



Policy Analysis Paper

FROM FRAMEWORKS TO FUTURES

A Critical Policy Analysis of Gender Equality and
Inclusion in Burma

Burmese Women's Union
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This policy analysis examines the state of gender equality, inclusion, and Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) frameworks in Burma's conflict-affected and transitional governance context. Decades of militarism, deepened by the military's illegal coup attempt in 2021, have created systemic challenges marked by sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), marginalisation of women and vulnerable groups, and various stages of regional interim governance bodies and institutional buildings from the ground up across multiple liberated areas.

Drawing on desk reviews, comparative case studies (Australia and Timor-Leste), and extensive consultations with stakeholders, including governance ministries, ethnic resistance organisations (EROs), women-led coalitions, LGBTIQ+ groups, and grassroots CSOs, the paper highlights both progress and persistent gaps in translating WPS commitments into practice.

Key findings show that:

- Formal commitments such as the National Unity Government's Gender Equality Policy 2024 (GEP2024), Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (PSEAH) measures, and WPS frameworks adopted by NUCC and ethnic administrations demonstrate intent, but implementation remains uneven.
- Survivors of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) and SGBV face major barriers to reporting, support, and justice, with accountability mechanisms emerging but fragile.
- Coordination among governance actors, armed groups, and women's organisations is improving yet hindered by overlapping mandates, limited funding, and reliance on informal trust networks.
- Localisation and federalised approaches are essential. Unlike centralised contexts where single national action plans work (e.g., Australia, Timor-Leste), Burma's federalising and ethnically diverse realities demand multi-level frameworks adapted to local contexts while anchored in shared national principles.

The analysis concludes that Burma's path forward requires:

- Harmonised, federalised WPS frameworks balancing national standards with local ownership that is based on international framework of WPS.
- Legal protections and affirmative measures for women, LGBTIQ+ individuals, and persons with disabilities (PWDs).
- Sustained capacity building for security, governance, and justice actors.
- Robust, survivor-centred accountability and monitoring systems.
- Inclusive coordination platforms linking civil society, ethnic and regional governance, and interim councils.
- Feminist leadership and meaningful political participation for women and marginalised groups.
- Dedicated, long-term financing and political will to translate commitments into impact.

Overall, achieving gender justice and sustainable peace in Burma requires moving beyond symbolic frameworks to enforceable, inclusive, and well-resourced mechanisms. By centring the voices of women, LGBTIQ+, PWDs, and conflict-affected communities, Burma's diverse local/regional governance actors can forge a pathway toward a just, peaceful, and gender-equal future in the framework of federal democracy.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABSDF	: All Burma Students' Democratic Front
ADF	: Australian Defence Force
AFP	: Australian Federal Police
AGD	: Attorney-General's Department (Australia)
BPLA	: Bamar People's Liberation Army
CBO	: Community-Based Organisation
CEDAW	: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CDM	: Civil Disobedience Movement
CoC	: Code of Conduct (NUG)
CRB	: Colour Rainbow Burma
CRPD	: Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CRSV	: Conflict-Related Sexual Violence
CSO	: Civil Society Organisation
DFAT	: Department of Foreign Affairs (Australia)
DoD	: Department of Defense (Australia)
DV	: Domestic Violence
ERO	: Ethnic Revolutionary Organisation
FDC	: Federal Democracy Charter
FV	: Family Violence
GBV	: Gender-Based Violence
GEP2024	: Gender Equality Policy: [drafted by the MOWYCA in 2024]
IEC	: Karenni State Interim Executive Council
INGO	: International Non-Government Organisation
KSCC	: Karenni State Consultative Council
LGBTIQ+	: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, and Others ["+" signifies inclusivity for other identities not explicitly listed]
MOHR	: Ministry of Human Rights (NUG)
MOWYCA	: Ministry of Women, Youth, and Children Affairs (NUG)
MSFC	: Mon State Federal Council
NAP	: National Action Plan
NGO	: Non-Government Organisation

NLD	: National League for Democracy
NSPAW	: National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women
NUG	: National Unity Government
PAP	: Policy Analysis Paper
PDF	: People's Defense Force
PoVAW	: Prevention and Protection of Violence Against Women
PSEAH	: Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment
PWD	: People with Disabilities

1. INTRODUCTION

The 2021 military's illegal coup¹ attempt in Burma have intensified sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV), and discrimination against marginalised groups, including LGBTIQ+ people and PWDs. It has also highlighted the persistent exclusion of women from leadership, decision-making, and policymaking spaces. Urgent challenges remain in prioritising gender equality and establishing comprehensive prevention, protection, and response mechanisms for violence against women and girls (VAWG) and other vulnerable groups.

This policy analysis paper (PAP) assesses gaps in existing and emerging gender policies, frameworks, and practices. It also outlines possible steps where no policy exists. The aim is to provide evidence-based recommendations to EROs, interim administrative bodies, and other political or armed organisations, enabling them to align with international standards such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), its protocol, and United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325). Beyond compliance, the paper encourages inclusive governance that both prevents VAWG and protects their rights, while advancing the meaningful participation of women in political and peace processes.

The analysis draws on policy documents from interim administrations, governing bodies, and resistance organisations, as well as frameworks proposed by women's organisations. It pays particular attention to measures ensuring women's political participation and safeguarding LGBTIQ+ and PWD communities from SGBV and other forms of violence. Ultimately, the paper recommends actionable strategies to help emerging governance structures and resistance groups foster inclusive systems that guarantee protection, prevention, and participation for all communities in territories under their control and administration.

1 The coup violated the 2008 Constitution, which was the product of a long, military-controlled process that took almost 14 years from start to finish, because the military (i) detained the President and other constitutional office-holders so the President could not lawfully declare the emergency under Article 417, (ii) invoked a transfer of sovereign power under Article 418(a) without following the required constitutional procedures (including the parliamentary steps in Article 421, and (iii) relied on factual claims that did not meet Article 417's narrow conditions. Source: Myanmar Law Library, https://www.myanmar-law-library.org/law-library/laws-and-regulations/constitutions/2008-constitution.html?utm_source=chatgpt.com



2. BRIEF BACKGROUND

2.1. Burma's Conflict

Since independence in 1948, Burma has endured one of the world's longest-running civil wars², driven by aspirations for autonomy and federalism. The government's failure to implement the 1947 Panglong Agreement, which had promised autonomy to certain ethnic minorities, fuelled resistance from ethnic minority communities that led to armed resistance movements and, in earlier decades, communist movements³. Repeated military coups, in 1962 and 1988, have entrenched authoritarianism and militarism, resulting in systemic oppression and widespread violations of human rights, persecutions of ethnic and religious minorities, mass displacements, and people's movements against the military dictatorship⁴.

2.2. Militarism in Burma

The military has dominated Burma's political, social, and economic life for decades. Following the 1962 coup, successive juntas consolidated power through violent repression, constitutional manipulation, and economic control⁵. The 1988 coup marked a turning point in modern Burmese history, embedding militarism as a central feature of governance and public life. The military's grip is maintained through a combination of ideology, economic control, and violent repression⁶. Since the 2021 coup, the military has escalated repression by killing and imprisoning protesters and supporters of democracy, imposing forced conscription, and destroying villages and communities by aerial bombings and

2 Guinness World Records, Longest Civil War of Modern Time, <https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/114580-longest-civil-war-of-modern-times#:~:text=The%20civil%20war%20in%20Burma,continues%20to%20the%20present%20day>

3 Crouch, M. (2016), The Constitutional Implications of Myanmar's Peace Process, The ConstitutionNet, International IDEA, <http://constitutionnet.org/news/constitutional-implications-myanmars-peace-process>

4 Maizland, L. (2022), Myanmar's Troubled History: Coups, Military Rule, and Ethnic Conflict, Council on Foreign Relations, 31 January 2022, <https://www.cfr.org/background/myanmar-history-coup-military-rule-ethnic-conflict-rohingya>

5 Head, J., (2021), Myanmar's Coup: What Protesters Can Learn from the '1988 Generation', BBC, 16 March 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-56331307>

6 Ibid



ground attacks suspected of supporting resistance⁷.

Militarism extends and has permeated resistance organisations and civilian life, shaping governance structures, gender norms, and power relations. Despite their opposition to military dictatorship, many anti-junta resistance groups reproduce militaristic values and hierarchies that reinforce patriarchal norms and limit women's participation. Women's contributions, whether in frontline support or political advocacy, are frequently undervalued. This dual militarism within both state and resistance movements continues to undermine democratic rights and inclusive governance⁸.

2.3. Gender Inequalities

The emergence of interim governance structures presents opportunities for more inclusive governance, yet women and marginalised groups remain severely underrepresented⁹. Their exclusion from decision-making undermines the development of gender-sensitive policies and weakens peacebuilding efforts¹⁰. EROs and interim bodies often prioritise federalism and state-building, neglecting and sidelining the urgent needs of women, survivors of violence, and other marginalised communities.

