of sexual violence have significantly increased after the military's coup attempt. The WLB had documented 492 sexual violence and assault cases from 1 February 2021 to June 2024. Among them are at least 13 cases of women being raped and subsequently murdered.⁴

The National Unity Government (NUG) has trained 3,000 women to document CRSV on the ground since the illegal military junta coup attempt. The NUG has documented one hundred and three CRSV incidents between 2021 – June 2023; however, the number of incidents could be higher because multiple victims are involved in some incidents, as well as many cases going underreported.⁵ The UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar reported to the Human Rights Council in July 2024 that sexual and gender-based violence is a serious issue for women, girls, LGBTQIA+, and individuals across the country since the coup. However, the survivors encounter numerous challenges in seeking justice and support due to the illegal military junta's weaponization of laws and the judicial system in its areas of control, whereas judicial systems in liberated areas under the control of the resistance forces are still lacking or weak in functioning.

There has not been an efficiently functioning, independent, and impartial

⁴ Radio Free Asia (2024). Nearly 500 cases of sexual assault against women in Myanmar's conflict. Retrieved from <https://www.rfa.org/english/myanmar/2024/11/06/myanmar-women-sexual-assault/>

⁵ Women Peace and Security Helpdesk (2023). Conflict-related sexual violence in Myanmar: barriers to and prospects for accessing international justice. Retrieved from https://wps-helpdesk.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/WPS038-CRSV-in-Myanmar-complete-draft_FINAL.pdf

justice system in Myanmar under successive military regimes in Myanmar for the past decades. It has therefore been absolutely impossible to utilize even the endemically corrupted justice system to seek justice for the CRSV survivors and victims within the Myanmar context, and this has thus enabled the perpetrators to continue to commit these crimes while enjoying blanket impunity.

Not only the illegal military junta but also some resistance groups are responsible for sexual and gender-based violence in some areas where local justice systems and mechanisms are either not yet established or, in effect, weak in enforcing the code of conduct by revolutionary forces.⁶ As the armed conflict spreads and intensifies, women and girls are more vulnerable to sexual violence by the illegal military Junta and some revolutionary actors. People's defense forces have been formed in many areas, taking up arms to fight against the illegal military junta, particularly in Myanmar's central region (Sagaing, Magway, and Mandalay Regions). The intense clashes continue, and the resistance forces have already seized many territories. Based on the data from Myanmar Peace Monitor, various ethnic resistance organizations and people's defense forces have taken or regained control of 97 towns.⁷ In January 2025, the military junta released a preliminary report on the population census, stating that data was collected in only 145 out of the country's 330 townships. This data clearly reflects the military junta's failure and its limited ability to control territory.⁸ On the other hand, worryingly, there is increased reporting of CRSV incidents in recently liberated areas seized from the illegal military junta's control. For example, there have been reported incidents of CRSV committed by some of the resistance actors in Ah Nyar Region (Sagaing, Magway and Mandalay Regions). It is of grave concern that resistance organizations fighting to end illegal military junta tyranny and establish federal democracy are still not addressing this matter of CRSV seriously. It is of grave importance that the revolutionary forces uphold international obligations and ensure the establishment, enactment and/or enforcement of laws and policies, and take action against perpetrators.

6 Human Rights Council (2024). Courage amid crisis: gendered impacts of the coup and the pursuit of gender equality in Myanmar. Retrieved from <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session56/a-hrc-56-crp-8.pdf>

7 Myanmar Peace Monitor (2024). 97 towns captured and controlled by revolutionary forces. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/mmpacemonitor/posts/1047690740795199?ref=embed_post.

8 The Irrawaddy (2025). Half of the country's territory is not included in the military junta's census. Retrieved from <https://burma.irrawaddy.com/news/2025/01/04/395411.html>

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Methodologies

Qualitative research methods were used to collect data in this study. The primary and secondary data analyzed in the research were collected by BWU's monitoring of open-source intelligence and reliable local media outlets. There are two sets of primary data: 1) documentation of conflict-related sexual violence cases, from our five targeted areas (Sagaing, Ayeyarwady, Bago, Magway regions, and Karenni State), and 2) interviews with organizations that are closely working with conflict-related sexual violence survivors. For the documentation process, BWU prepared the interview guides in the Burmese language, and BWU's field data collectors, who are well-trained in conflict-related sexual violence, carried out the field documentation. The data collectors conducted a pilot study to test the interview guides under the supervision of BWU by talking informally with the survivors, family members, and witnesses to build trust. During the documentation process, the data collectors obtained informed consent from the interviewees, either by having them sign a written consent form or by obtaining verbal consent.

The documenters informed interviewees that they had the right to withdraw from the interview without any reason and to skip any interview questions that they felt uncomfortable responding to. The place of the interview was online platforms and in-person. However, we do not interview survivors under 18 years of age due to concerns about retraumatizing them. Nor did we interview the survivors who are not ready to speak out about the incidents. Our priority is the Do No Harm Principle and the survivor-centered approach for the survivors. Focus group discussion (FGD) was also utilized by conducting a one-day online workshop with women's rights organizations, LGBTQIA+ organizations, and human rights foundations that are working on conflict-related sexual violence documentation and providing services to survivors on the ground. This workshop explored the challenges and limitations for the organizations, the possible actions to be taken, and steps to address CRSV amidst the intensifying conflict in Myanmar. The workshop was five hours long with 18 participants of all genders. The participants were divided into two groups and discussed the prepared semi-structured interview guide.

BWU emphasized the "Do No Harm Principle" to ensure the participants' safety during our research. Informed consent for the participation was voluntary, as

well as recording the interview, note-taking, and use of data from the interview in the research. The details about the participants' backgrounds and their information are kept confidential to mitigate any risk. Therefore, all the participants' names are pseudonyms. The raw interview data have been kept confidential and secure for the security of the participants and researchers to ensure their safety.

