



CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE (CRSV) IN MYANMAR

Context: Following Myanmar's 2021 military coup, sexual violence has been systematically deployed as a weapon of war against civilians opposing the regime. In June 2025, as part of the CEVAW Justice Denied Conference, a closed roundtable dialogue was convened for survivors, frontline responders, and CSOs to identify pathways forward.

CURRENT LANDSCAPE

Local women's organisations provide survivor-centre services, including mobile safe spaces, peer support networks, and emergency care in high-risk zones at great personal risk. Documentation efforts were led by local women CSOs and continue across multiple locations, though **fragmented** and **insecure**.

CRITICAL GAPS THAT NEED URGENT RESPONSE:

What's Missing

-  Medium/long-term livelihood support for survivors
-  Trauma-informed training for frontline responders and documenters
-  Secure databases and standardised documentation
-  Mental health support for survivors
-  Services for men, boys, LGBTIQA+ survivors
-  Strengthen coordination of referral services

KEY BARRIERS

The military enjoys complete impunity under 2008 Constitution (exempt from civilian courts). International justice mechanisms (International Criminal Court, International Court of Justice) engagement is welcome; but has limited in-country reach and strict evidentiary requirements. Survivors and documenters face retaliation risks both inside Myanmar and in exile. Reporting and documentation are dangerous activities.

Deep stigma, funding limitations, and restrictive donor requirements misaligned with frontline operational realities compound access barriers.

JUSTICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

International mechanisms are the only avenue for justice due to the complete corruption and collapse of domestic justice mechanisms.

International mechanisms are positioned for future transitional justice but are disconnected from frontline protection work and survivor's immediate protection needs. Alternative justice platforms under the National Unity Government lack appropriate forensic capacity, witness protection, transparency, and survivor-centred approaches.

Why Justice Systems Are Failing Survivors



Current Primary Mechanism: Document for Truth-Telling

Purpose: Evidence Preservation for future transitional justice

Risks: Re-traumatisation of survivors, data fragmentation and duplication, underreporting due to security concerns, disconnect from frontline protection work

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Immediate Actions (0–6 months):

- Provide flexible, rapid funding to women-led grassroots organisations delivering mobile services in conflict zones
- Establish secure database platforms and minimal standards for ethical CRSV documentation
- Fund mental health and psychosocial support for both survivors and frontline responders/documenters

Medium-term Actions (6–18 months):

- Invest in livelihood and income-generation programmes that reduce survivors' vulnerability and support long-term recovery
- Support capacity building on trauma-informed service delivery and ethical data collection
- Fund research-guided dialogue sessions with Myanmar-based CSOs to inform programming priorities through local voices
- Strengthen referral pathway development with mechanisms for regular security updates

Who Must Act:

- Australian Government and International Donors:** Relax strict funding requirements; provide core and multi-year funding; support CSO participation in global forums; and pursue universal jurisdiction options for perpetrators responsible for atrocity crimes.
- Multilateral Agencies:** Ensure international justice mechanisms connect with and support frontline protection work; uphold survivor agency and local data ownership
- Regional Institutions:** ASEAN has committed to prevent CRSV and protect populations from CRSV in its Regional Plan of Action on Women, Peace and Security (adopted November 2022). It must implement its outcome indicators.

KEY MESSAGES

Survivor Voices Must Lead:

Survivors want safety, consent over their stories, livelihood support for sustainable recovery, accessible services for all genders, and meaningful participation in shaping accountability processes – not exclusion from them.

Local Organisations Are Bearing the Load:

Myanmar's women-led CSOs continue critical CRSV response work at great personal risk with minimal resources, yet face funding barriers, security threats, and exclusion from international processes designed to help them.

Alignment Is Urgent:

International actors must align support with frontline realities rather than imposing external frameworks. This means flexible funding, secure infrastructure for documentation, and medium-term commitments that centre local voices and survivor agency.

The Opportunity:

The Australian Government and international partners can amplify locally-led work as part of broader commitments to women, peace and security, gender justice, and peacebuilding in Myanmar and the region.



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