Burma's entrenched gender inequalities are shaped by traditional norms and reinforced by the Myanmar military's constructed policies, structures, mechanisms, and practices. Women are often expected to be subservient to men, with societal and governmental structures limiting their access to education, employment, and leadership roles. Women are disproportionately confined to lower-paid professions, while men dominate more lucrative fields, reinforcing the gender

7 Wa Lone and Poppy McPherson, Insight: Troops burn villages in Myanmar heartland, seek to crush resistance, Reuters, 14 April 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/troops-burn-villages-myanmar-heartland-seek-crush-resistance-2022-04-14/> and "In Rakhine State, Myanmar's Military is Wiping Entire Villages Off the Map, The Irrawaddy, 18 January 2024, <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/in-rakhine-state-myanmars-military-is-wiping-entire-villages-off-the-map.html>

8 WLB, (2024) Militarism's Grip on Women's Political Life in Burma, yet to be published, December 2024, joint research paper by the WLB and APWLD

9 The Asia Foundation, Women's Political Participation in Myanmar: Challenges and Opportunities, 2023, <https://asiafoundation.org/publication/womens-political-participation-in-myanmar/>

10 UN Women & UNDP, Women's Participation in Peacebuilding in Myanmar, 2022, <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/05/womens-participation-in-peacebuilding-in-myanmar>



wage wage gap¹¹. Even as more women pursue higher education, structural barriers persist. Militarisation compounds these inequalities by subjecting women to violence, displacement, and further marginalisation. Without the strong political will and recognition and meaningful inclusion of women in governance and peace processes, new political arrangements risk replicating past injustices rather than creating a just and equitable society

11 Crisp, R., and Clementi, A., (2025), “Reality or Rhetoric: Understanding Gender Inequality and Education in Myanmar,” Australian Institute of International Affairs, 6 June 2025, <https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/reality-or-rhetoric-understanding-gender-inequality-and-education-in-myanmar/>



3. METHADODOLOGY

This paper draws on qualitative methods, including desk research, policy document reviews, and consultations with diverse stakeholders. Interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with women's organisations, ethnic administration bodies or federal units, community-based organisations (CBOs), armed resistance actors, LGBTIQ+ organisations, service providers, and emerging interim councils. Almost all consultations were carried out online, though some were in-person, depending on security and accessibility.

Although intended to consult with more than fifteen stakeholders, only a total of nine stakeholder consultation meetings were conducted, and these stakeholders include the Karenni State's Consultative Council (KSCC), Bamar People's Liberation Army (BPLA), Women's League of Burma (WLB), Sagaing Forum Federation (SFF), and the Ministry of Women, Youth, and Children Affairs (MOWYCA) of National Unity Government.

In parallel, ongoing research on CRSV was conducted with survivors, service providers, and women's organisations. While distinct from this policy analysis, the CRSV research informed the contextual understanding of patterns of violence, gaps in survivor protection, and the urgent need for gender-sensitive frameworks within resistance-held areas. Incorporating insights from both sets of research strengthened this paper's analysis of prevention and protection mechanisms, ensuring that its recommendations are grounded in survivor-centred perspectives. Stakeholders provided insights into the current gaps, challenges, and opportunities for advancing gender equality and Women, Peace and Security (WPS) principles within resistance-held areas and interim governance structures. The analysis also draws on international frameworks, such as CEDAW and the UNSCR 1325 Framework, to benchmark the policies and practices of interim governments and resistance actors against international norms and standards. The qualitative data offer a robust picture of civil society perspectives and the challenges of embedding gender equality in transitional governance contexts of the people's revolution to end military dictatorship and establish federal democracy.



4. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy analysis paper are fourfold:

1. Identify gaps, challenges, and barriers in the implementation of existing or emerging gender equality and WPS-related frameworks among interim administrations, resistance groups, and ethnic organisations.
2. Develop actionable recommendations that can guide inclusive policy and institutional reforms, ensuring that women, LGBTIQ+ individuals, and PWDs are meaningfully included in governance and peace processes.
3. Strengthen cross-sector dialogue by facilitating engagement between women's organisations, resistance actors, civil society, and emerging governance bodies, thereby promoting bottom-up, inclusive policymaking and enforcement plans.
4. Encourage alignment with international norms and best practices, including CEDAW, UNSCR 1325 Framework, and subsequent resolutions, to ensure Burma's transition to federal democracy is consistent with global commitments to gender equality and human rights.

By fulfilling these objectives, the paper seeks not only to influence current interim governance during the people's revolution but also to provide a roadmap for embedding inclusive, gender-sensitive practices in Burma's transitional period and long-term democratic and federal future.



5. STATE OF GENDER POLICY AND FRAMEWORKS

5.1. International Standards: CEDAW and UNSCR 1325

Burma ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)¹² in 1997, yet its implementation has been weak and selective. Successive regimes have failed to domesticate its provisions into national law or create effective monitoring mechanisms. The Optional Protocol, which enables individual complaints and inquiry procedures, remains unratified. Civil society groups had previously consistently reported to the CEDAW Committee¹³ about persistent violations, including gender-based violence, discrimination in education and employment, and political exclusion.

Furthermore, Burma is not a party to several other relevant international instruments, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) or international frameworks specifically protecting LGBTIQ+ rights¹⁴. These gaps in ratification reflect a broader pattern of limited engagement with rights-based special procedures and mechanisms, especially those viewed as challenging the authority of the state or traditional gender norms.

The WPS agenda, launched by UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), remains unfulfilled in Burma. Unlike many countries in the region, Burma has never adopted an NAP on WPS. This absence reflects both the dominance of militarism and the marginalisation of women in political decision-making and peace processes. While countries like Australia and Timor-Leste have developed single, centralised NAPs, Burma's context of ethnic diversity and decentralised resistance governance raises questions about whether a single NAP would be sufficient or whether state- and ethnic-level frameworks must complement national or union level initiatives.

12 UNOCHR, (1979), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, New York, 18 December 1979, UNGA Resolution 34/180, [https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women#:~:text=27\(1\)-,Introduction,ocus%20of%20human%20rights%20concerns](https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women#:~:text=27(1)-,Introduction,ocus%20of%20human%20rights%20concerns)

13 WLB, (2006), Constituting Our Rights, February 2006, https://www.womenofburma.org/sites/default/files/2018-06/2006_Constituting_Our_Rights_in_English.pdf

14 Equality Myanmar, (2020), Submission of Shadow Report to the United Nations' Universal Periodic Review Regarding the Human Rights Situations of LGBTI persons in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, prepared by the Civil Authorize Negotiate Myanmar (C.A.N-Myanmar), in collaboration with 17 LGBTIQ Organisations in Upper Myanmar Region, https://equalitymyanmar.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/CAN_UPR.pdf



International Treaties that Burma Ratified and Yet to Ratify [Burma has not ratified most other core treaties]

Treaties Ratified by Burma	Year	Treaties NOT Ratified by Burma
Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)	1991	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)	1997	International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)	2011	Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)
Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (OP-CRC-AC)	2019	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)
		International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICMW)
		International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPED)
		Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC Statute)

5.2. National Actions and Plans: NSPAW and PoVAW

Since the early 2000s, Burma has introduced national strategies aimed at promoting gender equality and addressing SGBV. The two most notable initiatives are:

- The National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women (NSPAW) 2013–2022, developed in line with CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action. It outlined twelve priority areas, including women and education, health, and decision-making¹⁵.

¹⁵ Myanmar Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement, National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women 2013-2022, https://myanmar.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/NS-PAW2013-2022_0.pdf



- The Prevention and Protection of Violence Against Women (PoVAW) Law, drafted from 2013 but never enacted due to political resistance and bureaucratic delays. The bill sought to criminalise forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, sexual violence, and marital rape, and to improve survivor protection. However, it was criticised by women’s rights groups for failing to adopt a fully survivor-centred approach and for not fully criminalising marital rape¹⁶.

In drafting both the NASPAW and PoVAW laws, there was a notable absence of meaningful consultation with women from conflict-affected ethnic areas. According to reports, the PoVAW draft process “has not adequately provided for the equal participation of and consultation with women and women’s organisations, particularly from conflict-affected ethnic communities.”¹⁷ Moreover, it has been documented that NASPAW removed a session on the situation of ethnic women in conflict areas, yet this omission, on both text and substantive issues such as CRSV, GBV, impunity, etc, has not been publicly acknowledged by those responsible¹⁸. This exclusion illustrates the need to record and highlight such gaps, especially by organisations like BWU that led efforts behind the scenes.

Both initiatives emerged under U Thein Sein’s quasi-military government (2011–2015), a period that opened space for policy dialogue¹⁹. Yet momentum stalled under the National League for Democracy (NLD), which, despite dedicating a manifesto section to gender equality, offered few mechanisms for implementation.

16 WLB, (2019), Procedural and Substantive Suggestions: For the Proposed Protection and Prevention of Violence Against Women Law, February 2019, [https://www.womenofburma.org/sites/default/files/2019-06/WLB_POVAW_Analysis_English%20\(Final\).pdf](https://www.womenofburma.org/sites/default/files/2019-06/WLB_POVAW_Analysis_English%20(Final).pdf)

17 Progressive Voice, Denying the Irrefutable: Women, Justice, and the PoVAW Law, 23 July 2020, https://progressivevoicemyanmar.org/2020/07/23/denying-the-irrefutable-women-justice-and-the-povaw-law/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

18 The detailed identification of omitted paragraphs and critical gaps in NSPAW can be found in the Women’s League of Burma’s 2019 analysis. These include both textual omissions and substantive issues around conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) and gender-based violence (GBV), impunity, and women’s participation in peace and security. See more details in “The Prospects of Advancement for Women? WLB’s Analysis of National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women, published by the Women’s League of Burma, May 2019, https://www.womenofburma.org/sites/default/files/2019-05/WLB_NSAPW_Analysi_Eng.pdf

19 Transnational Institute, No Women, No Peace: Gender Equality, Conflict and Peace in Myanmar (2016), <https://www.tni.org/en/publication/no-women-no-peace-gender-equality-conflict-and-peace-in-myanmar>



The 2021 coup further dismantled progress²⁰.