3.2. Limitations for Data Collection

As the armed conflict intensifies and expands, organizations working with CRSV survivors encounter many challenges, especially in the documentation process. The aerial bombardment, artillery shelling, and troop reinforcement by the illegal military junta in one of our research areas did occur during interviews. Consequently, we had to stop the interviews and wait until another time to reschedule when interviewees felt safe and ready. We had also experienced, in some cases, that the interviewees had to flee to another place to seek refuge. In this case, the data collector could not continue the interview. Limited communication channels and internet shutdowns by the junta meant that verifying and following up on the cases within the timeframe was another major challenge. There are restrictions on people's movement, with many checkpoints for field documenters and survivors (under surveillance). Additionally, the survivors and family members were hesitant and unwilling to speak out about the incidents due to security concerns as well as societal norms and patriarchal ideology rooted within the community. CRSV incidents documented by BWU for this report are not a comprehensive documentation due to limitations of human resources (field data collectors).

Therefore, the actual figure could be much higher on the ground than what we documented in our five targeted areas if our documenters had access to areas under the Myanmar military junta's control.



BWU had documented (88) CRSV incidents from 1st January 2024 to 31st July 2025. Among them, 64 are rape cases, including 11 gang rapes that involved between two and 10 perpetrators in each case.

4.FINDINGS

Unpacking CRSV in Myanmar

This chapter will present various forms of sexual violence that are perpetrated specifically by the illegal military junta troops, some resistance groups, and civilians in the conflict areas. As the armed revolution against the illegal junta advances, the risk of CRSV that women and girls face increases. BWU has been documenting sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and CRSV for many years before 2021. Since the 2021 attempted coup, the incidents have escalated, and it is threatening the lives of women and girls. BWU had documented (88) CRSV incidents from 1st January 2024 to 31st July 2025. Among them, 64 are rape cases, including 11 gang rapes that involved between two and 10 perpetrators in each case. The rest of the incidents are attempted rape, sexual harassment at military checkpoints, sexual exploitation with the power of arms or money, sexual abuse, and online sexual harassment by those who financially donate to the revolution. The survivors and victims' ages range between five and 70 years and include old women, girls, and those from the LGBTQIA+ community. Out of them, 29 are aged under 18, and four are people with a disability. Eight victims were killed after the incidents. Six were brutally tortured by the perpetrators. The majority of these perpetrators are from the criminal military junta.

4.1. Perpetrators





31 CRSV incidents, including 10 gang rapes, were documented as being perpetrated by the military junta troops, Pyu Saw Htee, the illegal military junta-appointed village chief and leaders, and individuals with strong ties to the criminal military junta.

4.1.1. The Criminal Military Junta and Its Troops, Militia, and Associated Actors

The criminal military junta troops are the main perpetrators who have carried out different types of grave human rights violations, such as extrajudicial killings, torture, arbitrary arrests and detention, bombing and shelling, and committing CRSV for decades with complete impunity, amounting to crimes against humanity and war crimes. More than half of the CRSV incidents that BWU has documented during this research period are from the central regions of Myanmar, namely Sagaing and Magway Regions, home to primarily the Bamar majority ethnic community. These regions had never experienced armed conflict before the illegal military junta's 2021 attempted coup, compared with other ethnic minority regions and borderlands. However, the central region's residents strongly resisted and opposed the attempted coup by taking up arms, and a diverse array of armed groups have emerged, such as the People's Defense Forces (PDFs). While the majority of PDFs are under the NUG chain of command, there are also some local PDFs that are not under the NUG's command. The armed conflict that has spread across the region has been coordinated with some longstanding ethnic resistance organizations (EROs) like the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO).⁹

As fighting between these resistance forces and the illegal military junta's troops escalates, the criminal military junta has supplied arms and weapons to its local militia groups, under the name of Pyu Saw Htee. Pyu Saw Htee was established with training and arms equipped by the illegal military junta as its local proxy forces to attack armed resistance groups and to monitor, intimidate, harass, and suppress civilians in areas under their control. Pyu Saw Htee has committed serious human rights violations and war crimes since the attempted coup, which have been horrifyingly witnessed and documented.¹⁰ According to BWU's data, 31 CRSV incidents, including 10 gang rapes, were documented as being perpetrated by the

⁹ COAR (2023). Broken heartland: armed violence and emergency response in central Myanmar. Retrieved from <https://www.coar-global.org/2023/09/27/broken-heartland-armed-violence-and-emergency-response-in-central-myanmar/>
¹⁰ Burma Human Rights Network (2024). Pyu saw htee and pro-junta thugs. Retrieved from <https://www.bhrn.org.uk/en/component/edocman/bhrn-report/pyu-saw-htee-and-pro-junta-thugs.html>

military junta troops, Pyu Saw Htee, the illegal military junta-appointed village chief and leaders, and individuals with strong ties to the criminal military junta. Of the 31 cases documented as committed by the illegal military junta, 21 were from Sagaing and Magway regions.

4.1.2. Resistance Group Perpetrators

As the dynamic of armed conflict extends and resistance groups continuously take over strategic territory, civilians in some of the liberated areas are facing different types of human rights violations and threats on the ground, particularly in Sagaing and Magway Regions. They face threats from the illegal military junta as it tries to regain territory from the resistance forces by reinforcing their troops, which commit egregious violations of human rights against entire communities in the form of collective punishment. They also face threats from some resistance forces as they lack, or do not enforce, a code of conduct (CoC) effectively to ensure civilian protection. While it is undeniable that widespread and systematic atrocities of the criminal military junta have been committed for decades with full impunity, some members of the PDFs, both those under the NUG's chain of command and local non-NUG PDFs, as well as some members of EROs, have started to commit sexual violence (SV), sexual exploitation (SE), and sexual harassment (SH). Their commanders need to take all measures necessary to ensure their troops are in full compliance with CoC and ensure the perpetrators are held accountable by law in case of abuses against civilians, including CRSV.

