

# Looking at the Current Peace Process in Myanmar through a Gender Lens

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# Catalyzing Reflection

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Gender and Development Initiative-Myanmar (GDI-Myanmar), established in February 2010, is an independent and non-governmental civil society organization based in Yangon, Myanmar. GDI-Myanmar works collaboratively with various stakeholders to promote gender equality, sustainable peace, reconciliation and rights of the indigenous people throughout Myanmar.

Cover Photo

Yangon, January 2014

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## Catalyzing Reflection Series

Looking at the Current Peace Process in Myanmar through a Gender Lens is the first paper in a series of publications in which local actors involved in the ongoing peace processes in Myanmar step back and reflect on different dimensions of the ongoing process. Each of the publications in the series provides a deep analysis of different dimensions of the peace process: the importance of a gender analysis, the complexity of the ceasefire process, and the necessity of public participation in current peace efforts.

With the government of Myanmar and multiple armed groups now engaging in peace talks after more than 60 years of conflict, this series, aptly titled Catalyzing Reflection on Dialogue Processes among Parties in Myanmar, addresses the urgent need to document these dimensions in order to better understand the country's complex and rapidly shifting peace process.

The authors are Myanmar nationals, whose expertise in the respective topics is based on their direct involvement on the ground. Their research and analyses speak directly to other actors in the process, the larger Myanmar community, and international actors in supporting roles. We hope that this series catalyzes more discussions and reflection to support current local, national and international peace efforts.

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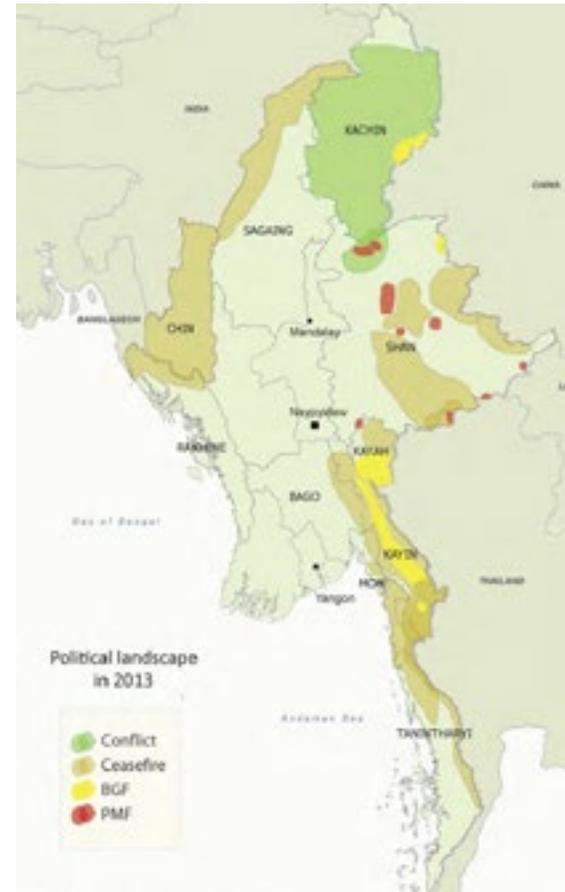
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# Acronyms

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women
CHRO	Chin Human Rights Organization
CNF	Chin National Front
CPTC	Chin Peace and Tranquility Committee
EAO	Ethnic Armed Organizations
GDI	Gender and Development Initiative
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ILO	International Labour Organization
KDN	Knowledge and Dedication for Nation-building/Karen Development Network
KNPP	Karenni National Progressive Party
KNU	Karen National Union
KWO	Karen Women's Organization
MPC	Myanmar Peace Center
MPS	Myanmar Peace Support Initiative
MWO	Mon Women's Organization
NMSP	New Mon State Party
NSAO	Non-State Armed Organizations
NSPAW	National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women
OSAGI	UN Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women
RCSS	Restoration Council of the Shan State
SHRF	Shan Human Rights Foundation
SSA-S	Shan State Army – South
SWAN	Shan Women's Action Network
UNSCR	UN Security Council Resolution
UPCC	Union Peacemaking Central Committee
UPWC	Union Peacemaking Working Committee

# Conflict Map of Myanmar



1 Source: Burma News International (2013), Deciphering Myanmar's Peace Process: A Reference Guide 2013.

A well-known peace scholar, Diana Francis, once said, "I do not mean to suggest that wars are simply displays of masculinity and have no other causes. I do want to say that gender as we know it, which positions men as dominant and characterizes them as aggressive and heroic, is fundamental to the culture of domination of which war is an expression" (CCTS Review, Feb 2004, p.2). Although it is difficult to unequivocally say that armed conflict is an invention of men while peace is one of women, it can simply be stated that conflict and violence have gendered natures. Gender identities constructed, promoted, and sustained by armed conflict as well as the impact of militarization powerfully influence women's and men's attitudes and behaviors in a post-conflict environment (Williams, 2000, p.332).

Armed conflict affects women and men differently. Thus, the experiences of conflict by women, men, boys and girls are not the same. Every conflict has a profound impact on gender relations and every effective and sustainable peacebuilding endeavor must take this into account (KOFF, 2012, p.1). For example, in many cases, men (and sometimes even boys) are expected to engage in fighting, while on the other hand, women are required to take on new tasks and responsibilities which are directly related to protecting and supporting their families. Women generate income and act as heads of households, breadwinners, and caregivers during armed conflict. They may engage in community politics, and rally together for peace and reconciliation like in the case of Liberia. At the same time, women can also be spoilers or drivers of conflict often because of what they have suffered. For example, the loss of a loved one can lead to a desire for revenge and not for peace, which may lead women to encourage men to keep fighting.

Peace is local. Peace does not come just from the cessation of armed hostilities and the signing of a ceasefire or peace agreement. Johan Galtung, a pioneer of peace and conflict studies, coined the distinction between negative

and positive peace (Galtung, 1996, p.5). Negative peace refers to the mere absence of violence, while positive peace represents a stable social equilibrium in which new disputes are resolved without resort to violence and war. The concept of positive peace is comparable to the holistic definition found in the United Nations' (UN) Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies that peace, "includes not only the absence of war, violence and hostilities [...] but also the enjoyment of economic and social justice, equality and the entire range of human rights and fundamental freedoms within society" (UN, 1993, p.5). The definition of peace described in the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies was derived through women's perceptions about their lives and gender roles as affected by conditions of war and peace. Thus, unless the experiences of the women and men from the conflict-affected communities are incorporated in the peace talks and negotiations, the peace process will not be meaningful to the whole community.

In Myanmar, after decades of armed conflict, gender roles and relations have changed among ethnic women and men from conflict-affected areas. However, women still remain a minority of participants in peace processes; they still receive less attention than men in peacemaking policies as well as in the management of political transitions. No systematic and government commissioned gender analysis has been conducted for any of the peace processes yet. So this is the time to say that looking at the current peace processes through a gender lens is a necessary contribution to filling these gaps.

### 1.1 Gender

The term 'gender' can be defined as socially constructed characteristics of women and men. It changes not only over time, but also varies between cultures and systems and even among different groups within a given culture. In most societies today, gender inequality and discrimination are still part of the mainstream culture. The United Nations Office of

the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI) describes:

*“Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities. Gender is part of the broader socio-cultural context” (UN, n.d.).*

Gender roles, gender inequities and power imbalances are not a result of natural biological differences of women and men. Rather, they are determined by the systems and cultures in which the individuals live. Thus, gender roles, differences and inequalities between women and men can be changed by challenging the status quo and seeking social change.

‘Gender equality’ refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women, men, girls and boys. Equality does not mean the sameness of women and men, but that women’s and men’s rights, responsibilities and opportunities do not depend on whether they are born male or female (Peacebuilding Initiative, n.d.). Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality can be guaranteed only when there is no discrimination against women. Article 1 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)<sup>2</sup> clearly defines discrimination against women as:

*“...any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field” (IWRAP Asia Pacific, n.d.)*

<sup>2</sup> Myanmar ratified CEDAW in 1997, and has twice submitted combined periodic reports (1999/2007). The next periodic report (combined fourth and fifth) will be due in 2014.

Women and girls can experience conflict differently than men, suffering physically as well as psychologically. Women’s rights are usually denied as human rights during the war, though they are technically protected under International Humanitarian Law (ICRC, 2010). Gender-based violence has increased in most of the conflicts in the world. Sexual violence is not just a result of the general breakdown of law and order during the conflict, but there is evidence from many conflicts that systematic rape and sexual abuse have been used as a part of a strategy to demoralize the community under threat. Furthermore, the link between conflict-related sexual violence and post-conflict spikes in what is known as domestic violence is being newly highlighted. Myanmar is not an exception to this observation (Human Security Report, 2012, p.209).

However, the ideology and practice of peacebuilding is usually shaped by the gendered worldview of the actors. Peace processes often remain blind or unresponsive to gender inequality because they are not gender sensitive or because gender is not integrated throughout the process. As a result, women have been marginalized from the benefits and goals of peace processes and men have also suffered from crisis of negative masculinity.<sup>3</sup> While women are heavily affected by wars and contribute to peacemaking and peacebuilding (often informally), they are often not recognized at the negotiation table and women’s issues, including their views on all aspects of the process, are often not reflected in peace agreements.