The omissions identified in the NSPAW are deeply concerning and indicate fundamental flaws in the plan's substance and implementation. These gaps, especially the failure to address constitutional discrimination, CRSV, military impunity, and meaningful inclusion of women in peace processes, go beyond simply being “rhetorical.” It also suffered from limited political will, the continued dominance of the military, entrenched cultural taboos, and patriarchal legal structures, including the 2008 Constitution that entrenches military supremacy while ignoring gender-sensitive provisions and removing a session on it. Implementation fell to the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement (MOSWRR), a body lacking the stature, resources, and institutional capacity to drive change. Without adequate political backing, budgetary allocation, or effective monitoring²¹, NSPAW had little impact on governance or policymaking.

5.3. MOWYCA's Gender Equality Policy 2024 (GEP2024)

The MOWYCA of the National Unity Government (NUG) introduces the Gender Equality Policy 2024 (GEP2024) as a cross-ministerial initiative²². This “whole-of-government” approach is commendable: it moves gender policy beyond being the responsibility of a single ministry and seeks to embed gender equality across all governance areas. This model challenges the long-standing norm where women's ministries are expected to ‘fix’ women's issues in isolation. This is a pioneering approach in the Burmese context. If coordinated and adequately resourced, this model could represent a groundbreaking approach for Burma, comparable to Australia's whole-of-government framework for gender mainstreaming.

20 Ebead, N., and Hirakawa, A., (2022), Inclusion and Gender Equality in Post-Coup Myanmar: Strategies for Constitutional and Democratic Reform, International IDEA (IDEA), May 2022, https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/inclusion-and-gender-equality-in-post-coup-myanmar-CAWE4_0.pdf

21 Minoletti, P., (2016), Gender (In) equality in the Governance of Myanmar: Past, Present, and Potential Strategies for Change, Policy Dialogue Brief Series, The Asia Foundation, May 2016, https://asiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Gender-in-Equality-in-the-governance-of-myanmar_Policy-Brief_ENG.pdf

22 Ebead, N., (2023), Implementing Myanmar's Federal Democracy Charter to Strengthen Women's Equality, International IDEA (IDEA), 7 March 2023, https://www.idea.int/news/implementing-myanmars-federal-democracy-charter-strengthen-womens-equality?utm_source=chatgpt.com



The GEP2024 references the importance of WPS, making it one of its five main objectives. The GEP2024 articulates five primary objectives: (i) institutional gender mainstreaming, (ii) inclusive leadership and governance, (iii) equitable economic empowerment, (iv) ending gender-based violence, and (v) advancing women, peace, and security. It demonstrates a bold and progressive shift in how gender equality is conceptualised and institutionalised in Burma. Strengths of GEP2024 include its emphasis on the inclusion of women, LGBTIQ+ individuals, as well as its ambition to address protection, prevention, and participation in governance and peace processes. It also includes grievance mechanisms and internal accountability, such as a code of conduct, complaint procedures, and disciplinary processes for gender-based offenses.

However, weaknesses remain. The policy does not clearly distinguish between short-term crisis responses (such as emergency support for survivors of violence) and long-term structural reforms (such as systemic inclusion in governance). This lack of clarity risks stretching resources thin and diluting accountability. Moreover, mechanisms for implementation, monitoring, and enforcement remain underdeveloped. In addition, the text is conceptually dense and may hinder accessibility for the broader community and the general public. It lacks specific strategies to include PWDs, LGBTIQ+ individuals, and displaced women, along with plans to address barriers to their participation, which are underdeveloped.

The interim GEP2024 does not appear in its public form to include documented consultations with local and international women's organisations, particularly those representing ethnic and conflict-affected communities, nor does it articulate a concrete collaboration strategy for implementation, creating a potential gap between policy commitments and effective, inclusive delivery. The policy lacks explicit integration with transitional justice mechanisms concerning past and ongoing violations. The feasibility of implementation remains unclear, compounded by the absence of a detailed budget or funding strategy.

5.4. MOWYCA's PSEAH

In March 2023, the MOWYCA adopted a Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (PSEAH) policy²³, which is publicly available. This policy establishes minimum standards for prevention, reporting, and redress of sexual

23 MOWYCA PSHEA Policy, <https://mowyca.nugmyanmar.org/en/mowyca-pshea-policy/>

violence, particularly within the Ministry’s mandate and related humanitarian operations. While the PSEAH and WPS frameworks overlap in their emphasis on protecting women and vulnerable populations from violence and abuse, they differ in scope and function and serve distinct purposes. The PSEAH focuses narrowly on preventing and responding to SEAH cases in humanitarian and government interventions, whereas the WPS framework adopts a broader agenda, addressing sexual violence alongside the promotion of women’s leadership, the inclusion of LGBTIQ+ persons and PWDs, and the advancement of gender-responsive peacebuilding.

5.5. Competing Frameworks

In parallel to GEP2024, the NUCC’s Joint Coordination Committee on Gender Policy (JCC-GP), different women’s networks assumed complementary responsibilities. WLB led the development of the WPS framework, while the Women Advocacy Coalition Myanmar (WAC-M) focused on drafting the Gender Policy. The resulting WPS framework and the Gender Policy were reviewed, contextualized within the JCC-GP, and formally endorsed/approved by the National Unity Consultative Council (NUCC), which serves as a policy-making body within the resistance movement.

Some broader policy discussions in Burma’s women’s movement have raised critiques of the coexistence of the NUCC-endorsed WPS framework and the NUG’s MOWYCA’s more recent framework on WPS. Concerns have been raised that the latter may represent a duplication of effort at a time when scarce resources could be directed elsewhere. However, it is important to note that the political-administrative reality is that MOWYCA is a formal governance body. As such, it carries responsibilities to produce actionable frameworks that are integrated into national systems, such as budgets, reporting, and inter-ministerial coordination, and for which it can be held accountable.

In this sense, MOWYCA’s framework serves a legitimate purpose as a governmental operational instrument. The key challenge lies not in choosing one framework over the other, but in ensuring effective coordination and integration so that the participatory principles of the NUCC process are preserved, while also embedding WPS commitments into formal structures of governance.



5.6. Assessment of the National Unity Government’s Military Code of Conduct

The People’s Defense Force (PDF), under the National Unity Government (NUG), has integrated significant protections for women, girls, LGBTIQ+ persons, and PWDs within its Military Code of Conduct (CoC)²⁴. The CoC prohibits sexual violence, harassment, and discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, or disability, signalling an awareness of the heightened vulnerabilities these groups face in conflict. Training on the CoC, delivered with the involvement of the Ministry of Human Rights (MOHR), represents a clear attempt to embed ethical behaviour and human rights norms into the resistance movement. By recognising the rights of marginalised populations, the PDF’s CoC aligns with the WPS agenda, particularly its principles of protection and inclusive participation.

However, the enforcement of these commitments remains a persistent challenge. Incidents of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and gender-based discrimination have been reported in conflict-affected communities, including some incidents linked to individuals associated with resistance groups, though not all cases are widely documented or addressed. This gap between policy and practice undermines trust, especially as communities increasingly expect the NUG to take responsibility for violations committed by its forces,²⁵ including groups not fully under its command.

Nevertheless, the stark difference here is that the military perpetrates CRSV and GBV as a systematic, institutionalised policy within a chain of command aimed at social control and ethnic cleansing. Meanwhile, resistance forces commit such acts as more isolated violations by specific combatants, lacking the same breadth, coordination, or strategic intent. The distinction is crucial for understanding the scale, responsibility, and urgency in addressing abuses by each actor while

24 Military Code of Conduct for People’s Defense Forces, <https://mod.nugmyanmar.org/en/pdf-code-of-conduct/>

25 There is documented evidence from credible organisations indicating that PDFs, which operate under the NUG but are not fully under its command, have also been implicated in committing CRSV and GBV. A situational report by Equality Myanmar documents over 150 cases of CRSV with 320 victims from February 2021 to November 2024, noting that while the military is the primary predator, resistance groups and EROs have been accused of sexual violence as well. ‘The Silence We Bear’: Conflict-Related Sexual Violence in Myanmar, by Dr. Johanna Higgs, January 2025, published by Equality Myanmar, <https://equalitymyanmar.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/ConflictRelatedSexualViolence-Final-compressed-for-web.pdf>

upholding the highest standards of accountability for all violations, regardless of the perpetrator²⁶.

Given the nature of resistance forces from diverse backgrounds, the NUG's capacity to investigate and prosecute every violation is limited. Nonetheless, the demand for transparency, accountability, and justice with consistent standards and efforts by the leadership remains high. Establishing credible mechanisms to enforce the CoC, ensuring survivor-centred responses with access to justice, and incorporating the voices of women, LGBTIQ+, and PWD communities into oversight processes are essential for the NUG to demonstrate a genuine commitment to ensuring effective implementation of its CoC to protect human rights and to distinguish itself from the military it opposes.

5.7. Stand-Alone WPS Framework and Its Application in Burma's Context

The question of whether countries should adopt a stand-alone WPS framework or incorporate WPS principles into broader gender or security strategies remains a subject of debate in global policy circles²⁷. Yet, strong evidence and international practice support the development of a stand-alone framework, typically in the form of a National Action Plan (NAP). Such frameworks make explicit a government's commitment to the WPS agenda as mandated by the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions²⁸. A stand-alone framework not only articulates priorities across the four WPS pillars, participation, prevention, protection, and relief and recovery, but also assigns responsibilities, sets timelines, and ensures accountability.