According to BWU's documentation, data from 1 January 2024 to 31 July 2025, the CRSV incidents perpetrated by the resistance groups have increased in the Sagaing and Magway Regions. BWU had documented 28 sexual violence and harassment committed by resistance groups, with the majority from Sagaing and Magway. Of the 28 cases, 17 were committed by PDFs under the NUG change of command, and 9 were committed by non-NUG PDFs. Moreover, BWU also documented one gang rape perpetrated by a civil disobedience movement individual (CDMer) from the Department of Elephant Conservation in Bago Region, and one case committed by a member of the Karenni Army (KA) in Karenni State. Most sexual violence incidents that BWU documented are rape cases, while other cases are attempted rape, sexual exploitation, and sexual harassment, including online sexual harassment.

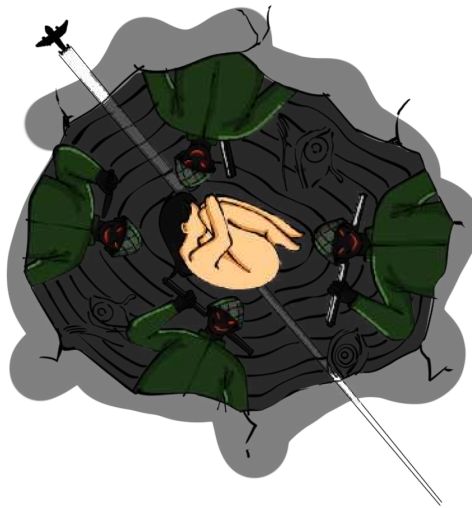
4.1.3. Civilian Perpetrators

As territory has been liberated and come under the control of resistance groups, some civilians, particularly those who have some level of power, including financial power, have become the perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence in the communities. The victims and survivors have no other choice, and they have to live with the perpetrators in the same place in conflict areas, including in IDP camps. As BWU's documentation data from our five targeted areas from 1st January 2024 to 31st July 2025 indicates, (29) sexual violence cases were committed by civilians, including rape, attempted rape, sexual harassment (in-person and online), and exploitation.



When the military soldier entered the village, the survivor was gathering the belongings and properties, and the soldiers saw and raped her. Even though the victim screamed, no one came to help because everyone was running away from the village because of the military reinforcement.

4.2. Forms of CRSV



4.2.1. Intimidation, Threat, and Torture

The survivors and victims of sexual violence were intimidated and threatened by perpetrators before, during, and after the crimes were committed.

When the illegal military junta troops raided villages, women and girls were not only arbitrarily arrested and used as human shields, but they were also sexually abused and raped. A respondent from Magway stated: ***"When the military soldier entered the village, the survivor was gathering the belongings and properties, and the soldiers saw and raped her. Even though the victim screamed, no one came to help because everyone was running away from the village because of the military reinforcement."***¹¹ The survivors and victims were threatened and tortured during the incidents. For instance, the survivors' mouth was covered, and their hands were tied back by the perpetrators who raped repeatedly while the other allied perpetrators were waiting for their turn. In some incidents, there were further safety and security risks not only for the survivors but also for their family members. A participant from Bago Region stated: ***"The military soldiers gang raped and tortured the survivor, and the perpetrators returned and threatened the survivor and family. Therefore, the survivor is still fleeing from the village."***¹²

On another front, women and girls were stopped at the illegal military checkpoints for the reason of investigation and experienced sexual harassment, assaults, and violence, including rape. Moreover, most survivors were afraid to scream and ask for help because the perpetrators threatened them that they would be killed if they disclosed and reported the case. A respondent from Sagaing Region stated: ***"The perpetrator recorded a video of the rape and threatened to send it to the survivor's family and post it online. He kept threatening and raping the survivor again and again."***¹³ This confirms that the survivors not only have had to endure sexual assaults and violence but also have to deal with various risks for their security and the security of their families because of the threats and intimidation posed by the perpetrators. Regarding an incident committed by a member of the PDF under the NUG chain of command in Magway Region, a witness stated: ***"A 15-year-old survivor and family members had been threatened by the perpetrator with guns and weapons after they committed rape several times. This makes the survivor live under threat with a lack of security in the village and school. Unsafe and difficult to continue residing in the village; therefore, they had to relocate to another place."***¹⁴

According to some testimonies by survivors, before the incidents, the perpetrators exhibited inappropriate behaviors and unwelcome physical touching and hugging, as well as intimidation and violations. A respondent from Sagaing

¹¹ A witness from Sagaing region.

¹² A witness from Bago region.

¹³ A survivor from Sagaing region.

¹⁴ A witness from Magway region.

Region stated, ***"In the days before the rape case happened, the perpetrator did inappropriately touch my body. When I was alone in the house, I was dragged into a room, my mouth was covered with a cloth, and I was raped."***¹⁵ Furthermore, women and girls in IDP camps are highly vulnerable groups to sexual gender-based violence because of the camp setting. Many extended family members have temporarily stayed in tiny rooms, and the shelters are very close to each other. The perpetrators committed sexual violence by taking advantage of the situation.

According to a respondent from Karenni State, the survivor had endured the rape case in the camp because the perpetrator forcibly covered her mouth so she would not scream. Some survivors got raped without any warning, for example, "I was sleeping alone at night when I noticed they came into the house. I was afraid to scream because there were two people. I was raped."¹⁶ In some incidents, the perpetrators (civilians) used deception, saying 'your mother asked me to bring you to her place,' and then they were raped on the way. However, early warning by the criminal military terrorists is mostly similar. For instance, the illegal military troops suddenly reinforced the village, brutally arresting the villagers, including women and girls, using them as human shields and raping those who could not escape. A respondent from Sagaing Region stated: ***"When the soldiers entered the village, they burned down the houses and arrested villagers. The villagers ran away from the village to escape, and I was raped."***¹⁷

”

I am afraid and ashamed to go outside because of the incidents, and I became seriously sick and couldn't sleep well. I no longer dare to show my face in the village. We have been subjected to hurtful gossip and negative comments from the community. As a result, my family members are also living under scrutiny from the community and no longer dare to step outside the house.