The 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing adopted gender mainstreaming as a tool to achieve gender equality. The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) defines the concept of gender mainstreaming as follows:

*“Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the*

<sup>3</sup> Negative masculinity can be characterized by arrogance and aggressiveness, which includes hostility, impatience and striving for achievement. (Janice W. Lee, ed., *Psychology of Gender Identity*, New York, Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 2005, p.68). Negative masculinity usually comes from traditional attitudes and gendered stereotypes.

*concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality” (ILO, n.d.).*

Gender mainstreaming in peacebuilding initiatives or peace processes is not just about adding on a ‘women’s component,’ or even a ‘gender equality component,’ to an existing activity. It also involves more than increasing women’s participation (CIDA, 2001, p.4). Rather, “mainstreaming situates gender equality issues at the center of policy decisions, medium-term plans, program budgets, and institutional structures and processes. [...] Mainstreaming can reveal a need for changes in goals, strategies and actions to ensure that both women and men can influence, participate in and benefit from development processes. It can require changes in organizations – structures, procedures and cultures – to create organizational environments which are conducive to the promotion of gender equality” (OSAGI, 2001, p.2).

On 31 October 2000, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. The Resolution affirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, humanitarian responses and in post-conflict reconstruction and stresses the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security (UN, n.d.). It also calls on all parties to a conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, in situations of armed conflict. UNSCR 1325 specifically calls on all actors to include women in peace processes as agents (Anderlini, 2007, p.54). UNSCR 1325 is a watershed political framework that makes women – and a gender perspective – relevant to negotiating peace agreements, planning refugee camps and peacekeeping

operations and reconstructing war-torn societies. It makes the pursuit of gender equality relevant to every single UN Security Council action, ranging from mine clearance to elections to security sector reform (UNIFEM, 2002, p.3). It is also a mandate for the United Nations system and its entities as well as for UN member states and parties in addition to their treaty obligations, including the CEDAW. In response to the mandate given by the UNSCR 1325, the UN Security Council has adopted further ‘sister’ resolutions, which extend the specific set of recommendations and strengthen institutional monitoring mechanisms.

- Resolutions 1820 (2008) recognizes that conflict-related sexual violence is a tactic of warfare, and calls for the training of troops on preventing and responding to sexual violence, deployment of more women to peace operations, and enforcement of zero-tolerance policies for peacekeepers with regards to acts of sexual exploitation or abuse.
- Resolutions 1888 (2009) strengthens the implementation of Resolution 1820 by calling for leadership to address conflict-related sexual violence, deployment of teams (military and gender experts) to critical conflict areas, and improved monitoring and reporting on conflict trends and perpetrators.
- Resolution 1889 (2009) addresses obstacles to women’s participation in peace processes and calls for the development of global indicators to track the improvement of international and national responses to the needs of women in conflict and post-conflict settings.
- Resolution 1960 (2010) calls for an end to sexual violence in armed conflict, particularly against women and girls, and provides measures aimed at ending impunity for perpetrators of sexual violence, including through sanctions and reporting measures.
- Resolution 2106 (2013) call for a consistent and rigorous prosecution for crimes of sexual violence, as well as national ownership and responsibility in addressing the root causes of sexual violence in

armed conflict, which is central to its deterrence and prevention. Equally important is challenging the myth that sexual violence in armed conflict is a lesser crime, a cultural phenomenon or an inevitable consequence of war.

The UN Security Council especially notes the persistence of rape, and urges states to protect women from such gender-based crimes through diverse peacebuilding processes such as the inclusion of women in conflict resolution and prevention, the enforcement of judicial systems to prevent a culture of impunity and an increase in the number of women in peacekeeping and security forces (CIDA, 2001, p. 4). This resolution builds on the provisions set forth in CEDAW and Resolution 1325, noting the particular importance of gender-based judicial reforms which create an enabling environment where women can seek justice or protection from gender-based crime (Peacebuilding Initiative, n.d.).

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#### Key Provisions of UNSCR 1325 are:

- Increased participation and representation of women at all levels of decision-making.
- Attention to specific protection needs of women and girls in conflict.
- Gender perspective in post-conflict processes.
- Gender perspective in UN programming, reporting and in Security Council missions.
- Gender perspective and training in UN peace support operations.

Key Actors responsible for implementation of UNSCR 1325 include: the UN Security Council; Member States; UN entities; the UN Secretary-General and parties to the conflict (Peace Women, n.d.)

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Compounding the problem of women's under-representation in peace negotiations is the fact that the profession of high-level mediation is almost exclusively male-dominated. A common refrain among policy makers is that the peace table is not a venue for discussion of gender equality or women's issues. These are important issues, they say, but should be addressed at a later stage. Implicit in such comments is the notion that women care only about issues of equality and that women's issues are their sole concern. There is still little understanding or acceptance that all issues are women's issues (Anderlini, 2007, p. 61).

Therefore, while women often contribute substantially to peacemaking, their concerns are often left unaddressed. However, the responsibility to bring peace is equally shared between women and men. Recognizing women's role in peacemaking does not mean setting aside the involvement of men in this important endeavor. It means that men must recognize the role of a fellow human being, and value the shared responsibility in tasks of mutual concern (Selim, 1995, p.9).

#### 1.2 Context

One of the Japanese newspapers once reflected the history of ethnic conflicts in Myanmar as: "about a third of Myanmar's 60 million people belong to ethnic minorities and many of them resent what they see as domination by the majority Burman community" (Asahi Shinbun, 30 April 2012). The ethnic nationalities along the country's periphery have spent more than half a century fighting the central government, which was and is predominantly controlled by the majority ethnic group for self-determination and equal treatment. The result has been uncountable damage to national development, generations of citizens raised in an atmosphere of fear and distrust, and the entrenchment of military power as the only guarantor of national unity (Poling, 2013). In 1988, students and youth (including many females) who were actively involved in the anti-government uprising movement joined the armed struggle along with the various Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs).<sup>4</sup> For example, many female and male students joined in establishment of

4 One of the courageous female students who gave her life for democracy in Myanmar during the 1988 uprising was a 16 years old middle school student, Win Maw Oo. She was shot by the military on 19.9.1988 while she was marching at the frontline of the demonstration and died the next day at Yangon General Hospital (Ref: Kyaw Phyo Tha 2013)

All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF) which is also known as the Students' Army.<sup>5</sup>

There were, at times, over 50 non-state armed organizations (NSAOs) operating in the border areas since the country gained independence from the British rule in 1948. However, between 1989 and 2010, over 30 groups either surrendered or entered ceasefires with the previous military government. Many of them faced pressure from the government to accept the government's plan to transform as legal entity, so agreed to transform themselves into government-controlled Border Guard Force (BGF) or People's Militia Force (PMF), but there are 21 organizations that have never transformed into BGF or PMF and many of them are now in peace negotiations with the government (The Irrawaddy, September 2013, P.32). Out of the 21 organizations, most of the NSAOs are ethnic-based armed organizations. These organizations include:<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> However, to date, no female student was known as a member of senior leadership of the ABSDF.

<sup>6</sup> Ceasefire status of the NSAOs is as of 30 September 2013.

### Non-State Armed Organizations

1. All Burma Students' Democratic Front (Formed 1988/ Signed union-level ceasefire)
2. Arakan Army (Formed 2008/ No ceasefire)
3. Arakan Liberation Party/Army (Formed 1968/ Agreed to ceasefire)
4. Chin National Front (Formed 1988/ Agreed to ceasefire)
5. Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (Formed 2010/ Agreed to ceasefire)
6. Kachin Independence Organization (Formed 1961/ Non-ceasefire)
7. Karen National Union (Formed 1947/ Agreed to ceasefire)
8. Karenni National Progressive Party (Formed 1957/ Agreed to ceasefire)
9. Kayan New Land Party (Formed 1964/ Ceasefire group since 1994)
10. KNU/Karen National Liberation Army Peace Council (Formed 2007/ Agreed to ceasefire)

11. Myanmar National Democracy Alliance Army (Formed 1989/ Non-ceasefire)
12. Myeik-Dawei United Front (Formed 1989/ Non-ceasefire and non-combatant)
13. National Democratic Alliance Army (Formed 1989/ Agreed to ceasefire)
14. National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Ka plang (Agreed to ceasefire)
15. New Mon State Party (Formed 1958/ Agreed to ceasefire)
16. Pa-O National Liberation Organization (Formed 1949/ Agreed to ceasefire)
17. Restoration Council of the Shan State/ Shan State Army- South (Formed 1964/ Agreed to ceasefire)
18. Shan State Progressive Party/ Shan State Army-North (Formed 1964/ Agreed to ceasefire)
19. Ta'ang National Liberation Army (Formed 1992/ Non-ceasefire)
20. United Wa State Army (Formed 1964/ Agreed to ceasefire)
21. Zomi Reunification Organization (Formed 1996/ Non-ceasefire and not much military activity) (The Irrawaddy, September 2013, p.32).