Importantly, it elevates gender equality from being an "add-on" to becoming a structural priority in security and governance policy²⁹. While mainstreaming WPS

26 Friedrich Naumann Foundation, Violence in Myanmar: women targeted by the military and resistance groups, 28 April 2025, <https://www.freiheit.org/violence-myanmar-women-targeted-military-and-resistance-groups>

27 Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), "Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security, October 2020," analysis and reflections, published by PeaceWomen, <https://www.peacewomen.org/security-council/security-council-open-debate-women-peace-and-security-october-2020-0>

28 Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2021-2031, Australian Government, <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/australias-national-action-plan-on-women-peace-and-security-2021-2031.pdf>

29 UN Women (2022), Developing a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security in Ethiopia, Background Document, UN Women Ethiopia Country Office, August 2022.

commitments into other national strategies can be valuable, experience suggests that such approaches often dilute or sideline WPS concerns when competing with broader political agendas. A stand-alone WPS framework also stimulates cross-sector collaboration by involving defence, justice, foreign affairs, social services, and civil society, thus ensuring an integrated, whole-of-government and society approach.

At the same time, its form must be tailored to the political and governance context of the country. In relatively centralised and ethnically homogeneous states like Australia or Timor-Leste, a single NAP has provided clarity and coherence, ensuring alignment across ministries and enabling streamlined monitoring, donor coordination, and international reporting. In contrast, Burma's political complexity and ethnic and cultural diversity make a one-size-fits-all model less feasible.

Burma's transitional process envisions establishing a federal system, shaped by the political transformation process to address historical inequality and grievances with multiple armed resistance groups and overlapping authorities, and deep ethnic and cultural diversity. In this sophisticated, delicate governance landscape, a purely centralised NAP risks being perceived as top-down, disconnected from local realities, and potentially undermining grassroots leadership. Subnational governance bodies, ethnic organisations, and community-based organisations (CBOs) often hold stronger legitimacy within their communities than national actors, making them essential to the effective localisation of WPS principles. As such, while a national-level WPS framework remains necessary for articulating commitments, aligning with international standards, and advocating for donor support, it should operate through a layered and decentralised, state- or region-specific WPS action plans that reflect local contexts, languages, and security dynamics.

Such a layered and decentralised approach would balance coherence with flexibility, ensuring that WPS commitments are standardised at the union/national level but contextualised at the regional/local level. It would also enable other marginalised groups, including LGBTIQ+ persons and persons with disabilities, to shape policies that directly impact their lives, thereby fostering ownership and sustainability. By comparison, the Australian and Timorese models (see more detail in Section 7, where comparative studies of Australia and Timor-Leste are provided) demonstrate the utility of a single NAP in centralised contexts, but they cannot be directly transplanted into the Burmese context. Instead, Burma's path requires embedding WPS through multi-level, decentralised development and implementation that



integrates bottom-up participation with union-level coordination. This approach is better suited to Burma's federal aspirations and resolution to its protracted conflicts, while ensuring that WPS remains not just a rhetorical commitment, but a transformative tool for inclusive governance and peacebuilding.

5.8. Current Situation under the Military's Ongoing Terror Campaign

Burma's judicial and law enforcement systems were long weaponised by the successive military juntas that have left survivors with virtually no access to justice for decades. Since the February 2021 military's illegal coup attempt, SGBV and CRSV by the military have increased dramatically. Resistance groups have also faced allegations of perpetrating SGBV and CRSV.

Women's civil society organisations, including those aligned with the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) and EROs, have become critical actors in addressing violence and advocating for rights-based governance in areas outside military control. Some interim councils and ethnic-administered structures have attempted to draft gender policies, promote inclusive governance, and build survivor support networks. Still, these efforts are localised, under-resourced, and vulnerable to military offensives.

The LGBTIQ+ community faces continued persecution under Section 377 of the Penal Code, a colonial-era law that criminalises same-sex relations³⁰. Since the coup, military-controlled courts have weaponised this law against LGBTIQ+ dissidents and human rights defenders, compounding the risks of violence, detention, and harassment. Despite increased grassroots visibility, stigma and criminalisation remain entrenched. Worse still, persons with disabilities have been systematically excluded altogether from political processes, service provision, and humanitarian response. The conflict has worsened their situation by limiting access to mobility, health services, and livelihoods, as conflict-related displacement has severely impacted PWDs' access to health, mobility, and dignity.

30 ICJ, Myanmar's Criminal Law and Justice System Perpetuates Stigmatisation, Discrimination, and Human Rights Violations against Its LGBTI People, new report finds, 8 November 2019, <https://africa.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-11/English%20NAP%20background%20document%20UN%20Women%20ECO%202022.pdf> <https://www.icj.org/myanmars-criminal-law-and-justice-system-perpetuates-stigmatization-discrimination-and-human-rights-violations-against-its-lgbtq-people-new-report-finds/>



KEY REFLECTION

Burma's gender policy and framework landscape is characterised by both innovations and setbacks. On one hand, earlier initiatives such as NSPAW and PoVAW highlighted important commitments but were undermined by limited capacity, weak enforcement, and entrenched militarism. On the other hand, more recent efforts, from the NUG's GEP2024 and Military Code of Conduct to grassroots-led WPS frameworks, illustrate new energy, creativity, and inclusivity, even in the midst of conflict.

The coexistence of governmental and grassroots frameworks points to a broader structural challenge: without coordination and complementarity, duplication risks wasting scarce resources and undermining trust. Yet, when these approaches are harmonised, marrying grassroots participation and ownership with governmental institutionalisation and accountability, they hold potential to set a precedent for gender-responsive policymaking in conflict-affected states. Burma's path forward requires a layered and federated approach, balancing union-level commitments with decentralised, context-sensitive frameworks that reflect ethnic diversity and local realities. If nurtured, these frameworks can help transform the current moment of crisis into a foundation for a genuinely inclusive federal democracy.



6. THE MYTH OF “NO BUDGET”

It is often argued in resource-constrained environments like Burma that prevention and protection frameworks, especially those targeting women, LGBTIQ+, and PWDs, fail due to a perceived lack of funding³¹. While operating within a tighter fiscal context compared to more stable states is undoubtedly challenging, the deeper issue is not the absolute absence of budget lines, but rather political deprioritisation. Funds, after all, reflect political choices. When inclusive protection mechanisms are absent from core national planning, it is less a financial shortcoming than a reflection of gendered governance priorities, particularly in militarised, male-dominated systems where such issues are sidelined³².

This “no budget” narrative also obscures an important pattern: even well-funded, politically stable nations struggle without prioritisation and accountability. For instance, despite its robust economy, Australia has invested heavily in its national WPS action plans. However, independent reviews by both civil society and academia have found that its efforts are hampered by a top-down, bureaucratic design, weak feminist engagement, and an over-reliance on activity-based indicators rather than substantive impact³³.

Similarly, Timor-Leste’s 2016 NAP, developed through genuine political commitment and multi-stakeholder input, did not allocate a specific budget, leading to implementation bottlenecks and dependency on external donors³⁴. These cases underscore that resource allocation alone does not translate into results without deliberate prioritisation, rigorous monitoring, and inclusive and participatory design. This analysis anticipates the upcoming comparative case studies, which reveal how political will, fiscal commitment, and transformative design must align to translate policy into meaningful impact.

31 International Rescue Committee, (2024), Contextualizing GBV Prevention and Response: Rhetoric or Reality for WROs and WLOs in Humanitarian Contexts?, International Rescue Committee (IRC), <https://gbvresponders.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/WPE-Policy-Report-EN-1.pdf>

32 Buchanan, C. (2022), Preventing Gender-Based Violence in Myanmar, International IDEA, Constitution Brief, March 2022, <https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/preventing-gender-based-violence-in-myanmar-CAWE3.pdf>

33 Reviews of Australian WPS implementation highlight weak accountability and limited feminist grounding, despite substantial funding (1325naps.peacewomen.org).

34 Timor Leste’s first NAP (2016–20) featured a ‘detailed implementation matrix’ but reportedly no allocated budget, forcing reliance on donor support and curbing long-term sustainability (1325naps.peacewomen.org).





7. COMPARATIVE CASE STUDIES

7.1 Case Study 1: Australia

7.1.1. Overview: Budget, National Gender Mechanism, and Institutional Structures

Australia has made significant investments in gender equality. In the 2022–23 federal budget, it committed A\$1.7 billion over six years to its National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children³⁵ and institutionalised gender-responsive budgeting through a Women’s Budget Statement and gender-analysis pilots³⁶. Its gender architecture includes the Office for Women, cross-departmental coordination among the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Department of Defence (DoD), Attorney-General’s Department (AGD), the Australian Federal Police (AFP), and the Australian Civil-Military Centre, as well as supported bodies such as Our Watch³⁷.

7.1.2. National Plans: Ending Violence Against Women and WPS Principles

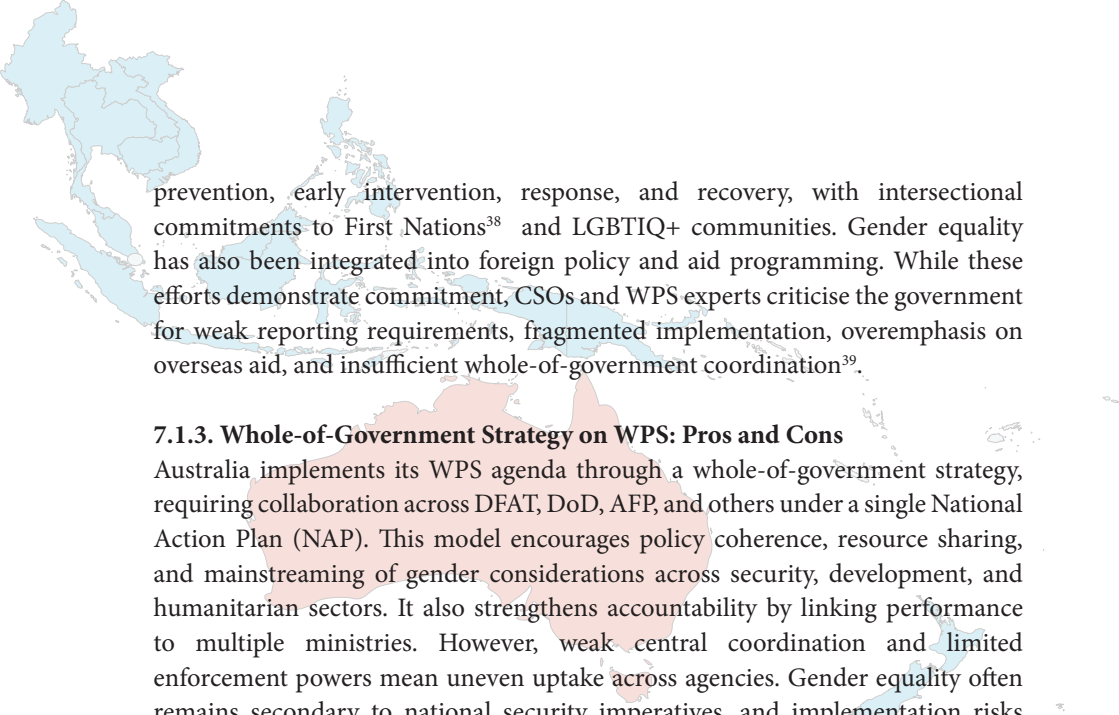
Australia’s first National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Children (2010–2022) was followed by the 2022–2032 plan, structured around four pillars:

35 A\$1.7 billion allocated to end violence against women and children over six years (aspistrategist.org.au, aspi.org.au, aph.gov.au).