15 A survivor from Sagaing region.

16 A survivor from Sagaing region.

17 A survivor from Sagaing region.

4.2.2. Victim-Blaming



Sexual and gender-based violence survivors and their family members are dealing with various challenges, such as victim blaming and survivor shaming, discrimination, and social stigma. This is due to social and cultural norms based on entrenched patriarchy in Myanmar's society as a whole that is firmly rooted in the community and family spheres. The survivors of sexual violence and assault are considered shameful. The harmful tradition of gossiping about the survivors after the incidents adds an extra layer of oppression and discrimination for the survivors. It further contributes to their mental and physical suffering, rather than supporting recovery. A participant from Sagaing Region sadly revealed: ***"I am afraid and ashamed to go outside because of the incidents, and I became seriously sick and couldn't sleep well. I no longer dare to show my face in the village. We have been subjected to hurtful gossip and negative comments from the community. As a result, my family members are also living under scrutiny from the community and no longer dare to step outside the house."***¹⁸

One finding highlights that the survivors suffer not only from victim blaming and ostracizing by the community, but also from their families. It results in a double trauma for the survivors. A participant from Bago Region stated: ***"When the survivor talked about the sexual assault and abuse to her husband, she was blamed instead of blaming the perpetrator."***¹⁹ Consequently, many incidents are underreported. The

¹⁸ A survivor from Sagaing region.

¹⁹ A witness from Bago region.

survivors lost self-confidence and lived with insecurity after experiencing sexual violence. A participant from Karenni State stated: ***"I was overwhelmed with anger, sadness, and fear rather than understanding why this was happening to me."***²⁰ Another respondent from Sagaing Region also stated her situation, ***"...Losing virginity is shameful, and it affects the dignity of women and girls, and it makes the incidents under-reported. Sometimes, the survivors blame themselves as the perpetrator targeted them because of their behaviors and personalities."***²¹ The findings confirm that victim blaming leads to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as survivors feel anxiety, depression, and shame for being raped or sexually abused. Thus, it is essential to raise awareness and consciousness among the public to create a safe space for survivors to voice out in order to break the silence, reduce social stigma, and seek justice.

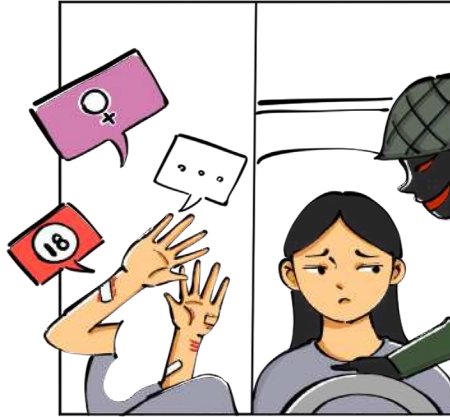
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"When we express about sexual harassment, it is also a form of psychological abuse. I experienced some people sending pictures of male genitalia and nude pictures of themselves, asking for photos of female genitalia in return. The community accepted and designated this issue as casual, not considering it a priority for addressing. They even encouraged the harassers to do what they asked, such as more donations, and it is justifying the harassment."

20 A survivor from Karenni state.

21 A witness from Sagaing region.

4.2.3. Sexual Harassment Online and In-Person



In Myanmar, verbal sexual harassment against women and girls is normalized as casual within the family and community, and has been for generations. Women and girls experience sexual harassment at home as well as in public areas, such as in the streets, on public transport, and at the workplace. However, sexual harassment cases rose after the 2021 attempted coup, both online and in-person. The Myanmar junta's soldiers and their civilian authorities commit sexual harassment and assaults, both verbally and physically, at checkpoints. A participant mentioned her experience: ***"The soldiers made inappropriate verbal sexual harassment and physical sexual assault. However, I didn't speak up because I was in fear."***²²

As the momentum of the revolution escalates across the country, more funding is needed for weapons and ammunition. Women and girls are mobilizing themselves and volunteering for online fundraising and campaigns. They have become targets of online sexual harassment, such as texting, erotic communications, and propositioned sexually with inappropriate words. They were being told to engage in sex chat by harassers if they wanted more donations. A respondent stated: ***"When we express about sexual harassment, it is also a form of psychological abuse. I experienced some people sending pictures of male genitalia and nude pictures of themselves, asking for photos of female genitalia in return. The community accepted and designated this issue as casual, not considering it a priority for addressing. They even encouraged the harassers to do what they asked, such as more donations, and it is justifying the harassment."***²³ The findings implicitly show

²² A survivor from Magway region.

²³ A survivor from Karenni state.

the harmful impact on mental health, well-being, and self-esteem on the survivors of these incidents.

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A mother and daughter were arrested while the military terrorists reinforced the village. After the military terrorists withdrew from the village, they were both gang-raped and brutally murdered. The daughter's body was dismembered, while her mother was killed by having her throat slit. However, we cannot do anything to the perpetrators.

4.2.4. Impunity



The perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence, specifically the criminal military junta, have been enjoying full impunity for decades. However, various other perpetrators emerged after the attempted coup, such as the illegal military junta's militia, Pyu Saw Htee, military-appointed village leaders and their powerful civilian associates, and some members of resistance groups. Despite the perpetrators committing many incidents, access to justice has been extremely challenging. When it comes to the Myanmar criminal military junta and its proxies, reporting or

seeking justice is entirely impossible. As a consequence, the perpetrators continue perpetrating these offences further with impunity. A participant from Bago said: ***“The perpetrator is the village administration leader appointed by the military junta, who also usually brings military soldiers to oppress and abuse the villagers. Therefore, he is free from punishment and keeps committing sexual violence.”***²⁴

Ongoing armed conflict is one of the main factors that allows impunity. A participant from Magway said, ***“A mother and daughter were arrested while the military terrorists reinforced the village. After the military terrorists withdrew from the village, they were both gang-raped and brutally murdered. The daughter’s body was dismembered, while her mother was killed by having her throat slit. However, we cannot do anything to the perpetrators.”***²⁵ Furthermore, the perpetrators, who are typically rich and have a strong relationship with the criminal military junta, continue to commit sexual and gender-based violence and abuse women without facing any legal action or accountability. The perpetrators threaten or give a small amount of money as compensation to the survivors to forcibly settle the incidents.

