

Statement (Myanmar): International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict

Sunday 19 June 2022, by [Women's Peace Network](#) (Date first published: 19 June 2022).

This International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, we, Women's Peace Network, reaffirm our commitment and solidarity with all the victims and survivors of conflict-related sexual violence across Myanmar and the world, and urge the international community to pursue concrete and comprehensive actions for bringing justice to them and ending such violence for all.



Ou Founder and Executive Director, Wai Wai Nu, addressing the 50th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council about the Myanmar military's crimes, including sexual violence as a weapon of war, and the urgent need for international action

We commend those who remain strong and resilient despite the challenges they continue to face as victims and survivors. We remind the world that such women, girls, men, and boys – including members of the LGBTQ+ community – have all the power that they need to speak truth to power. They are not helpless victims, but are agents of their own future.

Through their harrowing accounts, we come to learn that in the case of Myanmar in particular, conflicts breed sexual violence, and impunity breeds such brutalities. For decades, as the Myanmar military perpetrated mass atrocity crimes against ethnic minority groups, their civil society – particularly women human rights defenders and organizations – led efforts to document and report on its forces' commission of sexual violence. According to such reports, the military wielded rape as a weapon of war against ethnic minority communities as a way to subjugate them or – as was demonstrated by their genocidal campaign against Rohingya in 2017 – destroy them in their entirety.

Since its attempted coup last year, the Myanmar military has continued to perpetrate this violence in its brutal campaign of terror. As shared by its victims and survivors, the junta is now committing rape and other egregious forms of sexual violence in the country's inhuman interrogation centers, squalid prisons, and growing areas of armed conflict, which include Sagaing Region and Kachin and Karen states. Women, as well as members of the LGBTQ+ community, remain at heightened risk of being targeted with this brutality.

Therefore, today, the international community must pursue concrete and comprehensive actions against such conflict-related sexual violence and for its victims and survivors. Countries must hold the Myanmar military accountable, including by imposing an arms embargo on Myanmar as well as

economic sanctions and financial penalties on the junta and its related businesses; the United Nations Security Council in particular should uphold its mandate and refer the situation of the country to the International Criminal Court. Governments and parties must also provide financial and material assistance, including psychosocial support and mental health care, to all those affected by conflict-related sexual violence – for their protection, livelihoods, and rehabilitation – in a manner that truly respects their autonomy and dignity. Women’s groups and other civil society organizations should benefit from such assistance in continuing their work to support at-risk communities, including Rohingya, and to document and report on such violence to the world.

The international community’s actions, not words, are what will eliminate sexual violence and bring justice to the victims and survivors of this heinous crime.

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Women’s Peace Network

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- https://mcusercontent.com/6819ae24e30bd9a9db0322d69/files/486b6395-8805-5fbc-6ca8-1ab140bf8710/_6_19_English_Int_l_Day_for_the_Elimination_of_Sexual_Violence_in_Conflict_.pdf
- Women’s Peace Network is composed of lawyers, community leaders, and peace activists from Myanmar and around the globe who share a common goal: peacefully promote and protect human rights.

We strive to ensure that Myanmar is a place where all people can enjoy peace, justice, and prosperity and live together harmoniously.