36 Gender-responsive budgeting pilots and Women’s Budget Statement integrated into FY 2022–23.

37 Australia’s WPS NAPs published in 2012–18 and 2021–31 (dfat.gov.au). Our Watch is an independent, not-for-profit organisation established to drive nationwide change in culture, behaviours, and power imbalances to prevent violence against women and their children. The Commonwealth (federal) and Victorian governments established Our Watch as a key initiative under the National Plan in June 2013. Since that time, all states and territories governments have joined as members. <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/about-us/what-we-do>





prevention, early intervention, response, and recovery, with intersectional commitments to First Nations³⁸ and LGBTIQ+ communities. Gender equality has also been integrated into foreign policy and aid programming. While these efforts demonstrate commitment, CSOs and WPS experts criticise the government for weak reporting requirements, fragmented implementation, overemphasis on overseas aid, and insufficient whole-of-government coordination³⁹.

7.1.3. Whole-of-Government Strategy on WPS: Pros and Cons

Australia implements its WPS agenda through a whole-of-government strategy, requiring collaboration across DFAT, DoD, AFP, and others under a single National Action Plan (NAP). This model encourages policy coherence, resource sharing, and mainstreaming of gender considerations across security, development, and humanitarian sectors. It also strengthens accountability by linking performance to multiple ministries. However, weak central coordination and limited enforcement powers mean uneven uptake across agencies. Gender equality often remains secondary to national security imperatives, and implementation risks fragmentation as agencies interpret commitments differently.

7.1.4. Gaps and Challenges

Despite substantial overall gender equality funding, WPS initiatives have lacked earmarked resources, undermining accountability. For example, the 2025 budget allocated no new funds to frontline gender violence services despite rising

38 First Nations people in Australia encompass Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the original inhabitants of the continent. They are not a single homogenous group but rather a diverse collection of hundreds of nations, each with their own distinct languages, cultures, and histories. Their heritage is the oldest continuous civilisation on Earth, with evidence of human presence dating back over 65,000 years.

39 Wyeth, G., Examining Australia's National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security, 19 April 2021, <https://thediplomat.com/2021/04/examining-australias-national-action-plan-on-women-peace-and-security/> and Hutchinson, S., (2024) "Time for More Action on Women, Peace, and Security", The Strategist, 8 March 2024, <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/time-for-more-action-on-women-peace-and-security/>

fatalities⁴⁰, sparking civil society criticism⁴¹. Analysts note that monitoring remains bureaucratic, focusing on inputs and outputs rather than feminist, outcome-driven change⁴². Institutional resistance, male-dominated leadership in security sectors, and declining public urgency around gender-based violence further constrain progress.

7.1.5. Successes

Australia has increased women's representation in security institutions, with the Australian Defence Force (ADF) meeting recruitment targets and accelerating entry for women⁴³. Civil society engagement is strong, through mandated consultations, shadow reporting, and online feedback mechanisms, reinforcing accountability and inclusivity in WPS implementation⁴⁴.

7.1.6. Lessons Learned

Australia's case illustrates that significant resources and institutional frameworks do not automatically yield transformative results without political will, feminist-informed accountability, and cultural change. Sustained progress requires strong enforcement, outcome-focused monitoring, inclusive leadership within security institutions, and shifts in attitudes to ensure WPS principles are embedded in practice. Being a high-income country does not guarantee gender equity; structural change and accountability remain essential.

40 According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare report, domestic violence is a significant problem in Australia, with one woman being killed by a current or former partner approximately every 11 days on average. According to Mission Australia 2018 reports, 1 in 6 women have experienced violence by an intimate partner, compared to 1 in 16 men. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/family-domestic-and-sexual-violence/responses-and-outcomes/domestic-homicide>, 25 February 2025, and <https://www.missionaustralia.com.au/domestic-and-family-violence-statistics#:~:text=Overall%2C%201%20in%205%20women%20and%201,killed%20by%20a%20current%20or%20former%20partner>.

41 2025 budget fails to allocate new funding to violence services, despite rising deaths ([news.com.au](https://www.news.com.au)) and Coverage of violence fatalities and political silence in Australia's 2025 election debate ([news.com.au](https://www.news.com.au)).

42 Criticism of activity-oriented M&E and lack of feminist accountability ([internationalaffairs.org.au](https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au)) and Departments use global data instead of tracking institutional outcomes ([internationalaffairs.org.au](https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au)).

43 The Australian Defence Force (ADF) removed restrictions on women serving in combat roles over a period of time, with the process beginning in 2011 and culminating in 2016. Previously, women were excluded from certain combat roles, but the ADF gradually opened these positions to women, including special forces roles.

44 See Australian Government (2021), Second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2021–2031, which outlines the mechanisms for civil society participation, including roundtables, consultations, and the use of shadow reports.





7.2 Case Study 2: Timor-Leste

Timor-Leste demonstrates how political will, grassroots leadership, and feminist networks can drive gender equality even in resource-scarce, post-conflict settings. Its experience shows that inclusive governance and strong national ownership, and social mobilisation matter as much as funding.

7.2.1. Post-Conflict and Low-Resource Context

Emerging from Indonesian occupation in 1999, Timor-Leste rebuilt amid trauma, poverty, and institutional collapse. Despite ranking 141st on the UNDP Human Development Index in 2022⁴⁵, it has advanced gender equality by centering women in post-conflict governance and state-building processes.

7.2.2. Women's Political Participation, NAPs, and CSO Leadership

Timor-Leste's 30% quota for parliamentary candidates (2006) ensured that women held over 38% of seats by 2017, among the highest in Southeast Asia⁴⁶. Two National Action Plans on WPS (2016–2020, 2022–2025) integrated UNSCR 1325's pillars into governance, security, and peacebuilding⁴⁷. These were co-developed with civil society, particularly Rede Feto⁴⁸ and Aloha Foundation⁴⁹, embedding grassroots perspectives. Gender working groups, a Gender Resource Centre, and collaboration

45 UNDP. (2022). Human Development Report 2021/22: Uncertain Times, Unsettled Lives. New York: UNDP.

46 UN Women. (2022). Timor-Leste Country Brief: Women in Politics and Decision-Making. Retrieved from [UN Women Timor-Leste](#) and Parliament of Timor-Leste. (2017). Election Results and Gender Representation Statistics.

47 Government of Timor-Leste (2016, 2022). National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. Office of the Secretary of State for Equality and Inclusion.

48 Rede Feto is a network of 18 women's organisations coming from all over Timor-Leste. It was established on 10th March 2000 during the first National Women's Congress. Its member-empowerment framework aims to strengthen the organisation and advocacy capacity of the member organisations, which work to impact in advancing the status of women and their participation in the national development process.

49 The Aloha Foundation is a non-governmental organisation and was founded by Kirsty Sword Gusmao, the former First Lady of Timor-Leste. The Foundation was initially established to raise awareness and campaign against sexual violence against women and girls, particularly in the aftermath of the 1999 militia attacks.



with the Office of the Secretary of State for Equality and Inclusion (SEII) further institutionalised gender equality across ministries and local administrations⁵⁰.

7.2.3. Political Will and Grassroots Leadership

Progress stemmed from alliances between women leaders, CSOs, and political champions such as President José Ramos-Horta and reformist women members of parliament (MPs). Laws on domestic violence and child protection emerged from these partnerships, driven by CSOs' community mobilisation and public education efforts⁵¹. Even with minimal funding, grassroots consultations ensured policies addressed the realities of rural women, LGBTIQ+ persons, and CRSV survivors.

7.2.4. Critiques of the Timorese Model

Observers caution against equating women's numerical representation with real influence. Parties often nominate women to meet quotas without empowering their leadership⁵². Observers, including the Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality, have pointed out that numbers alone do not guarantee meaningful participation or policy influence for women⁵³. Patriarchal norms, customary practices, limited access to education, high teenage pregnancy rates, and weak support for women's leadership continue to constrain progress. Gender-based violence remains widespread, with 59% of ever-partnered women reporting intimate partner violence⁵⁴. These factors reveal that formal gains risk remaining symbolic without transformation of political culture, power structures, party practices, societal attitudes, and deeper cultural and institutional transformation.

50 Alola Foundation. (2021). Annual Report. Dili: Alola Foundation and Rede Feto (2020). Women's Rights Advocacy in Timor-Leste.