In cases involving resistance forces, many reported incidents resulted in no legal action or accountability measures against the perpetrators, while some were mishandled or failed to achieve justice for the survivors. According to the data BWU has documented, some incidents committed by members of resistance groups were reported and filed with the local authorities, but some remained silent. Some assume that speaking out about sexual violence will impact the reputation of the revolution. A participant from Sagaing stated: ***“We let the perpetrator have impunity and do not hold them accountable, and do not take action for the incidents because he is actively involved and participates in the revolution. Therefore, we endured the incident.”***²⁶ One participant from Sagaing mentioned: ***“If members of NUG and PDFs commit sexual violence, they cover up the incidents and perpetrators and do not take any action, even when the survivors report and file to the NUG’s People Administration Force. The survivors and family members have been subjected to intimidation and threats, which causes them to fear for their safety and security. Therefore, the perpetrator remains free and unpunished.”***²⁷

However, in contrast, many believe that keeping silent encourages the perpetrators to continue committing such crimes, and thus, cultural impunity will spread within the revolution, which will impact its credibility. Therefore, a woman activist encour-

24 A witness from Bago region.

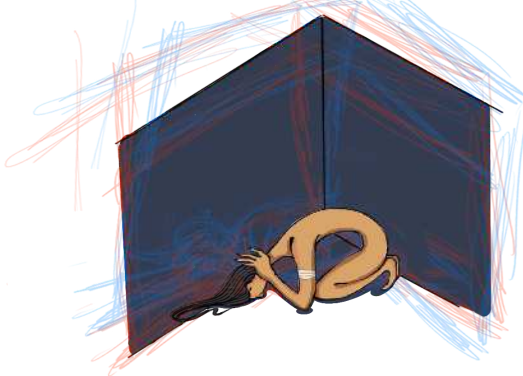
25 A witness from Magway region.

26 A witness from Sagaing region.

27 A witness from Sagaing region.

ages all the survivors to break the silence of sexual and gender-based violence during the revolution. ***“We need to speak out to ensure that the perpetrators are held accountable and take responsibility for their actions. Speaking out is also essential to support survivors and end impunity. It helps in healing their emotional wounds and enables them to pursue justice. To prevent future violence, we must raise our voices. We can push for effective protection mechanisms and bring policy changes by speaking out about the incidents during this time. Lastly, we must break the harmful effects of social norms and stereotypes because in Myanmar, experiencing sexual violence is seen as shameful. We must speak out to break that mindset. Survivors should not feel ashamed; it is perpetrators who should feel the shame.”***

5.THE IMPACT ON SURVIVORS



5.1. Survivor's Mental Health

After the incidents, survivors suffer negative psychological and physical impacts due to social pressure and norms, which are strongly rooted within the community. Consequently, some survivors engage in self-blame regarding the incidents. It makes them lack self-confidence and have low self-esteem after experiencing harsh sexual harassment and sexual violence. A woman who experienced harsh sexual harassment stated: ***“At the beginning, I kept thinking, ‘Is it my fault or my way of living leading me to be the target of sexual harassment and violence? I started losing self-confidence, and it made me feel horrible. This feeling has lasted for a long time.”***²⁸

²⁸ A survivor from the Karenni state.

Additionally, living in the same place with the perpetrator after the incident is torment for survivors. They are frightened and afraid of going outside because they are upset and depressed. A survivor from Sagaing Region stated, ***“I am frightened and afraid of going outside and don’t know where to go or what to do. Seeing that person [the perpetrator] makes me upset and stressed.”***²⁹ The incidents left the survivors with a severe impact in terms of mental as well as sexual trauma.

5.2. Livelihood

The criminal military’s illegal coup attempt has led to severe economic hardship and deterioration of livelihoods in the country, and the unemployment rate increases daily, especially among women and girls. This makes them vulnerable and at risk of sexual violence in the workplace. According to BWU’s primary data, women and girls are sexually abused and harassed by their bosses; however, they endure the incidents because they are the breadwinners for their families. A respondent from Bago stated: ***“I am afraid of losing my job in this difficult situation. So, I endured all the sexual assaults.”***³⁰ An underage survivor worked as a maid at the perpetrator’s home before the incidents, but later stopped working there. A respondent from Bago stated: ***“On weekends and school holidays, the survivor was sent by her mother to the military-appointed village chief to work as a housemaid. Then, the girl was raped several times while the perpetrator’s wife went out.”***³¹ Some sexual harassment survivors even shut down their businesses (small shops) due to being afraid of further abuse and violations.

The incidents of sexual violence affect not only the survivors but also their family members due to concerns over safety, livelihood opportunities, and social stigma within the community. In some cases, survivors and their entire families must urgently relocate to a safe location because of the threat from the perpetrators. Additionally, due to social pressure and stigma, family members feel ashamed of themselves instead of blaming the perpetrators. A survivor from Sagaing Region stated, ***“My family and I are under constant surveillance by the community due to the incidents. Villagers gossip and spread rumors about us, so my family is ashamed, and they do not even dare to step outside. My father has given up farming because he is emotionally distressed and has lost the motivation to continue.”***³² The finding clearly shows that family members are struggling with multiple effects of sexual violence and assaults. In another tragic incident in Sagaing Region, a woman who cared for her 80-year-old mother was raped and brutally killed by soldiers from the criminal mili-

²⁹ A survivor from the Sagaing region.

³⁰ A survivor from the Bago region.

³¹ A witness from the Bago region.

³² A survivor from the Sagaing region.

tary junta. The only family member left is an 80-year-old mother who has no help, and no one is there to care for her.