President U Thein Sein ascended to office in the beginning of 2011. In his inaugural speech on 30 March 2011, he stated that his top priority was to build national unity by addressing the decades of armed conflicts with the ethnic nationalities. On 18 August 2011, the President offered to hold peace talks with the EAOs. It was also announced that it would be a three-step process: 1) State/region or sub-national level – especially ceasefire talks; 2) National or union level – talks; and 3) Political Dialogue. Since then, more than fourteen ceasefire agreements were signed within the period from August 2011 to October 2013.

On 26 October 2012, the President decreed the establishment of the Myanmar Peace Center (MPC), a quasi-government body which aims to provide technical assistance to the current ethnic peace processes in the country. According to the Presidential Decree, the MPC is put under the authority of the President's Office Ministers U Aung Min and U Soe Thein. It is the first time in fifty years that any government of Myanmar has seriously attempted to resolve the ethnic problem that has plagued the nation since independence in 1948.

However, the peace processes have been criticized on several accounts. Many critiques mention that they are top-down, lack civil society involvement and still have to move from negotiating new ceasefires to a political dialogue. The lack of civil society involvement also means exclusion of women who remain marginalized within the peace process. No official gender advisor has been hired by the MPC or any of the EAOs yet despite frequent calls from civil society and others for this to be done.<sup>7</sup> While gender mainstreaming seeks to eliminate gender-based discrimination in policies and programs, evidence indicates that the ceasefire agreement frameworks and their implementation continue to fail in addressing underlying gender roles and associated power dynamics that lay the basis for institutionalized gender discrimination.

Despite women's participation in politics being regarded as less important in ethnic and rural areas, the number as well as interest of women in politics is increasingly compared to statistics published during the military regime. For the first time in the history of Myanmar, the U Thein Sein Administration has seven women (one Ministerial and six Deputy Ministerial positions) in the Union cabinet (as of August 18, 2013). Fifty-three women (4.6 percent) hold seats in Parliaments (both Union Parliaments and State/Region Parliaments). Twenty-five women (7.8 percent) hold seats in the Lower House, four women (2.4 percent) hold seats in the Upper House, and 24 women (3.6 percent) hold seats in the State/Region Parliaments (Gender Equality Network, 2012, p.2). The visibility of women in the cabinet as well as in the Parliament is a good force for widening the space for

7 Statement of the Civil Society Forum of Peace (September 2011). Civil Society forum of Peace (CSFoP) is a network of Myanmar civil societies and community based organizations working in peace sector.

gender mainstreaming in the peace process in Myanmar. In a Gender Inequality Index published by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in the 2013 Human Development Report, Myanmar ranked 80th on a list of 186 countries, while neighboring India ranked 132nd, Thailand ranked 66th and China ranked 35th (UNDP, n.d.). The index was based on women's achievements in reproductive health, empowerment and the labor market. In Myanmar, 75 percent of women aged 15 and older were engaged in the labor market, either working or actively looking for work, compared with 82 percent of men, according to the index report. About the same percentage of women and men had completed at least secondary education, at 18 percent and 17 percent respectively. For maternal mortality, Myanmar was found to have 200 deaths per 100,000 live births, compared with 48 in Thailand and 200 in India (Michaels, 2013).

In Myanmar, people easily think that gender is all about women. Dr. Nyo Nyo Thin, an active gender activist and Member of Parliament, said that 'gender' is not only about women. Indeed, gender is not all about women's issues. It is the issues of men too. This is often forgotten in the Myanmar peace process.<sup>8</sup> We are still waiting for a dawning of a new day – a day for peace and development in the country enjoying equality and justice by all women and men, girls and boys from all ethnic nationalities.

8 Interview with Dr. Nyo Nyo Thinn, 12.06.13 in Yangon.

## 2 Methodology

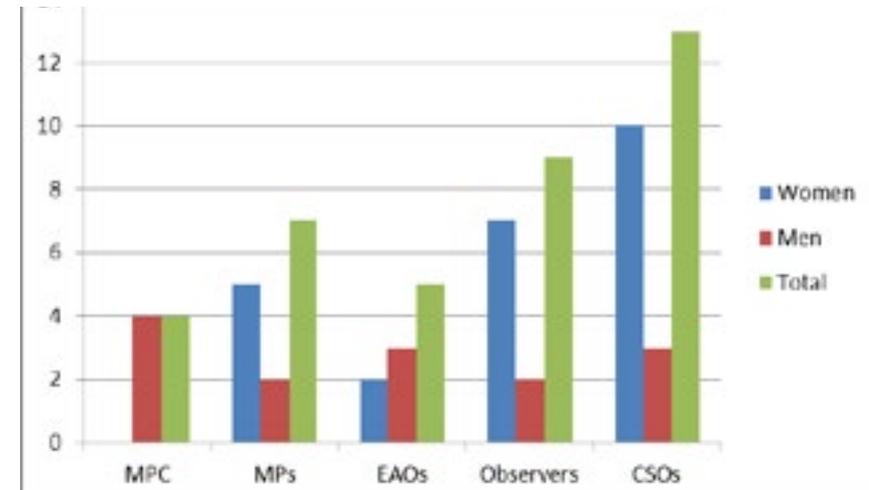
The research methodology for this paper is based on two main sources of data: 1) secondary sources such as ceasefire agreements, journals, books and reports and 2) primary data collection through key informant interviews (see annex 1).

The timeframe for the primary data collection was from July to August 2013. Out of the 16 ceasefire and peace processes in the country, four processes were selected to be case studies. These four processes refer to four EAOs, namely the Chin National Front (CNF), Karen National Union (KNU), New Mon State Party (NMSP), and Restoration Council of the Shan State (RCSS). The reason for selecting these organizations is that they are among the leading ethnic armed organizations in the current ceasefire and political negotiations in Myanmar. CNF, KNU and NMSP are members of both the United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC) and the Working Group for Ethnic Coordination (WGEC). RCSS is a member of the WGEC.

Thirty-eight respondents (24 women and 14 men) participated in the study: four from the Myanmar Peace Center including the Union Minister U Aung Min, seven Members of Parliament, five from the EAGs studied (two from NMSP, one each for CNF, NMSP and RCSS), 10 observers and 12 members of civil society organizations. The majority of the respondents (71 percent) had clear knowledge and understanding of the current peace process in the country and the rest (29 percent) had a clear understanding on the ceasefire processes with the groups in their respective states.

## Methodology

Chart 1. Distribution of the respondents by categories



The interviews were held in Naypyitaw, Yangon, Taunggyi, Mawlamyine, Hpa-an, and Mae Sot. Due to ongoing processes with their respective organizations, some senior leadership from the EAOs were not available to meet for an interview. Please note that the analysis is based on the limited interview sample size of 38 respondents, and cannot represent all dimensions of the processes.

### 3 Gender Analysis of the Current Peace Process in Myanmar

The current peace structure of the Government of Myanmar as well as of the NSAOs is male-dominated.<sup>9</sup> On 3 May 2012, the Government of Myanmar consolidated its peace-making efforts by establishing the Union Peacemaking Central Committee (UPCC) headed by President U Thein Sein and the Union Peacemaking Working Committee (UPWC) headed by Vice-President Dr. Sai Mauk Kham. Prior to this, the Parliament established different committees on peacemaking issues. On 23 August 2011, the Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House) established the National Races Affairs and Internal Peacemaking Committee and on 1 September 2011, the Amyotha Hluttaw (Upper House) also established the National Races Affairs and Domestic Peace Committee. The UPWC, the operational body of the current peace processes with NSAOs has three Vice-Chairpersons, all men: 1) the President's Office Minister U Aung Min, former Major General and also known as Peace Minister, 2) Deputy Commander-in-Chief Vice Senior General Soe Win and 3) the Chair of the *Pyithu Hluttaw's* National Races Affairs and Internal Peacemaking Committee, U Thein Zaw who is a former Brigadier General.

The UPCC, chaired by the President, has 11 members, all of whom are men. The UPWC, chaired by Vice-President Dr. Sai Mauk Kham, has 52 members and only two are women (two members of *Pyithu Hluttaw* – Daw Doi Bu from N'Jang Yang in Kachin state and Mi Yin Chan from Kyaikmaraw in Mon state). There are two negotiation teams from UPWC. One is led by Union Minister U Aung Min of the Ministry of the President's Office and the other is led by U Thein Zaw, member of *Pyithu Hluttaw*. The Government's negotiation teams are usually composed of governmental and military high-ranking positions<sup>10</sup> usually filled by men, so currently there are no women in the government peace negotiation teams. The parliamentary committees on ethnic and peace issues are also male-dominated.