51 D'Cruz, J. (2018). Feminist Coalitions and Post-Conflict State Building in Timor-Leste. *Gender & Development*, 26(3), 393–408.

52 Woltersdorf, A. (2018), "Are Timor-Leste's Quotas for Women in Government a Good Thing? 'Of course!' Say Female MPs", Future Hub, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 20 September 2018, <https://asia.fes.de/news/are-timor-lestes-quotas-for-women-in-government-a-good-thing-of-course-say-female-mps.html>.

53 "WAVE: Women and Political Leadership in Timor-Leste – Literature Review", IWDA, research report, October 2019, http://iwda.org.au/assets/files/Women-and-Political-Leadership-Literature-Review-Timor-Leste_publicPDF3_3_2020.pdf

54 The Asia Foundation. (2016). Understanding violence against women and children in Timor Leste: Findings from the Nabilan baseline study. https://asiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/UnderstandingVAWTL_main.pdf





7.2.5. Lessons Learned

Timor-Leste shows that resource scarcity is not a barrier when political will, legal mechanisms, and grassroots mobilisation align. Legal quotas and NAPs, when locally owned, can institutionalise participation. For Burma, the key lesson is that inclusion must go beyond symbolism: even fragile or interim systems can mandate women's participation, establish quotas, and partner with CSOs to break the “no budget, no action” mindset.

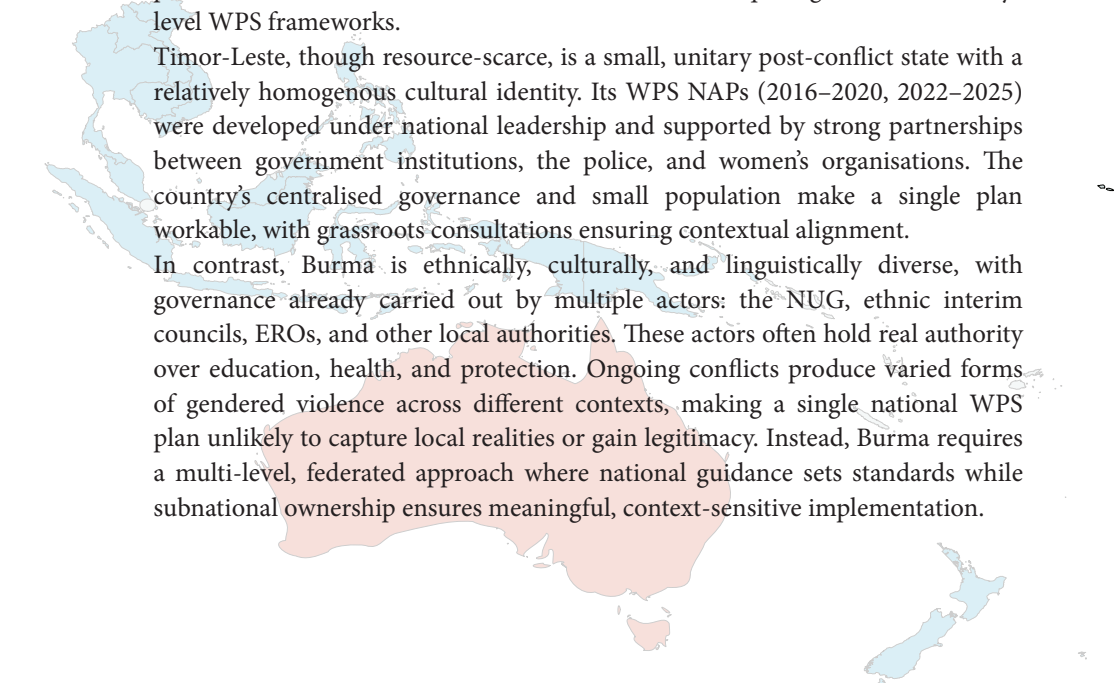


Comparative Insight: Why a Single NAP Works in Australia and Timor-Leste

Australia and Timor-Leste illustrate how governance structures shape the suitability of a single national WPS Action Plan (NAP). Australia, despite being a federation, has a cohesive national identity, strong institutions, and the rule of law. Its three successive NAPs were nationally led, developed with civil society input, and implemented largely through federal and state institutions. Centralised policy-making, combined with limited ethnic or regional fragmentation, has allowed one plan to be mainstreamed across ministries without requiring state or territory-level WPS frameworks.

Timor-Leste, though resource-scarce, is a small, unitary post-conflict state with a relatively homogenous cultural identity. Its WPS NAPs (2016–2020, 2022–2025) were developed under national leadership and supported by strong partnerships between government institutions, the police, and women's organisations. The country's centralised governance and small population make a single plan workable, with grassroots consultations ensuring contextual alignment.

In contrast, Burma is ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse, with governance already carried out by multiple actors: the NUG, ethnic interim councils, EROs, and other local authorities. These actors often hold real authority over education, health, and protection. Ongoing conflicts produce varied forms of gendered violence across different contexts, making a single national WPS plan unlikely to capture local realities or gain legitimacy. Instead, Burma requires a multi-level, federated approach where national guidance sets standards while subnational ownership ensures meaningful, context-sensitive implementation.



7.4. Takeaways for Burma

The comparative cases highlight several lessons for Burma. First, feminist indicators and civil society oversight must be built into any framework. Inclusive and intersectional consultations should meaningfully involve diverse women's groups, LGBTIQ+ persons, and people with disabilities (PWDs). Tokenistic engagement risks eroding trust and undermining effectiveness.

Second, designated funding is critical. As Timor-Leste's experience shows, plans without clear budget lines struggle in implementation. Burma's interim bodies and international donors must allocate resources, strengthen institutions, and adopt transparent financing mechanisms.

Third, policy integration must occur at senior levels. Australia's experience, where WPS was sometimes relegated to human resources units, shows the need to embed WPS into decision-making bodies such as security councils, defence ministries, and justice systems. Political will, accountability, and resourced gender focal points are essential to prevent uneven or symbolic implementation.

Finally, the case studies demonstrate that even well-funded, politically supported action plans can falter without rigorous monitoring, coordination, and buy-in across institutions. For Burma, this means combining union-level guidance with localised, participatory ownership. Effective prevention and protection require more than commitments: they demand inclusive governance, transparent financing, and transformative institutional change.

KEY REFLECTION

The case studies of Australia and Timor-Leste show that the effectiveness of WPS frameworks depends less on resources alone and more on governance structures, political will, and inclusivity. Both countries successfully operate with a single national NAP because they have relatively centralised governance and cohesive national identities. However, even in these contexts, shortcomings, such as fragmented implementation, weak monitoring, or tokenistic representation, limit transformative change.

For Burma, these lessons reaffirm that a one-size-fits-all model is ill-suited to its fragmented, federalising, and conflict-affected landscape. A decentralised, layered approach, combining union-level guidance with state- and community-level ownership, is necessary to reflect diverse realities. Strong political will, designated funding, institutional accountability, and grassroots participation must underpin any WPS framework if it is to move beyond rhetoric and deliver real protection, prevention, and participation for women and marginalised groups.



8. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This section synthesises insights from consultation meetings with a diverse range of stakeholders operating in conflict-affected and resistance-governed areas of Burma. Participants included community-based organisations (CBOs), women's and ethnic women's organisations, LGBTIQ+ groups, service providers, armed resistance actors, interim government ministries, and emerging federal units and interim consultative councils establishing bottom-up governance models. Together, they provided perspectives shaped by lived realities of conflict, displacement, and insecurity, while working on establishing bottom-up governance, institutions, and service provisions, civilian protection, and gender equality.

Many stakeholders hold overlapping roles, simultaneously serving as service providers, advocacy actors, and frontline responders, and work closely with survivors of domestic and family violence (DV/FV), SGBV, and CRSV. Their interventions span prevention, case management, psychosocial support, and community mobilisation.

Meetings with stakeholders were held through a combination of online and in-person to ensure accessibility amid ongoing conflict, security threats, and mobility restrictions. Particularly significant were contributions from newly forming interim consultative councils and governance bodies, whose efforts to integrate gender perspectives into justice and social service systems shed light on both opportunities and obstacles in institutionalising protection and prevention during the interim period of the people's resistance movement.

The findings reflect a complex intersection of grassroots activism, resistance politics, and emergent governance from the ground up. They illustrate how stakeholders navigate protection frameworks, resource constraints, and accountability gaps in volatile and fragile contexts. For analytical clarity, these perspectives are organised across four key domains: (1) governance and policy alignment; (2) implementation of protection and prevention mechanisms; (3) coordination and resource allocation; and (4) accountability and monitoring.

This framework helps identify both systemic and situational factors shaping the protection landscape, while also pointing to critical areas for strengthening collective responses to violence and gendered harm. Stakeholder-driven recommendations and forward-looking planning are presented later in this section.





8.1. Governance and Policy Alignment

Stakeholders consistently acknowledged the value of formal frameworks for gender equality and the WPS agenda but highlighted persistent gaps in governance and policy alignment. Consultations revealed a diverse field of actors, including resistance-aligned ministries, EROs, women-led coalitions, LGBTIQ+ groups, and grassroots organisations, each approaching policy from different priorities.

Women's organisations stressed the need for grassroots-driven policy development that reflects the lived realities of conflict-affected communities, drawing on decades of activism and advocacy that predate UNSCR 1325. They also emphasise their long-term grassroots activism and advocacy predating formal international resolutions and instruments, asserting substantial influence in shaping frameworks and political discourse despite ongoing cultural resistance and political barriers. By contrast, interim governance bodies and armed actors tended to favour frameworks designed for political legitimacy and administrative coordination. Both approaches are influential but not always harmonised.