6. ACCESS TO JUSTICE



6.1. Lack of Protection and Prevention

Both international and regional frameworks on women, peace, and security highlight the protection of women and prevention of CRSV in armed conflict situations. It encompasses the actions of robust protection from gender-based violence, such as rape and other types of sexual violence and human rights violations, but also ensures women's rights to participate in peace processes during and after armed conflict. Nonetheless, these frameworks have ignored the situation of Myanmar's women and girls, in which they are lacking protection from various forms of human rights violations, including SGBV and CRSV. In terms of lack of protection, the situation is far worse in areas under the illegal military junta's full control. Based on the testimonies, there is nowhere to report all the sexual incidents perpetrated by the criminal military junta troops and their affiliated actors. A respondent stated, "***The village is located between the military junta and the resistance group, so the villagers are too scared to get involved in the case and are afraid of further consequences.***"³³ Civilians are silently enduring sexual violence incidents since they not only fear reporting but also have nowhere to turn to seek protection, let alone justice.

³³ A witness from Bago region.

Ongoing conflict is one of the main challenges and barriers for the survivors, leaving unreported sexual violence incidents, particularly when the perpetrators are armed actors. The survivors keep silent about the incidents perpetrated by the criminal military junta, Pyu Saw Htee, and the village chief, especially in the areas fully controlled by the criminal military junta. A respondent revealed that ***“We could not take any legal action against them because they are soldiers from the military regime. Also, my family is involved in the revolution, so we were afraid we might get arrested.”***³⁴ Therefore, some survivors do not even dare to receive emergency support due to fear of retaliation. A respondent stated, ***“The military controls the city, and the perpetrator is a pro-military. He is also a rich person, so no matter what he does, no one dares to speak out or take action against him due to the security concerns of the survivors.”***³⁵ Additionally, for security reasons, interviews with some survivors of sexual violence incidents that occurred within the revolutionary group could not be conducted. However, the testimonies underscore that most cases committed by civilians and members of PDFs and armed groups were reported to the respective administration units in liberated territories.

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After the incident, the survivor was forcibly arranged into marriage with the perpetrator by her parents and the community leaders, with some money for compensation. However, the perpetrator ran away by taking compensation that had been agreed to be given to the survivor, because he did not want to marry the survivor.

³⁴ A family member of a survivor from Sagaing Region

³⁵ A witness from the Bago region.

6.2. Discriminatory Traditions and Harmful Practices in Conflict Settings



Myanmar is home to diverse ethnic groups; each has its own unique and beautiful traditions. However, some traditional practices harm women and girls because of the patriarchal ideology that is embedded within the community. In terms of sexual violence, a prevalent traditional practice in particular is forced marriage within the community. It results in the survivors being at risk of being lifelong victims of sexual violence. For instance, after the rape, the survivor was arranged to marry the perpetrator by the family because of social pressure and fear of being ostracized from the community. Furthermore, not only the illegal military junta and members of resistance groups, but also financially powerful civilians with good ties to the criminal military junta commit sexual violence and settle these incidents with a small amount of money.

The safety and security for women and girls has deteriorated, while prevention and protection mechanisms are not effective in the conflict setting, with numerous grave human rights violations. A case study from Sagaing Region, in which a civilian committed sexual violence, was settled with some compensation and forced marriage with the perpetrator. A respondent mentioned, **“After the incident, the survivor was forcibly arranged into marriage with the perpetrator by her parents and the community leaders, with some money for compensation. However, the perpetrator ran away by taking compensation that had been agreed to be given to the survivor, because he did not want to marry the survivor.”**³⁶ Traditional practices bypass legal processes and are barriers to access to justice and reparation for survivors. In some

³⁶ A witness from Sagaing Region.

ethnic areas, the survivors were expelled from the village if they became pregnant due to sexual violence. It covers up the perpetrators' actions and leads to hiding from seeking justice for survivors. Women and girls continue to suffer multidimensional forms of oppression. Therefore, traditional practices can perpetuate the culture of impunity, making it impossible to hold perpetrators accountable.

6.3. Resistance Groups' Administration of Justice for CRSV Survivors



As the resistance groups take over control of more territory, they establish interim governments, local governance, and administrations in their respective areas. Therefore, it is crucial to assess the situation of resistance groups' administration of justice for sexual violence incidents on the ground. For example, the liberated areas in Sagaing and Magway regions are under the NUG's administration and security command. In this context, civilians report human rights violations, including sexual and gender-based violence incidents, to the NUG. Thus, the role of local administrations under the NUG command is critical to ensure that victims and survivors have access to justice and that the perpetrators are held accountable for their crimes by law. The testimonies highlight that most of the sexual violence incidents that occurred in the NUG administrative areas are reported to the People's Security Force (PSF) for justice. However, it seems there is no effective legal and accountable mechanism under the NUG to address these incidents.

A respondent stated regarding the process of resolving the incidents, ***“Despite efforts at the township and village levels, PDF called and met several times with the perpetrator, but no effective resolutions or actions have been taken to date. Due to the lack of any effective action, the perpetrator has been threatening the survivor and their family with weapons and is moving freely in the village. The survivor and their family are living in fear for their safety both in the village and at school, without adequate protection. As a result, the family has had to seek out and relocate to a safer place despite the difficult situation. The survivor and their family are encountering various hardships and struggles and are reaching out for help to ensure that effective actions are taken against the perpetrator.”***³⁷

While there is an urgent need for the NUG and resistance groups to strengthen their legal and judicial systems, it is equally important for them to establish protection mechanisms for women and girls in their areas of administration. Most sexual violence incidents that occur under the NUG administration are reported to the PSF; however, only a few are being investigated, and many incidents are resolved through compensation or are delayed in investigation, with the cases eventually closed without any further legal action to hold the perpetrators accountable. In the interview, Ma Latt (Women activist) stated that ***“I don’t know about the other EROs, but there is a Code of Conduct and Protection from Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse (PSHEA) within the NUG. However, it should not just exist on paper; it must be followed and enforced on the ground. In some cases, action has been taken, but the justice system is very weak. Therefore, we need to work collaboratively between NUG ministries and civil society organizations, and women’s organizations must come together for collective action and consultation for CRSV. If the perpetrators continued to enjoy impunity, they would keep committing such crimes repeatedly. The worst is that it encourages the other to perpetrate, and if there is no accountability, this issue will persist for a long time.”***³⁸ She added some recommendations in order to establish proper community-based service and survivor-centered support systems within the community. ***“Some relevant authorities often say that the revolution is the priority, but we must also push back and highlight that justice is just as important for sexual violence. It’s now time for the responsible institutions to handle justice properly.”***

³⁷ A Witness from Magway region.