The peace negotiation teams of most of the NSAOs also lack the presence of women. Out of 16 NSAOs (as of 30 September 2013) who have entered into the ceasefire or peace negotiation with the government, only three organi-

zations have or had female members in their negotiation teams. These three organizations are the KNU, Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP), and NMSP. For the KNU, there were at least three women members in the ceasefire negotiation team (2011 to 2012) during the term of the 14th Congress, while Padoh Naw Zipporah Sein was serving as General Secretary. However, this composition has been altered and women members are not widely found within the KNU negotiation team at the current term of the Congress, i.e. the 15th Congress, while Naw Zipporah Sein has been promoted to be Vice-Chair of the KNU. For the NMSP, there was one woman – Mi Sar Dar (a Member of Central Committee, and head of Education Department) in the negotiation team but she was not involved in the recent and last meeting due to some logistical issues. The KNPP has one woman, Maw Oo Myah as a member of the negotiation team. It is also observed that women's participation in the negotiation teams is not based on a policy or design but because of their current positions in their organizations.

There are usually both local and international observers at the peace table. However, more male observers are invited than female observers. The observers are usually invited by both sides but the invitation of civil society observers is usually done by the NSAOs. Significantly, women from civil society organizations are more likely to be invited by both the government and the NSAOs. One of the reasons, described by the respondents, is that women from civil society organizations are more knowledgeable and flexible in relation to the issues between the government and the NSAOs. Besides, in many cases, women and men from civil society organizations are regarded as neutral, non-biased and have no economic or political expectation from their engagement.<sup>11</sup>

Among the few women who are invited to be observers at the talks with EAOs are Mai Chin Chin, member of the Chin Peace and Tranquility Committee (CPTC), who was invited by the CNF; Margaret Thomo, who was invited by the UPWC as observer for talks with the KNPP; Dr. Anna May Say Pa (former Principal of the Myanmar Institute of Theology), Naw Susanna Hla Hla Soe (Director of the Kar-

11 Interview with Rev. Saw Mathew Aye, 24.06.13 in Yangon.

9 In this paper, the term 'Non-state armed organizations (NSAO)' is used to describe all armed organizations in general. However, for ethnic-based armed groups, the term 'Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs)' is used. The majority of the NSAOs in Myanmar are ethnic-based, but there are few groups which are not, such as ABSDF and MNDAA.

10 Members of the Government negotiation teams usually include Union Ministers at the President's Office, Union Minister for Immigration, Union Minister for Forestry and Environmental Conservation, Chief Ministers of the respective State/Region, Deputy Union Attorney General, Deputy Union Minister of Home Affairs, State/region Ministers for Border and Security Affairs, Regional Military Commanders, etc.

en Women's Empowerment Group), and Nant Khin Aye Oo (member of the Karen Affairs Committee) who were invited by KNU; Mi Kun Chan Non (Vice-Chairperson of the Mon Women's Organization) who was invited by the NMSF. Recently, Ja Nan Lahtaw and Nang Raw Zahkung from the Shalom Foundation were invited by the KIO to be consultants of the peace negotiation's technical team. Thus, UN Women mentioned that:

*"Most of these processes are led by male negotiators and the inclusion of women is still minimal. On the government side, there are only two women in the 52-member Working Committee under the Union Peace Committee. As for the ethnic groups, the Karen is the only one with a female head negotiator and several women involved in the negotiations as experts or observers. The Mon has one woman on their negotiation team and two female observers. The other ethnic groups do not have any women on their team" (UN Women, n.d.).*

Not only are women largely excluded or put into observer roles, the current ceasefire agreements between the NSAOs and the UPMC have also failed to consider gender mainstreaming in their initiatives. Out of 16, five processes are at stage 1 (State/sub-national level) and 11 processes are entering into stage 2 (Union/national level). At the state/sub-national level, the agreements are mainly focused on ceasefire and military security matters. Out of the 16 organizations that are entering into the peace process, less than five groups came up with detailed agreements on political, military, education, social, cultural and development issues. However, none of them have clearly mentioned gender issues yet.

Besides, the formation of ceasefire monitoring teams is neither gender sensitive in its composition, nor in its terms of reference. For example, those EAOs who have an agreement with the government to establish monitoring teams such as the CNF, RCSS, KNPP and KNU do not clearly mention the necessity of gender mainstreaming in their initiatives. Consequently, it has to be observed that both NSAOs and UPWC are failing to implement gender

mainstreaming in the current peace processes. Thus, many peace process analysts including Khin Ohmar, Coordinator of Burma Partnership, say that gender issues are not mentioned in and are not tackled by any of the peace agreements.<sup>12</sup> Again, Cheery Zahau, Chin Human Rights activist, rightly comments, "I do not see any gender sensitivity in the current peace processes in Myanmar".<sup>13</sup>

One of the reasons for the failure to include gender issues can also be ascribed to the fact that the current peace process is interpreted as a ceasefire process. Thus, its objective is seen as being to stop fighting or to end hostilities between the two conflicting parties and there is no role for addressing gender issues. Dr. Sui Khar, Assistant General Secretary of the CNF, explained why gender related issues are not properly addressed in the current ceasefire process and its challenge:

*"In the initial phase of the peace process (of the CNF), we were not able to consider gender issues. One of the reasons was a security concern of the delegation team members. So, we didn't consider including women in our ceasefire negotiation team at the moment. However, for political dialogue, we strongly encourage to have at least a 30 percent presence of women at all levels. At the same time, we see the limitation of it. For example, for our Chin process, I think that this policy (30 percent participation of women in decision making) could only be realized when Chin society is ready for accepting women at the leadership role."<sup>14</sup>*

Prof. Nang Vo Kham, Member of the RCSS/SSA Peace Process Monitoring Committee, also echoes what Dr. Sui Khar has mentioned. She said that, for the RCSS/SSA, discussions at the peace table right now are mainly about ceasefire issues which are more related to military concerns, so it is thought that it is not the right time yet for gender issues to be discussed at the talks.<sup>15</sup> However, for Rev. Saw Mathew Aye, Director of the Knowledge and Dedication for Nation-building/Karen Development Network (KDN) and observer for the talks of the KNU, the leadership's awareness as well as their sensitivity to gender issues and willingness to include women in the negotiation team purely

12 Interview with Khin Ohmar, 24.06.13 in Yangon.

13 Interview with Cheery Zahau, 04.07.13 in Yangon.

14 Interview with Dr. Sui Khar, 21.06.13 in Yangon.

depends on their personal commitment. He said that if the leadership has clear and strong political will and commitment for gender integration, there is space for gender issues to be included as well as for women to get involved.<sup>16</sup>

Most of the respondents were able to identify a clear and pivotal place and role for men in the current talks and processes, but were not able to identify a correspondingly clear place and role for women. Men are seen as lead negotiators, technical advisors, developers for framework agreements, talk organizers, etc. While men are taking the lead in ceasefire and peace negotiations including political dialogue initiatives, women are most often excluded from these processes. Female Members of Parliaments witnessed their experiences of exclusion from participation in direct peace negotiation. Mi Myint Myint Than, Member of *Pyithu Hluttaw* from Mon State, told the authors that she was refused to be a member of the government negotiation team in her state because she was a woman.<sup>17</sup> Daw Doi Bu, Secretary of *Pyithu Hluttaw's* Committee on Ethnic Affairs and Internal Peacemaking, recounted her experience to the authors as follows:

*"I requested Minister U Aung Min to include me as a member of the negotiation team for the talks with KIO. But he told me that the road to the place where the talk would be held is so bad and it is not easy for women to travel. Actually, the place where the talk would be held is not an unfamiliar place for me. It is really nonsense that a responsible woman for her own people was not allowed to go there. The reason was so meaningless. That is just discrimination [against women]. The [2008] Constitution describes that women should not be discriminated. However, in reality, we are discriminated as we are not involved in the peace process."<sup>18</sup>*

The exclusion stems from the fact that peace negotiations are regarded as male's domain of politics and the business of persons with a military background, according to Dr. Nyo Nyo Thinn. She describes that such an idea derives from the militarized organizational culture where women's role in political leadership and public decision-making has

15 Interview with Prof. Nang Vo Kham, 27.06.13 in Taunggyi.

16 Interview with Rev. Saw Matthew Aye.

17 Interview with Mi Myint Myint Than, 14.07.13 in Naypyitaw.

18 Interview with Daw Doi Bu, 14.07.13 in Naypyitaw.

been underestimated for a long time.<sup>19</sup> Regardless of their capabilities, women are excluded from involvement in direct peace negotiation. In contrast, men are seen as more capable and suitable enough to negotiate for the matters which are crucially important for self-determination and equal rights of their respective ethnicity. Mi Cherry Soe from the Human Rights Foundation of Monland (Hurform) describes that "it is thought that men can represent women because they are seen as capable. It is thought that when men speak, it also includes women's voices because they have experiences. But actually, men cannot represent women."<sup>20</sup>

Traditionally, men are expected to be the leaders in society and women are expected to be followers. A study conducted by the Gender and Development Initiative-Myanmar in May and June 2012 found that the peace process is regarded by the majority of women and men from the armed conflict affected areas as being politics and hence as task for political and military leaders (GDI, 2012, p.5). One illustrative example is the Chin process. Rev. Tluang Ceu, Secretary of the Chin Peace and Tranquility Committee and Chin Ceasefire Monitoring Committee and an experienced 'go-between' for the process between government the CNF, said that "Chin women are not active in the peace process. Many women I met do not think that they have a role to play in peacebuilding in the country."<sup>21</sup> Similarly, Mi Kun Chan Non, a prominent Mon woman leader, rightly comments, "our cultural norms are one of the biggest barriers which restrict women's wider participation in politics. According to our cultural norms and values, we want men to be leaders and women to be those who sit around men for support. Men have to decide and lead, women have to obey and follow. This is how we are being socialized, and what we have internalized."<sup>22</sup>

Another barrier to mainstreaming gender into the current peace processes is due to lack of a National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security issues. As a Member State of the United Nations, Myanmar has an obligation to observe and implement UNSCR1325 and the resolutions which followed it. According to UNSCR 1325, women need to be present for ceasefire as well as peace talks and processes. So, their absence in the current

19 Interview with Dr. Nyo Nyo Thinn.

20 Interview with Mi Cherry Soe, 04.07.13 in Yangon.

21 Interview with Rev. Tluang Ceu, 12.06.13 in Yangon.

22 Interview with Mi Kun Chan Non, 15.06.13 in Yangon.

23 It is expected that the MPC would be the best placed organization to coordinate the development of a NAP on UNSCR 1325 and engage widely with civil society including women's organizations in the near future.