Governmental representatives within the resistance movement acknowledged that policy frameworks are evolving, with increasing ministerial engagement beyond gender-specific portfolios. However, coherence remains fragile, especially in regional and conflict-affected areas where multiple governance structures operate in parallel. While stakeholders recognised the value of the NUG's GEP2024 and other WPS-related frameworks, many expressed frustrations over overlapping initiatives and unclear relationships between documents.

This fragmentation reflects deeper misunderstandings between bottom-up legitimacy and top-down ministerial ownership. Although diverse action plans can foster ownership and contextual relevance, they also complicate alignment at the national level. Variation in awareness, capacity, and integration across governance layers further exacerbates these challenges.





8.2. Implementation of Protection and Prevention Mechanisms

Stakeholders consistently underscored the gap between policy commitments and field-level realities. While protection policies and prevention mechanisms for SGBV and CRSV are widely referenced in formal statements, they often remain aspirational rather than operational. Survivors of GBV, CRSV, and DV continue to face major barriers to justice, particularly in areas where justice is administered by newly established weak justice systems by interim governance bodies or armed actors, including through customary systems. In conflict-affected and mixed-control zones (e.g., ERO or EROs and the military), displacement and insecurity amplify vulnerabilities, leaving survivors with few safe avenues for reporting or support. Weak or absent protection infrastructure further exposes them to stigma, retaliation, and secondary victimisation.

Some armed resistance forces reported codes of conduct and safeguards for women and LGBTIQ+ members within their ranks, yet women's networks highlighted inconsistent or weak enforcement. Positive examples exist where survivor cases led to investigations and disciplinary measures, showing potential entry points for accountability. Prevention efforts were praised where organisations invested in training, awareness-raising, and survivor-centred practices, but the absence of shared standards across actors means survivors face or can access uneven levels of protection.

The analysis reveals a persistent implementation gap: protection frameworks remain fragmented, inconsistent, and vulnerable to collapse under militarised conditions. Stakeholders emphasised the urgent need for standardised, enforceable mechanisms applied across all governance and resistance actors, alongside regular gender-sensitive training for armed personnel, community leaders, and service providers. Without this, protection commitments risk remaining symbolic rather than transformative.

Parallel research conducted by the BWU on CRSV offers vital insights into survivors' lived experiences and exposes systemic protection failures in Burma. The findings reveal that while CRSV is systematically deployed by the military as a deliberate tool of repression, sexual violence also occurs in some resistance-held areas. In these areas, however, such violence tends to be isolated incidents committed by individual combatants rather than part of an orchestrated policy. This reality exposes survivors to multiple layers of vulnerability, including social stigma, fear of retaliation, and limited access to justice and support services.



Community-based organisations and women’s groups frequently serve as first responders, despite being under-resourced and overburdened.

The research further underscores that interim governance structures and resistance groups have yet to establish consistent, survivor-centred protection mechanisms. While some local initiatives provide psychosocial support, safe shelter, and legal aid, these efforts are ad hoc in nature and lack integration into broader governance or security frameworks. The absence of formal accountability measures, both against the military and within resistance movements, erodes survivors’ trust and deters reporting.

Integrating these insights into the policy analysis highlights the urgent need for coordinated, well-resourced, and survivor-centred frameworks that prioritise both prevention and protection. It reinforces the importance of linking grassroots service providers with emerging policy frameworks so that survivors’ voices and needs shape protection mechanisms. Without this integration, responses risk remaining ad hoc and unable to tackle the structural drivers of CRSV.



8.3. Coordination and Resource Sharing

Although coordination efforts are underway among the National Unity Government’s ministries, women’s organisations, ethnic and regional interim administrations, and EROs, stakeholders noted that these processes remain uneven, largely informal, and frequently hampered by limited resources and overlapping mandates. This was described as one of the most persistent challenges across stakeholder meetings. While some governance actors acknowledged improvements in multi-ministry collaboration and growing technical engagement with ethnic administrations and CSOs, local organisations continue to face gaps in both resource access and technical support. Donors’ inflexible funding and reporting requirements raise concerns about sustainability and local ownership.

CSOs often characterised their work as under-resourced, fragmented, and at times duplicative, largely due to weak communication with interim councils or armed resistance structures. Women’s organisations stressed that gender equality is still too often treated as a “women’s issue,” with insufficient buy-in from other ministries or governance actors. At the same time, many groups emphasised the value of human resource sharing and network connectivity, which have allowed women’s organisations to provide mutual support and build capacity despite resource scarcity.

Some armed resistance actors acknowledged the importance of gender-sensitive policies but admitted that operational pressures and resource constraints relegated gender issues lower on their agendas. Where coordination has worked well, such as between grassroots women's organisations and local service providers, it has often been based on informal trust networks rather than institutionalised mechanisms. This reflects a coordination deficit, rooted not only in resource scarcity but also in power asymmetries and the absence of institutionalised inter-agency mechanisms. Challenges related to prioritisation and network dynamics occasionally lead to fragmented efforts or diluted focus. Unlike Timor-Leste, where women's networks are institutionally linked to government (governance or administrative bodies) through standing committees, coordination in Burma remains highly informal.

8.4. Accountability and Monitoring

Across meetings, stakeholders consistently identified weak accountability structures as one of the most significant gaps. Women's organisations stressed that policies are often adopted without clear monitoring frameworks, resulting in symbolic rather than substantive compliance. Service providers described how monitoring remains largely ad hoc, relying on individual leadership commitment rather than systemic enforcement. Interim administrations expressed willingness to strengthen accountability but cited limited technical expertise and resources. Armed groups acknowledged the difficulty of enforcing the standards framework across decentralised units, particularly in contested areas where operational and security priorities overshadow gender commitments.

There are, however, emerging signs of progress. Some transitional governance structures have begun applying policies such as the PSEAH within armed wings of the resistance, and stakeholders recounted cases where perpetrators faced warnings, dismissals, or judicial processes, including imprisonment. While encouraging, these mechanisms remain inconsistently understood and applied, leaving survivors to navigate barriers such as fear of retaliation, social stigma, and doubts about impartiality.

Transparency and systematic data collection were highlighted as critical needs to support evidence-based adjustments. Grassroots and women-led groups emphasised survivor-centered, culturally appropriate accountability frameworks that are integrated into broader WPS systems - encompassing implementation processes, monitoring and reporting mechanisms, compliance and enforcement

structures, justice pathways, institutional responsibilities and coordination mechanisms. Current monitoring systems, when they exist, tend to rely on basic quantitative indicators or annual reports but rarely include qualitative measures of service quality or survivor satisfaction.

Analytically, accountability in Burma remains more aspirational than institutionalised, risking that political commitments to gender equality and to end SGBV and CRSV are diluted into performative statements. Closing this gap will require robust, enforceable monitoring mechanisms, co-designed by ministries, civil society, and women's organisations. Yet such mechanisms will remain ineffective unless the long-standing, military-constructed centralised system is dismantled and replaced with a federal democratic governance model capable of supporting genuine accountability.



8.5. Stakeholders' Recommendations and Future Planning

Stakeholder meetings show that while stakeholders acknowledge existing policy efforts, they agree that future progress requires both structural coherence and practical mechanisms. A recurring recommendation is to harmonise existing gender and WPS frameworks rather than duplicating or fragmenting them. Women's organisations stress that grassroots-driven frameworks must not be sidelined, urging ministries and interim administrations to build upon these foundations. Many actors emphasised that in Burma's diverse ethnic and political landscape, a federalised approach is essential, one that allows ethnic administrations and interim councils to adapt the WPS agenda to their contexts while contributing to a shared national vision.

On protection and prevention, stakeholders consistently called for enforceable standards. Recommendations included establishing common codes of conduct for resistance movement's armed actors, civil servants, and service providers, ensuring survivor-centred principles are applied universally. Scaling up gender-sensitive training and awareness-raising was highlighted as urgent, especially for frontline personnel such as medics, local administrators, security forces, and justice actors. Participants urged the institutionalisation of comprehensive survivor-support systems covering psychosocial care, legal aid, emergency relief, and livelihood assistance for conflict-affected women, girls, LGBTIQ+ persons, and PWDs. In some cases, stakeholders suggested incorporating customary and community-based mechanisms into prevention strategies, provided they are not

harmful and are adapted to align with rights-based safeguards and international standards.

Coordination and resource sharing emerged as central to future planning. Stakeholders recommended establishing formal, multi-sectoral coordination platforms at local and regional levels, with meaningful participation from women's groups, health, justice, and security sectors, and internally displaced persons (IDPs) committees. They noted that reliance on informal trust networks, while valuable, is insufficient for sustainable and inclusive governance. Importantly, women's organisations insisted that gender equality should not be siloed within women-specific ministries but must be mainstreamed across all ministries, backed by adequate resources. Several participants proposed developing joint donor strategies to ensure sustainable and transparent funding that directly reaches grassroots organisations.

Finally, accountability and monitoring were identified as decisive areas for future work. Stakeholders recommended establishing independent monitoring bodies to oversee compliance with gender and WPS commitments, alongside transparent reporting and complaints systems accessible to survivors and communities. Many acknowledged their limited technical capacity for systematic monitoring and evaluation, emphasising the need for investment in capacity-building. Local administrations and grassroots organisations, in particular, require support to collect disaggregated data by gender, ethnicity, age, disability, and displacement status. Stakeholders also called for aligning domestic accountability with international obligations, ensuring coordinated reporting and compliance with global WPS mandates. Without such mechanisms, they cautioned, gender policies will remain aspirational rather than operational.