³⁸ Women activist

6.4. Challenges for Civil Society Working on CRSV Issue



Civil society organizations, women’s rights and feminist groups, LGBTQIA+ organizations, and human rights groups are continuously documenting CRSV cases despite the dangerous and challenging conditions on the ground. Even though the Myanmar military has a long track record and continuing practice of widespread, systematic use of rape as a weapon of war against civilians, there are no existing functioning mechanisms to investigate and prosecute these crimes committed by the military junta. However, many organizations, either inside the country or those forced to flee to neighboring countries, continue collecting data and documentation and supporting survivors and their families under challenging circumstances amid a conflict situation. Therefore, this section will present the challenges and limitations for the women’s rights and human rights groups working to document CRSV incidents and provide support to survivors on the ground.

These organizations face various challenges and limitations, including security issues for their staff, funding shortages, delays in verifying incidents due to limited communication channels, and difficulties obtaining consent for documentation. A documenter stated the situation of the documentation process: “When sexual violence incidents occur within the resistance group’s territory, they manage the incidents internally rather than transferring elsewhere and restricting documentation. However, the process lacks transparency, and they do not disclose detailed information regarding how the case is handled. Although the sexual violence incident increased in our targeted areas, it is difficult to collect detailed information. If the case involves a defense force member, it is often covered up.”³⁹

³⁹ A participant from women organization.

Community members are also hesitant to provide information due to concerns for safety and security. Many fear retaliation and threats, making it difficult for the survivors to speak out. A respondent stated, **“Although the community shares the information related to CRSV cases, they often do not consent to systematic and official documentation, while the perpetrators are the Myanmar military terrorists and armed groups.”**⁴⁰ On the other hand, the criminal military junta restricts access to information by shutting down and cutting off communication channels such as phone lines and the internet, and it makes the verification and follow-up process even more challenging.

Funding is another main challenge for organizations. As a woman organization's representative stated: **“Due to funding shortage and limitations, organizations cannot provide safe houses, shelter, and financial support to all survivors; therefore, some incidents end up disappearing.”**⁴¹ Some organizations highlighted the need for technical support and capacity-building training on data management skills. These organizations require support to systematically document CRSV incidents in their communities, enabling them to address the CRSV situation and adopt a survivor-centered approach to service provision.

40 A participant from women organization.

41 A participant from women organization.

7.CONCLUDING ANALYSIS

The situation of CRSV has undeniably and alarmingly spread nationwide after the criminal military junta illegally attempted a coup. The incidents have worryingly increased, particularly in the Dry Zone, as evidenced by BWU's documentation. While the main perpetrators remain the criminal military junta and their associates, some members of resistance groups and as well as civilians in the resistance-controlled liberated areas, also commit CRSV. This is especially so in the Dry Zone central Myanmar regions, where various newly emerged resistance groups are based. However, addressing sexual and gender-based violence in conflict areas has not been given priority, particularly during the current revolution, as it should have been. Girls and women are targeted as sexual objects, and rape is used as a weapon of war in the conflict setting of Myanmar.

The Spring Revolution is an ideological revolution aimed at combating all forms of dictatorship and advancing the protection of human rights and equality for all, including gender equality. However, in reality, the progress has not reached the expected level, and it remains a challenge for Myanmar's society. Survivors are living in constant fear of retaliation by the perpetrators, who continue to enjoy impunity and thus have the potential to commit the same crimes.

In addition to impunity, patriarchal ideology and social and cultural norms are the other main barriers to breaking the silence and protecting survivors and their families from victim blaming, social stigma, and survivor shaming, which are deeply rooted within the community. Some traditional practices negatively impact and double-burden the survivors and families, which is still applied in many communities, particularly where there is a lack of proper protection measures or mechanisms, and thus, seeking justice is almost impossible. In addition, civil society and women's groups are simultaneously facing various challenges on the ground, including financial constraints, security risks, and obstacles in access to documentation of incidents.

Although the criminal military junta has committed severe acts of sexual and gender-based violence, which have been widespread and systematic for decades,

justice and accountability for victims and survivors remain merely notional. While the survivors and victims have broken the silence and raised their voices calling for justice, they are stifled and neglected.

On the other hand, NUG's judiciary is currently ineffective, unable to access everyone, and lacks transparency for the perpetrators to be held accountable. Although the NUG's Military Code of Conduct for People's Defense Forces explicitly prohibits the use of torture or ill-treatment against detainees and sexual assault of civilians, it seems a lack of proper awareness may be a contributing factor to sexual violence.

Thus, there is an urgent need for the NUG and other interim federal council authorities and governance bodies to develop a firm policy that safeguards girls and women while upholding the rule of law, starting at the local government level and extending to the regional level, even though it has yet to be implemented nationwide.

It is important to raise awareness of international humanitarian laws, war crimes, and crimes against humanity within NUGs' and EROs' military institutions. The NUG urgently needs to address sexual and gender-based violence incidents without any delay, as such incidents undermine the public's trust and hinder the revolution.