24 Interview with H.E. U Aung Min, 11.08.13 in Yangon.

25 Interview with Pi Za Tlem and Pu Paw Lian Luai, on 13.07.13 in NayPyiTaw.

26 The NSPAW was developed over three years and launched in Naypyitaw in October 2013. The 10-year plan suggests practical ways to address challenges in a dozen priority areas, including initiatives to improve access to education and health care as well as the development of better laws to eliminate gender-based violence and policies to promote equal rights to jobs, credit and resources (The Irrawaddy, 7 October 2013)

27 A National Action Plan (NAP) on UNSCR 1325 has a different focus – that is on the conflict-specific aspects and security issues including transitional justice. It addresses also different actors (such as the military). However, obviously both should be mutually reinforcing. So, when Myanmar starts to develop a NAP on 1325, the existing measures outlined in the NSPAW need to be integrated into the NAP UNSCR 1325 in a way that the two are mutually reinforcing. Some countries argue that once they have National Action Plan on Gender – there is no more need for a NAP UNSCR 1325 – but most of the time, the first doesn't cover all the issues that should be put forward in a NAP on UNSCR 1325.

peace processes represents a big gap in the promotion of gender mainstreaming in Myanmar. When the authors met with Minister U Aung Min, he explained that the MPC<sup>23</sup> is not ready to start working for the development of a UNSCR 1325 action plan whereas he admitted that women's participation in peace process was important.<sup>24</sup>

Members of Parliament such as Pi Za Tlem, Member of *Pyithu Hluttaw* and Pu Paw Lian Luai, Member of *Amyothar Hluttaw* and member of the Committee on Ethnic and Internal Peace Affairs mentioned that actions for capacitating the Parliamentarians on the issues such as UNSCR 1325 and its importance is highly needed so that they are able to develop and adopt necessary mechanisms for ensuring gender mainstreaming in the current peace processes in the country.<sup>25</sup>

In March 2013, the Myanmar government adopted the National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women (NS-PAW) (2013-2022).<sup>26</sup> The stated objectives of the NSPAW are that all women in Myanmar are empowered and able to fully enjoy their rights with the support of the Government of Myanmar and that enabling systems, structures and practices are created for the advancement of women, gender equality, and the realization of women's rights.<sup>27</sup>

The NSPAW was developed in relation to the twelve priority areas based on CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action such as 1) women, livelihoods and poverty reduction, 2) women, education and training, 3) women and health, 4) violence against women, 5) women and emergencies, 6) women and the economy, 7) women and decision-making, 8) institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, 9) women and human rights, 10) women and the media, 11) women and the environment and 12) the girl child. Government agencies are tasked with implementing the NSPAW along with national and international non-government organizations, UN agencies, private agencies and civil society. The NSPAW mentions 'women in emergency' situations. In it, the term 'emergency' is interpreted as both natural disasters and conflicts (Article 11 of NSPAW). However, as it is a combination of natural disaster and conflict situations, less

focus and attention is placed on women in armed conflict and thus, as the term 'emergency' is a combination of natural disaster and conflict situations and due to its significant situation, issues of women in armed conflict situation needs to be focused and given more specific attention in the NS-PAW.

In conclusion, the continuing evidence of gender discrimination found in conflict and post-conflict settings in Myanmar (GDI, 2012, p.6) and occasionally even within the structure of peace initiatives themselves, describes that the current peace initiatives and the actors that conduct them have yet to grasp the core of the issue. The current approaches of peace processes in Myanmar still fail to address the larger contextual issues behind gender relations and women's marginalization in peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction. This, in turn, can exacerbate women's marginalization in economic, social and political processes and undermine their well-being and quality of life. In such situations, while the peacebuilding community may show greater recognition of and appreciation for the new open spaces (social, economic, political) in conflict and post-conflict settings that accommodate new roles and opportunities for women, those open spaces often close as the dust of conflict settles. For peacebuilding initiatives to sustain such transformation of gender and social relations, it is imperative that peacebuilders themselves and the organizations they represent understand the role of gender, identity and power and transform their own operations accordingly (ICRW, 2003, p.25).

For the gender analysis of the current peace processes, four cases – CNF, KNU, NMSP and RCSS – were selected. The authors selected these four cases as we see that the talks with these four groups are significantly contributing to the peace process in the country. Access and availability also played a role in the selection. Four issues – leadership, gender sensitivity of the agreements, women’s participation in the talks and the role and contribution of civil societies – are discussed within each case.

#### 4.1 Chin National Front (CNF)

The CNF was formed on 20 March 1988, dedicated to securing the self-determination of the Chin people, to restore democracy and to establish a federal Union of Myanmar (Chinland, n.d.) According to the Constitution, the Supreme Council of the CNF is to be formed with 21 members including one seat for women’s representatives. (Chinland, n.d.) However, no female representative at the Supreme Council has been elected or appointed yet, but there is one member at the Central Committee.<sup>28</sup> The CNF signed the Geneva Call’s Deed of Commitment banning anti-personnel mines on 31 July 2006, but has not signed the other two Deeds of Commitment yet – the Prohibition of Sexual Violence in Situations of Armed Conflict and towards the Elimination of Gender Discrimination and the Deed of Commitment for the Protection of Children from the Effects of Armed Conflict (Geneva Call, n.d.).

The CNF decided to enter into the peace process with the government in 2011 and the first talks with the UPWC took place in January 2011 in Hakha in Chin State. Since then, they have already met with the government for three rounds of negotiations. The preliminary agreement between the CNF and the UPWC was signed on 6 January 2012 at Hakha in Chin State, containing nine points in the preliminary agreement which mainly focused on the agreement of both sides – CNF and the government – to a ceasefire (Burma Partnership, 6 January 2012). The first Union-level agreement was signed on 7 May 2012 at Hakha in Chin State. It has 15 points, including: ceasefire issues, the establishment of temporary observation bases in accordance

with the preliminary agreement, rights and responsibilities of liaison offices, and basic principles for political dialogue, matters regarding international agreements, public consultation, matters regarding humanitarian organizations, promoting human resources and capitals, joint efforts to eradicate illegal drugs, visas, a Chin National Day, matters regarding CNF and Chin National Army (CNA), basic human rights, a ceasefire monitoring body, and the institution of a peace mediating body (Burma Partnership, 7 May 2012). The second Union-level agreement was signed on 9 December 2012 at the MPC in Yangon. It has 27 points grouped into five topics, namely Chin national issues, national reconciliation, human rights and environment, military, development and social and cultural matters. (Burma Partnership, 9 Dec 2012).

Out of the total 51 points of the three agreements, only in one agreement (Article 24 of the second Union-level agreement) is the word ‘gender’ mentioned: in the agreement that “there shall be no discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, religion or gender for the appointment or promotion in civil service position”. Apart from this single word in one article of one agreement, it is simply observed that none of the three agreements between the CNF and the government reflects the necessity of gender equality and the importance of women’s participation in the peace process as well as in post-conflict reconstruction and development. Thus, Cheery Zahau mentioned during the interview with the authors that there is no gender sensitivity in the agreements of the CNF with the government.<sup>29</sup>

Moreover, it is evident that the CNF’s peace process is still far from promoting the role of Chin women’s participation in ceasefire and political negotiations. From the first to the third round of talks, no woman has been involved in the CNF’s negotiation team. Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO), an officially invited Chin civil society observer to the talks, sent its male delegate. The CPTC, a civil society organization which played a significant role in the creation of the peace process between the CNF and the government, is comprised of twenty members but has only one woman. However, her role in the current peace process

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Cheery Zahau.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Dr. Sui Khar.

is simply observed as “a communication hub between the CNF, the CPTC and the Chin state government to facilitate smooth logistical arrangements for each round of formal and informal talks” (Ja Nan Lahtaw, 2012, p.10).