Taken together, these perspectives highlight a vision of WPS implementation in present and future Burma that is federalised, survivor-centred, and institutionally grounded, with clear roles for both grassroots actors and emerging governance bodies. For stakeholders, the path forward lies in embedding inclusivity and accountability into federal governance structures from the ground up while building the technical and resource foundations necessary to transform commitments into lived realities.





8.6. Findings

- **Policy frameworks exist but lack coherence.** While formal gender and WPS policies signal strong commitments, their effectiveness is limited by fragmentation, overlapping mandates, and the absence of alignment between grassroots-driven initiatives and ministerial frameworks. Misunderstanding between bottom-up legitimacy and top-down ownership continues to weaken coherence.
- **Protection gaps remain critical.** Survivors of GBV, CRSV, and DV face systemic barriers to justice and support, including stigma, weak institutional capacity, and militarised environments. Mechanisms often remain rhetorical, with implementation inconsistent across regions. Locally driven initiatives show promise but remain under-resourced and unevenly enforced.
- **CRSV requires urgent, structured responses.** Research and stakeholder meetings confirm that CRSV persists both as a weapon of war by the military and as a challenge within resistance-held areas. Survivors face compounded vulnerabilities, while service providers and CBOs shoulder disproportionate burdens without sufficient funding or integration into formal frameworks.
- **Coordination is weak and unsystematic.** While trust networks and ad hoc collaborations enable some cooperation, resource scarcity, overlapping mandates, and limited institutionalisation undermine sustained coordination.
- **Accountability enforcement remains weak.** Policies are often adopted without robust monitoring or enforcement. Emerging practices, such as the application of PSEAH within armed resistance forces, are important but inconsistent. Transparent data systems and survivor-centred monitoring remain underdeveloped, limiting trust and impact.
- **Resource and funding models undermine sustainability.** Current donor funding models risk undermining sustainability. By prioritising short-term projects, limiting direct financing for grassroots actors, and neglecting transparent budget allocations for gender and WPS, donors inadvertently weaken the long-term institutionalisation of gender equality and local ownership.
- **Locally adapted models are more viable.** Given Burma's ethnic diversity, contested governance, and complex conflict dynamics, a decentralised WPS

framework embedded within a federal governance structure is more realistic and equitable than a centralised, single national plan.

- **Survivor-centred approaches are underdeveloped.** Despite recognition of the principle, service delivery and accountability mechanisms remain institution-focused rather than survivor-focused. Institutionalisation of holistic survivor support (psychosocial, legal, livelihood) is still in its infancy.
- **Political will and inclusive engagement are critical determinants of progress.** Progress depends not only on resources but on sustained leadership commitment across governance levels, the inclusion of marginalised groups (LGBTIQA+, PWDs, ethnic and religious minority women), and recognition of grassroots actors as equal partners in agenda-setting and implementation.



8.7. Conclusion

The synthesis of stakeholder consultations reveals a governance landscape marked by both aspiration and constraint. While national-level gender and WPS frameworks provide important normative anchors, their impact depends on adaptive, localised translation that reflects Burma's diverse ethnic, cultural, and conflict dynamics. The multiplicity of actors, ministries, ethnic administrations, resistance groups, women's organisations, and grassroots networks underscores both the richness of engagement and coordination and the challenge of fragmentation.

Protection and prevention mechanisms remain uneven: well-articulated in principle but inconsistently enforced and frequently inaccessible to survivors. Coordination shows promise, with emerging cross-sectoral collaboration and resource-sharing, yet remains constrained by weak institutionalisation and resource scarcity. Accountability is nascent, with encouraging signs of disciplinary measures and policy uptake, but still hampered by stigma, fear of retaliation, and the absence of robust monitoring systems.

Taken together, these dynamics highlight the urgent need to bridge the gap between formal frameworks and grassroots realities. Harmonisation of policies, sustained capacity-building, and the establishment of transparent, survivor-centred accountability structures are essential to ensure commitments translate into lived protections. Crucially, the meaningful inclusion of women, LGBTIQA+ persons, PWDs, and ethnic and religious minorities must move beyond symbolism and become embedded at the heart of governance processes.

Ultimately, sustaining momentum for transformative gender justice in Burma requires political will across governance levels, institutionalised collaboration between resistance movement's political bodies and armed wings and civil society, and a deliberate commitment to inclusivity by all actors. Only by aligning frameworks with grassroots realities and embedding feminist principles in governance structures can protection and prevention become both credible and enduring.



What Exists

Multiple frameworks, diverse actors, and growing political commitments show that the WPS agenda is recognised across Burma's interim governance landscape toward establishing federal democracy. Women's organisations, CSOs, interim consultative councils, and interim governance, and even some armed actors of the resistance movement, are taking steps to embed protection and prevention into their structures.

What Is Missing

Implementation remains inconsistent and fragmented. Survivors face persistent barriers to justice and protection, while coordination is often reliant on informal trust networks rather than institutionalised systems. Accountability and monitoring remain aspirational, with weak survivor-centred mechanisms and underdeveloped data systems.

What Must Be Done

Progress depends on harmonising national standards with locally adapted approaches, embedding survivor-centred protection into all governance structures, and building sustainable coordination platforms. Investing in capacity-building, accountability, and inclusive participation will determine whether WPS frameworks remain symbolic or become transformative.

So, What

Without these shifts, gender equality efforts risk perpetuating divisions instead of overcoming them. With them, Burma has a unique opportunity to turn bottom-up resilience and grassroots leadership into the foundation of a new, inclusive federal democracy.



9. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Establish a Multi-Level, Federated WPS Framework

Develop a federal-level WPS framework with unified minimum standards and clear accountability mechanisms, while allowing ethnic administrations, interim bodies, and civil society to adapt context-specific action plans. This balances coherence with local ownership in a federal system.

2. Establish and Strengthen Inclusive Legal and Policy Protections

Enact and enforce laws that explicitly protect women, girls, LGBTIQ+ individuals, and persons with disabilities, including gender quotas, anti-discrimination legislation, and alignment across justice, security, and governance sectors. This ensures equal rights are safeguarded in transitional and future governance structures.

3. Invest in Capacity Building and Gender-Sensitive Training

Institutionalise mandatory, recurring gender-responsive training for security forces, governance actors, community leaders, and service providers. This strengthens prevention and protection responses and embeds survivor-centred approaches in frontline practice.

4. Build Formal, Inclusive Coordination Platforms

Create multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms at township and regional levels, ensuring the participation of women's groups, ethnic actors, and humanitarian responders. Transparent resource-sharing and clear mandates will prevent duplication and foster sustainability.

5. Strengthen Survivor-Centred Protection and Support Systems

Establish confidential, accessible, and culturally sensitive services — including psychosocial care, legal aid, safe shelters, emergency relief, and livelihood support. Responses must prioritise survivors of GBV, CRSV, and DV and ensure non-discrimination across gender and identity.



6. Institutionalise Accountability and Monitoring

Develop independent, survivor-focused accountability mechanisms featuring zero-tolerance policies, independent investigations, and consistent enforcement across governance and resistance structures. Monitoring must combine quantitative data with qualitative assessments of service quality and survivor dignity.

7. Promote Feminist Leadership and Political Participation

Adopt legislative reforms, leadership development programs, and targeted advocacy to ensure women, youth, and marginalised groups participate meaningfully in governance and political processes. Participation must go beyond symbolic inclusion to genuine power-sharing.

8. Secure Sustainable Financing and Political Will

Commit multi-year, dedicated funding streams for WPS initiatives, paired with strong political leadership to ensure frameworks translate into measurable impact. Without resources and political will, commitments risk remaining aspirational rather than transformative.



10. CONCLUSION

The illegal military junta's ongoing terror campaign and entrenched militarism in Burma continue to pose profound structural challenges to gender equality, democratic inclusion, and sustainable peace. This analysis shows that while formal frameworks and international commitments provide an important normative foundation, transformative change will only be realised if these frameworks are meaningfully localised and adapted to Burma's political realities.

Across the country, a diverse range of actors, from grassroots women's organisations and LGBTIQ+ networks to ethnic and regional interim consultative councils and administrative bodies, are already laying the groundwork for inclusive federal governance. Their efforts demonstrate that the proliferation of frameworks should not be seen as duplication or weakness, but rather as evidence of a broad-based commitment to embed WPS principles in transitional governance.

However, frameworks alone are not enough. Effective implementation requires bridging international standards with local ownership, strengthening legal protections, and investing in gender-sensitive capacity-building across governance and security actors. Coordination must be strengthened, including resource-sharing, while accountability mechanisms must centre on survivor dignity and ensure access to justice without stigma or retaliation. Without harmonisation, adequate resources, and robust accountability, WPS initiatives may continue to fall short of creating meaningful change.

The findings also highlight the resilience of women-led coalitions, ethnic organisations, and governance bodies, who continue to collaborate and drive forward despite cultural, political, and logistical barriers as well as daily security risks due to the military's aerial bombings and ground attacks. Their leadership underscores the centrality of resilience and resistance against military tyranny, persistent advocacy, inclusive dialogue, and feminist approaches that prioritise the agency of women and marginalised communities most affected by conflict.

Ultimately, Burma's pathway to gender equality and sustainable peace depends on striking a careful balance between bottom-up legitimacy and top-down institutionalisation, and between local adaptation and national coherence. If coordinated effectively, the combined efforts of civil society, resistance actors, and emerging governance structures can reshape Burma's political future into one that protects, empowers, and includes all communities.



The challenge ahead is not merely to draft frameworks but to animate them — in policy, in institutions, and most importantly, in the lived realities of survivors and marginalised groups. A nuanced, inclusive, and well-resourced WPS implementation pathway is not only a policy imperative; it is a foundational pillar for Burma’s transition to federal democracy, peacebuilding, and long-term social cohesion in the face of protracted crisis.



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