To combat sexual gender-based violence, international mechanisms like international humanitarian law and the Women, Peace, and Security framework can serve as foundational guidelines for developing policies and regulations aimed at preventing and prosecuting such crimes. The WPS framework was developed based on UN Resolution 1325, which guides the prevention of all forms of structural and physical violence, with a particular focus on sexual gender-based violence during armed conflicts. The WPS framework promotes women's full and meaningful participation in the decision-making positions of the peace process, conflict prevention, as well as rehabilitation and recovery of survivors.⁴²

As Myanmar is not only a state party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)⁴³ and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)⁴⁴ but also an ASEAN member, it is legally obligated to **prevent and protect women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence. *Therefore,***

42 United Nations Women (2023). A guide to UN security resolution 1325 and the women peace and security agenda in Myanmar. Retrieved from <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/stories/news/2023/10/the-women-peace-and-security-agenda-in-myanmar>

43 United Nations Women. (n.d). Asia and Pacific. Retrieved from

<https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/focus-areas/cedaw-human-rights/myanmar>

44 United Nations (1989). Convention on the rights of Child. Retrieved from

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>

the NUG and EROs should reaffirm and recognize those conventions and regional frameworks and be in compliance with their international obligations in their implementation. In the current context of Myanmar, sexual and gender-based violence is a critical and essential issue which must be addressed urgently through multiple approaches, including awareness raising, systemic documentation, coordinated advocacy, survivor-centered approach to rehabilitation and recovery support, establishing of robust policies and laws, effective law enforcement, monitoring, and evaluation of implementation of law and policy on the ground to ensure accountability to end impunity. As Myanmar resistance groups work towards transitional justice, it is crucial to prioritize addressing conflict-related sexual violence and integrate it into the strategic planning. Conflict-related sexual violence is a war crime and a crime against humanity, and the military has been violating this international law for over seven decades. It is therefore imperative and urgent to pursue accountability and responsibility through international mechanisms.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

To the National Unity Government (NUG), People's Defense Forces (PDFs), and Ethnic Resistance Organizations (EROs):

- Develop and establish robust laws and policies to protect girls and women from sexual and gender-based violence;
- Hold accountable the perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence with full transparency.
- Raise awareness of sexual and gender-based violence among respective troops under their command in cooperation and collaboration with CSOs and NGOs;
- Support a survivor-centered approach to emergency services in collaboration with local, national, and international organizations;
- Provide access for organizations to systematically document and provide necessary service provision to survivors, including safe houses and healthcare; and
- Enforce the rule of law to take formal legal action and hold perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence to account.

To Civil Society Organizations:

- Hold consultations to share experience and organize exchange workshops among CRSV data documenters from the respective organizations;
- Develop and launch collective CRSV awareness public campaigns on the ground as well as on social media to educate the public with the aim of prevention and protection;
- Engage in coordinated and collaborative advocacy at national, regional, and international levels;
- Share services and resources among the organizations, including technical, referral, and litigation services for survivors;
- Coordinate for sustainable long-term support for survivors and increased coordination among CRSV working groups or organizations in areas of mental health, resource mobilization, and capacity building; and
- Engage in coordinated advocacy with different stakeholders such as EROs, the interim government, CSOs, women, LGBT, and human rights organizations through regional and international platforms.

To the UN, ASEAN, and the International Community

- Refrain from recognizing the criminal military junta as a legitimate government;
- Withdraw investment, support, or any kind of cooperation that results in the flow of financial support to the criminal military junta;
- Enforce targeted sanctions specifically blocking arms and aviation fuel from reaching the criminal military junta and increasing pressure on the criminal military junta to stop all kinds of atrocities targeting civilians; and
- Support and cooperate with Argentina's arrest warrant for the criminal military junta leaders for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide to end blanket impunity.

Support for locally led organizations by:

- Allocate and expand comprehensive and inclusive direct support and resources to local human rights, women's rights, feminist, and LGBTIQ+ organizations working on SGBV and CRSV issues to effectively and efficiently continue to:
 - Facilitate locally-led emergency assistance for survivors;
 - Document SGBV and CRSV incidents and provide necessary support to ensure that field data collectors taking risks to document on the ground are safe.
 - Implement survivor-centered approach service provision programs for victims and survivors (physical injuries and prevention of sexually transmitted infections, emergency relocation) by providing safe houses, shelters, and vocational training to rebuild their lives.
- Provide technical assistance to groups and organizations that work on and support CRSV survivors, including those providing MHPSS services and documenting CRSV crimes.
- Strengthen cooperation and collaboration with the NUG and ethnic governance institutions and judicial mechanisms to develop and implement prevention and protection policies and mechanisms to address the situation effectively, including assisting them to establish and enforce measures to hold perpetrators to account by law.



About Burmese Women's Union (BWU)

The Burmese Women's Union (BWU) was established on January 7, 1995, along the Thailand-Burma border by a group of young female students who left Burma following the 1988 pro-democracy uprising. BWU is multi multi-ethnic organization and members are women of all backgrounds from Burma who embrace diversity and unity, without discrimination based on sexual orientation, ethnicity, and religion. BWU aims to foster a society that values gender equality, justice, and harmonious coexistence in peace. It works toward the dismantling of dictatorial regimes, advocates for the establishment of a federal democratic system that upholds equality among ethnic groups. To achieve gender equality, BWU actively engages in capacity building, research, and advocacy.

■ **Vision**

The BWU envisions a society that values gender equality, justice, peace, and harmonized human existence.

■ **Mission**

We, the women of Burma, have zero tolerance and stand united in our unwavering commitment to reject all forms of discrimination based on gender, race, and religion. We recognize the strength of diversity as a driving force in our collective struggle to end all forms of dictatorship. Our efforts are dedicated to ensuring the emergence of a federal democracy that guarantees ethnic and gender equality through advocacy, empowerment, research, and capacity building.

■ **Objectives:**

- To promote women's participation in the political process and decision-making level.
- To increase the inclusion of women's perspectives and capabilities in efforts to dismantle all kinds of dictatorships and build a genuine federal democratic union.
- To enhance the understanding and acceptance of women's rights and gender equality recognized by international standards in the whole society in Burma.

.....

"Although the child survivor received medical treatment and improved physical injuries, the severe psychological trauma remains, constantly terrifying".

"The illegal military junta's associates, the village chief and Pyu Saw Htee, are raping the girls in the village. The perpetrators solve the incidents with money, and some remain without any action".

"I want effective action to be taken against sexual violence incidents after the revolution".

"My 6-year-old daughter was taken from my arms by illegal military soldiers and raped".