The CNF and the government agreed to set up the Cease-fire Monitoring Body during the first Union-level talks and it is an important mechanism for sustaining the peace process in Chin State. The ceasefire monitoring committees are initially organized in four townships – Thantlang, Tiddim, Matupi and Paletwa – under the facilitation of the CPTC. However, women’s participation in these committees is remarkably low and insignificant. Rev. Tluang Ceu, Secretary of the CPTC, said that only one woman member participated at each of the committees in Tiddim and Paletwa.<sup>30</sup> Apart from the CHRO and the CPTC, there is no other state-level or national-level Chin civil society organization which is actively and significantly involved in the peace process in Chin State. Recently, the Chin Affairs Partnership (CAP), a Chin civil society coalition for supporting the current peace process in Chin state, is formed but only one member out of nine is a woman.

Mai Chin Chin, a female observer at the peace talks with the CNF, rightly reflects the above described situation during the interview with the authors in that she says that the peace process is understood by many Chin women and men as a political process that women are traditionally not supposed to be involved in, while Chin men’s role is strongly considered as getting involved as leaders and decision-makers. Rev. Ceu described his observation that Chin women seem to be less ready to engage in activities related to the current peace process in Chin state because men have already dominated it and there is no clear space for women mentioned in the agreements. However, during the interview with the authors, Dr. Sui Khar described that the CNF has a mandate to promote 30 percent participation of women in the public consultation process as well as in the political dialogue process.<sup>31</sup> However, it is also observed that there is no structured process or protocol to materialize the mandate into practice yet.

30 Interview with Rev. Tluang Ceu.

31 Interview with Dr. Sui Khar.

#### 4.2 Karen National Union (KNU)

The KNU is an organization supporting peace, democracy and human rights in a federal Union of Myanmar. The KNU is the leading political organization representing the aspirations of the Karen people. The KNU was founded in 1947, but its predecessor organizations date back to 1881 (Karen National Union, n.d.). The KNU administers all the functions of the government in areas under its control. These responsibilities are administered by 14 departments such as foreign affairs, education and culture, health and welfare, agriculture, defense, forestry, mining, justice, interior and religious affairs, fishery, livestock and farming, alliance affairs, information, transportation and communication and finance and revenue (Karen National Union, n.d.).

The 15th Congress of the KNU was held from 26 November to 26 December 2012, and 11 Central Executive Committee members were elected. One out of 11 is a woman who is Padoh Naw Zipporah Sein, Vice-Chairperson [General Secretary for the 14th Congress’ term](Karen National Union, 27 Dec 2012). Two out of the 45 who are Standing Committee members (including the CEC) are women, and there is no female department head in the current term. Thus, although the KNU has a policy that women are to be at the decision-making level, the top level positions are still dominated by men. Naw Zipporah explained this situation:

*“KNU is the only (armed) organization who has a woman at the highest leadership in the history of armed struggle in this country. It is because the KNU has the policy that women should be part of the decision-making level. So, this is also to help KNU to promote women. However, we are not at the level of 30 percent participation yet.”<sup>32</sup>*

The KNU signed the Geneva Call’s Deed of Commitment for the Prohibition of Sexual Violence in Situations of Armed Conflict and towards the Elimination of Gender Discrimination and the Deed of Commitment for the Protection of Children from the Effects of Armed Conflict on 21 July 2013 (Geneva Call, 24 July 2013). It took seven years for

32 Interview with Padoh Naw Zipporah Sein, 19.07.13 in Mae Sot.

the KNU to sign these two Deeds of Commitment. In their statement for signing them, the KNU described that:

*“Therefore, we consider that by signing these Deeds of Commitment, we will continue to apply and reinforce our organization’s existing rules and regulations. We, the KNU, are honored to sign these Deeds of Commitment and look forward to co-operating with Geneva Call and other organizations to both ensure that children enjoy the protection and assistance that they deserve and ensure the prohibition of sexual violence and the elimination of gender discrimination” (Geneva Call, 24 July 2013).*

With the Call of Peace by the President in August 2011, the KNU decided to enter into peace talks. In February 2012, the KNU laid out the Four-Step Peace Plan: 1) preliminary ceasefire stage; 2) durable ceasefire stage; 3) initial political dialogue, resolution of underlying political problems and national reconciliation; and 4) political participation (Karen National Union, 22 Feb 2012). Since September 2011, the KNU and the government negotiation teams have met more than a dozen times, but there are only three agreements signed. The state/sub-national level agreement (the first agreement) was signed on 12 January 2012, and it has 11 points mainly focusing on ceasefire (Myanmar Peace Monitor, n.d.,a). The first Union-level agreement (the second agreement) which has 13 points was signed on 7 April 2012 (Burma Partnership, 7 April 2012). The Ceasefire Code of Conduct (CoC) as signed on 3 September 2012 (Burma News International, 2013: p. 118). The CoC was made up of 11 chapters and 34 detailed points – including matters of safety for civilians.

The KNU is able to include the participation of women in the peace process in the second agreement. The fifth point of the second agreement explicitly mentioned women’s participation in local peacebuilding actions by stating that “district and township level peacebuilding teams must be established to help foster the peace process. In particular, women must be included in the peace process” (Burma Ethnic Studies, 2012). However, it is simply noticed that the second agreement is still weak in terms of establishing

clear guidelines for where and how women should participate though it has promising points for promoting gender sensitivity and women’s participation. Saw Kyaw Zwar of Karen Affairs Committee remarked that:

*“I do not see a clear mechanism to set up affirmative action for women’s participation in the second agreement of the KNU. For example, the agreement should explicitly mention about at least 30 percent women’s participation in the formation of monitoring groups, etc., but the agreement fails to do so. The KNU is quite advanced in terms of promoting women’s role in peace processes but it still has some unclear processes.”<sup>33</sup>*

It would be more responsive and specific to the needs of women and men if the terms used in the agreements would be gender sensitive. For example, if the second point of the first agreement used the clause as: “...guarantee the human rights and safety of all women and men civilians” rather than just “all civilians”, the agreement would be more reflective to the needs of women and men.

Similarly, it would be more sensitive to the needs of women and men if the second point of the second agreement would be “both sides agreed to implement a mutually-binding ceasefire CoC in order to guarantee livelihood and security of the women and men”, rather than “security of the people”. Naw Blooming Night Zan of Karen Refugee Committee described that, “gender sensitivity is very important in order to be able to build a process of safe and secure transition in post-ceasefire situation”.<sup>34</sup>

The Ceasefire CoC is observed as a good instrument for ensuring women’s and men’s protection and for safeguarding security and freedom from fear of local women and men. Gender issues must be addressed and tackled properly through conducting a proper gender analysis, in particular when they relate to security of women and men. Padoh Naw Zipporah Sein explained to the authors that:

*“Actually, we feel that it is important to have the code of conduct for the military because like in the conflict areas,*

<sup>33</sup> Interview with Saw Kyaw Zwar, 12.06.13 in Hpa-an.

<sup>34</sup> Interview with Naw Blooming Night Zan, 20.07.13 in Mae Sot.

<sup>35</sup> Interview with Naw Zipporah Sein.

women and men, but particularly women, suffered lots of violations. So, even if the ceasefire has happened, if we don't have the code of conduct for the military to follow, there will be no guarantee for the safety of women. So, it is important for the guarantee of safety and security of civilian, women and children."<sup>35</sup>

However, the Ceasefire CoC is still in need of steps to realization. Padoh Saw Kwe Htoo Win, General Secretary of the KNU, mentioned in June 2013 that:

*"In terms of the agreement related to a ceasefire code of conduct we've only reached a draft stage – in other words an agreement in 'principle'. Since our last talks in September 2012, there have not been any follow up meetings to have a concrete agreement on the ceasefire code of conduct that both armed groups need to follow" (Karen News, 5 June 2013).*

Some actors worry that the leadership change of the KNU may affect women's participation in peace negotiations. Padoh Naw Zipporah Sein, the then General Secretary of the KNU mostly led the ceasefire talks throughout her term. However, after having been elected Vice-Chair, she has not been seen in the peace negotiation team anymore. Naw Susanna Hla Hla Soe, Director of Karen Women Action Group and Karen peace activist, reflected on this situation during the interview with the authors by saying that she is concerned "that the change of the KNU leadership may affect the formation of the peace negotiation team and that the women will be replaced by men".<sup>36</sup> Rev. Saw Mathew Aye and one of the civil society observers said that the "[KNU's] new leadership should continue to include women in the process".<sup>37</sup>

It is observed that many Karen women leaders are actively engaging in the ceasefire and peace processes. Three women participated as members of negotiators along with men for the KNU during the term of the 14th Congress. They are Naw Zipporah Sein who is currently Vice-chair of the KNU (former Lead of the KNU Negotiation team), Naw

36 Interview with Naw Susanna Hla Hla Soe, 17.06.13 in Yangon.

37 Interview with Revd. Saw Mathew Aye.

May Oo Mutraw who is former spokesperson of the KNU and Naw Blooming Night Zan who is the head of Karen Refugee Committee and member of the negotiation team. Various Karen civil societies or community-based organizations such as Knowledge and Dedication for Nation-building (KDN), Karen Affairs Committee (KAC), Karen Women Empowerment Group (KWEG), Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG), Karen Environment and Social Action Network (KESAN) and the Committee for Internal Displaced Karen People (CIDKP) are actively involved in the Karen peace process. However, in later phases of the process women's participation in the KNU negotiation team is declining.

In order to support the Karen peace process within the country, the Karen Peace Support Team (KPST) was formed on 8 April 2012. There are 11 members who are Karen civil society leaders and peace activists. Out of the 11, four members are women including two Co-ordinators, Naw Susanna Hla Hla Soe and Nant Khin Aye Oo.<sup>38</sup>

The Karen Women's Organization (KWO) strongly urges the inclusion of women in the current peace process. During the 2012 International Day of Peace, the KWO made a statement mentioning the importance of women's role in peace process. She said "we hope that all parties to the various peace talks will act to include women in their delegations. Women have a vital role to play in building peace and unity alongside men" (Karen Women Organization, 21 September 2012. Naw Blooming Night Zan rightly described the importance of gender sensitivity in post-ceasefire reconstruction and that women should be included in all structures and procedures for the post-ceasefire reconstruction and governance.

One of the remarkable findings from the KNU case is that women get into the peace process at the decision-making level due to their existing positions. Though the KNU has the policy to promote women's participation in decision-making processes, actual implementation of the policy seems weak. At the same time, it is also worth noticing that the few women who are in leadership positions with regard to peace and security globally are not necessarily gender

38 Interview with Nant Khin Aye Oo, 19.06.13 in Yangon. Also see Deciphering Myanmar's Peace Process: A Reference Guide 2013. P. 121.

sensitive. Indeed, women are not 'naturally' more gender sensitive than men. Thus, awareness raising and further training on this is needed.

#### 4.3 New Mon State Party (NMSP)

The NMSP was formed in July 1958 under the leadership of Nai Shwe Kyin (alias) Nai Ba Lwin just after a big surrender under the leadership of the Mon People's Front (MPF) which started its armed resistance in 1948 (New Mon State Party, n.d.). The NMSP's first party conference was held in 1989. Since 1995, when the NMSP signed a cease-fire agreement with the former military government, the party conference has been held every three years (Mizzima News, 21 Dec 2011). During the party conference, 27 members of the Central Committee (CC) and seven Central Executive Committee (CEC) members are usually elected. Currently, there is no female member at the CEC but one female member with the CC named Mi Sar Dar. She is the head of the education department.

The NMSP signed the Geneva Call's Deed of Commitment for the Protection of Children from the Effects of Armed Conflict on 2 August 2012, but did not sign the other two Deeds of Commitment – banning anti-personnel mines and prohibiting sexual violence and discrimination of women (Geneva Call, n.d.).

In 1995, during the military rule, the NMSP agreed to a ceasefire with the government without having any political discussion like many other non-state armed groups. In August 2009, the MNSP announced that it would not transform its armed wing into a Border Guard Force. In October 2011, the NMSP expressed that they would agree to a ceasefire and peace talks only according to the UNFC's policies (Min Thu-Ta, 23 November 2011). The state-level agreement (the first agreement) which has five points mainly focusing on the ceasefire was signed on 1 February 2012 in Mawlamyine (Peace Monitor, n.d.,b). The Union-level agreement (the second agreement) which has four points was signed on 25 February 2012 in Mawlamyine (Peace

Monitor, n.d.,c). The second agreement includes dispositions on a nation-wide ceasefire, political dialogue, stability and development of education, health and social sectors and on seven point-conditions during the ceasefire and political dialogue processes. The NMSP and the government have met for more than six times since October 2011.

In terms of gender sensitivity, all points of the above mentioned agreements lack gender sensitivity. The NMSP is organizing a series of coordinated consultations related to the peace process with Mon communities, Mon civil society organizations, various NMSP departments and other political parties through the support of Myanmar Peace Support Initiative (MPSI), but gender issues have not been addressed during the consultations yet.<sup>39</sup> Mi Kun Chan Non, a well-known Mon woman leader, said during an interview with the authors that:

*"From my own observation and knowledge, the NMSP doesn't have a gender policy so gender sensitivity in policy and decision-making is not a mandate of the NMSP. That is why the ceasefire or peace agreements of the NMSP cannot reflect the necessity of gender sensitivity in the process."<sup>40</sup>*

Women's participation in the peace process in the Mon state needs to be strengthened. Currently, Mi Sa Dar, a Central Committee member of the NMSP, is in the peace negotiation team. Mon Women's Organization (MWO) is supporting her on her involvement in current peace talks. However, she is experiencing discouragement to get involved in peace negotiations. She explained this situation during the interview with the authors:

*"I know that the NMSP should have at least one woman in the peace negotiations with the government. It is also a sign of providing equal opportunity for Mon women to be part of this process. But I am losing confidence sometimes because sitting in the midst of men is a huge challenge while they are not able to describe their appreciation of women's participation."<sup>41</sup>*

39 Interview with Mi Cherry Soe.

40 Interview with Mi Kun Chan Non.

41 Interview with Mi Sar dar, 05.07.13 in Mawlamyine.

Nevertheless, Rachel Gasser of swisspeace writes that “despite the challenging environment that peace negotiations often present [for women], Mi Sar Dar has managed to bring female voices to the negotiations between the Myanmar government and the NMSP” (ISN, 5 August 2013). Regarding women’s participation in the current Mon peace process, Nai Tala Nyi, one of the NMSP’s CEC members, explained during the interview with the authors:

*“The party opens the door for all women and men, but still only a few women participate in party leadership. Women should be empowered for political leadership in our Mon society. Traditionally, women are less active in this area.”*<sup>42</sup>

Mon civil societies such as the Human Rights Foundation of Mon Land, the Mon Youth Group, the Rahmonya Peace Foundation, the Civil Society Development Project (CSDP), the Mon Women’s Organization (MWO) and the Mon National Education Committee (MNEC) are actively involved in the Mon peace process. The MWO and the recently formed Mon Women Network (MWN) are active Mon civil society organizations which advocate and promote women’s role in peace processes. From the case of NMSP, it was learnt that the role of civil society organizations is very important in advocating women’s participation at the decision-making level. Moreover, it is also evident that there should be a transparent and well-informed procedure for bringing women into the decision-making level. Otherwise, women’s participation would remain a decorative act and would even discourage women and men.

#### 4.4 Restoration Council of the Shan State (RCSS)

The RCSS was organized in 2000 by Sao Yawd Serk from the Shan United Revolutionary Army (SURA) which was started in 1964. The RCSS is also known as Shan State Army –South (SSA-S). The central leadership of the RCSS/SSA-S is observed as male dominated.<sup>43</sup> In response to the President U Thein Sein’s Call for Peace, the RCSS decided to enter into the peace process with the government. The first informal meeting between Sao Yawd Serk and UPWC Vice-Chair Minister U Aung Min was held on 19 November 2011 in Thai-Shan border (BNI, n.d.).

42 Interview with Nai Tala Nyi, 05.07.13 in Mawlamyine.

43 Interview with Maj. Sai Oo, 27.06.13 in Taunggyi.

The first State-level agreement (the first agreement) between the RCSS and the government which has eight points was signed on 2 December 2011 in Taunggyi (Peace Monitor, n.d.,d). The first Union-level agreement (the second agreement) which has 11 points was signed on 16 January 2012 in Taunggyi (Peace Monitor, n.d.,e). The second Union-level agreement (the third agreement) which has 12 points was signed on 19 May 2012 in Kengtung (Peace Monitor, n.d.,f). The RCSS, the government and the UN Office on Drugs and Crimes’ (UNODC) tripartite, nine-point anti-drug agreement was signed on 28 October 2012 (Peace Monitor, n.d.,g). Since November 2011, the RCSS has met with the government representatives almost seven times. In June 2013, Sao Yawd Serk and the RCSS leaders met with President U Thein Sein in Nay Pyi Taw for the first time and discussed the establishment of an all-inclusive political dialogue, military affairs and the formation of a conflict monitoring team in the eastern state (The Irrawaddy, September 2013).

Out of the total 31 points of the three agreements plus nine points of the tripartite agreement none mentions the role of women’s participation in the peace processes. It is also observed that none of the agreements between the RCSS and the government reflects the necessity of gender equality and the importance of women’s participation in the peace process as well as in post-conflict reconstruction and development. Thus, Nang May Hnin Kyaw, a Shan peace activist based in Taunggyi, described her observation during the interview with the authors:

*“Ceasefire agreements between the RCSS and the government still fail to reflect the needs of Shan women. I strongly believe that gender sensitivity is needed to be put in place in the agreements so that women and men who suffered from the armed conflict will effectively gain benefits from the current peace negotiations.”*<sup>44</sup>

The eighth point of the third agreement is about the creation of a peace-monitoring group for the process between the RCSS and the government. The RCSS organized a meeting of the Shan State scholars on 22-23 August 2012

44 Interview with Nang May Hnin Kyaw, 15.06.13 in Taunggyi.

and nominated the 19 Peace Monitoring Committee members who are well known and highly regarded persons in Shan State (BNI, n.d.). Two members out of 11 are women, Nang Vo Kham who is a retired professor from the Department of Geography from Taunggyi University and Sao Mya Waddy who is a descendant of a Shan Saopha family and also a prominent lawyer in Taunggyi.<sup>45</sup> However, until the end of October 2013, the local monitoring group is still to be made functional. As Nang May Hnin Kyaw states,

*“From my personal observation, the Shan peace process doesn’t have a significant place for women in decision-making. Two educated Shan women were invited to be members of monitoring committee by RCSS/SSA, but their participation cannot be regarded as representation of wider Shan women. Besides, compared to other ethnic groups, we have less active Shan civil societies inside the country involved in the peace process.”<sup>46</sup>*

Compared to other ethnic peace processes such as Karen and Mon, the Shan peace process has less direct involvement of Shan civil societies or civil societies based in the Shan State. The Shan Women’s Action Network (SWAN) and the Shan Human Rights Foundation (SHRF) are prominent among the few organizations who are involved in the current peace process in the Shan state. Inside the country, the Kabawza Youth Reading Club, a community-based organization in Taunggyi, has some activities on peace education for local communities. Sai Hla Kyaw, General Secretary of Shan Nationalities Democratic Party said:

*“Shan civil societies are not strong enough to bring voices from the grassroots compared to other ethnic groups like Karen and Kachin. I think it is due to difficulties with communication and travel from one place to another inside Shan state. [...] We have been living under repressive military rules for more than half a century and people are full of fear. Not only of the government’s military, but also of local militia we have to be afraid. So, this fear mentality makes us stay away from participating in the peace process.”<sup>47</sup>*

The SHRF and the SWAN (2002) documented 173 incidents of rape and other forms of sexual violence that were

reported, involving 625 girls and women, committed by the government army troops in the Shan State, mostly between 1996 and 2001.<sup>48</sup> Recently, the SWAN made a statement demanding for a real ceasefire and honoring of the terms of agreements made between the government and the RCSS and to move forward for a genuine peace for which all women and men are hoping (S.H.A.N, 22 April 2013). Moreover, as the ongoing conflict in the region continues to result in human rights violations, including documented cases of rape and violence against women and children, (SWAN, 19 December 2012) inclusion of gender sensitivity in the ceasefire agreements becomes urgent.

During the interview meeting with Major Sai Oo, RCSS/SSA Peace Committee Liaison Officer in Taunggyi, he humbly explained to the authors that Shan women have suffered sexual and gender-based violence during the armed conflict and the government soldiers usually committed rape, but most of the cases were not reported officially as they were afraid of getting punished by the government authorities. Besides, survivors were also afraid and felt ashamed so they did not disclose their cases. He concluded his words that the RCSS/SSA leadership was aware of this, but that they think that now is not the right time to address such issues while both sides are struggling to build and sustain mutual trust. He said, “now, it is just the beginning of the peace process. We still have to go a long way”.<sup>49</sup>

#### 4.5 Insights from Case Studies

These four case studies show that the armed organizations have their own strengths and limitations for mainstreaming gender and promoting women’s participation in their decision-making structure as well as in peace initiatives. The gender issue is completely neglected in the ceasefire agreements and the participation of women in the negotiations is still very low. However, some groups, such as the CNF and the KNU, still have a policy to promote women’s participation and mainstreaming gender equality in the upcoming political dialogue. Table 1 and 2 respectively provide an overview of women’s participation in different decision-making forums and in senior leadership positions of the EAOs analyzed.

49 Interview with Major Sai Oo, 27.06.13 in Taunggyi.

45 Interview with Sao Mya Waddy, 27.06.13 in Taunggyi.

46 Interview with Nang May Hnin Kyaw.

47 Interview with Sai Hla Kyaw, 19.06.13 in Yangon.

48 Shan Human Rights Foundation (SHRF) and Shan Women Action Network, The Burmese military regime’s use of sexual violence in the ongoing war in Shan State. SWAN, Chiang Mai. Ref: SWAN, May 2002.

Table 1. Gender Checklists of the Myanmar Peace Center and the Four Organizations Analyzed (as of August 31, 2013)

Items	CNF	KNU	NMSP	RCSS	MPC
1. Women's Presence in CEC/Supreme Council	N	Y	N	NDA	N/A
2. Women's presence in CC level	Y	Y	Y	NDA	N/A
3. Women's presence in negotiation team	N	Y	Y	N	N
4. Policy on gender mainstreaming	N	N	N	NDA	N
5. Presence of women observers in the talks	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
6. Policy on participation of women in the talks	?	Y	?	NDA	?
7. Mainstreaming gender issues in agreements	N	N	N	N	N
8. Discussion on women's participation in peace process	Y	Y	Y	NDA	Y
9. Policy on 30% women's participation in political dialogue	Y	Y	N	NDA	?
10. Appointment of gender advisor	N	N	N	N	N
11. Wide participation of women in ceasefire monitoring	N	Y	N/A	?	?
12. Presence of active women organizations in the process	N	Y	Y	NDA	N

N = None; Y = Yes; NDA = No Data Available

Table 2. Participation of Women and Men in Senior Leadership of the Ethnic Armed Organizations Analyzed (as of August 31, 2013)

EAO	CEC or Supreme Council			Central Committee		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
CNF	21	20	-	NDA	NDA	1
KNU	11	10	1	45	43	2
NMSF	7	7	-	27	26	1
RCSS	NDA	NDA	NDA	NDA	NDA	NDA

## 5 Prospects and Challenges for Future Initiatives

Gender is a fundamental element of conflict and of peace. Gender analysis can play an important role in furthering successful peacebuilding. Through the transformations it illuminates, it may contribute to knowledge and skills required for the prevention of future violent conflicts. For such reasons, gender and gender equity cannot be dismissed as irrelevant to the peacebuilding enterprise (ICRW, 2003, p.26).

Therefore, it is crucial to recognize the relevance of gender in peace processes, to see the fundamental link between gender and violence as well as between gender and peace and to acknowledge that relationships based on the goal of domination cannot bring peace with justice (Francis, 2004, p.10). Thus, now is the time to work for the acknowledgment of gender as necessary to the very notion of peace and to see mainstreaming of gender issues as essential to peace dialogue in Myanmar. Thus, as Naw Bloming Night Zan from Karen Refugee Committee and also an observer describes:

*“They [the government and the EAOs] must have a clear agenda for gender mainstreaming in peace processes including ceasefire monitoring. It should be on the agenda of peace talks. Women must be assigned for taking responsibility. Not only women, but also men, have to be assigned equally. Let’s give a chance to women and men working together.”*<sup>50</sup>

Moreover, increasing public interests in the peace processes and the public’s understanding and awareness on the necessity of integrating rights and different needs of women and men in the peace process can also be an important factor for incorporating gender perspectives as well as providing a greater space for women in current political negotiations. Naw Zipporah Sein has said that “when we talk about peace, not only politicians and military leaders need to be part of it but now people are starting to see and recognize women’s spaces and capacities to be properly built up”.

There are increasing numbers of civil society organizations that are advocating for promoting gender mainstreaming and women’s participation in the current peace processes in Myanmar. Among the prominent civil society actors are the Civil Society Forum of Peace (CSFoP) initiated by Shalom/Nyein Foundation, Gender and Development Initiative-Myanmar (GDI-Myanmar), Women Organizations Network of Myanmar (WON), KWEG, SWAN, MWO and the Women League of Burma (WLB). Recently, GDI-Myanmar initiated a civil society coalition for enhancing advocacy for the development of a NAP on UNSCR 1325 in collaboration with various civil society actors. Moreover, some international NGOs such as swisspeace and the Center for Humanitarian Dialogue as well as some donor countries such as the United States, United Kingdom and Australia are pushing these issues forward and supporting local efforts at best. Over the last 18 months, Shalom/Nyein Foundation collaborated with UN Women for promoting women’s participation at peace tables. These experiences show that the term ‘gender’ is becoming seen as less of a threat by various actors, including the government.

For NSAOs, an important instrument that has the potential to promote gender sensitivity and women’s participation in their decision-making structures is the Geneva Call’s Deeds of Commitment. Out of the 16 groups who are entering into the peace process, four organizations (KNU, NMSP, CNF and KNPP) signed the Geneva Call’s Deeds of Commitment, but only the KNU signed the Deed of Commitment prohibiting sexual violence and gender discrimination of women.

Moreover, some ethnic armed groups have policies on at least 30 percent participation of women in decision-making bodies. Nevertheless, few agreements are able to create a venue for promoting gender equality dimensions in the peace process such as KNU’s ceasefire CoC. The setting up of the internal policy by some of the ethnic armed organizations for promoting greater women’s participation in decision-making is also a window for gender mainstreaming in the peace process. However, the issue of quotas for

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Naw Bloming Night Zan.

women's participation remains contentious. While adopting a quota may contribute to greater representation by women and lend greater visibility to an invisible problem, it does not guarantee an immediate shift. However, most examples suggest that over time it produces precisely the change from an impression of that it is odd to have a woman in a position of power to an acknowledgment that it is normal to have women and men in positions of power.

Although there are some positive factors for gender mainstreaming in peace processes, there are also some challenges to it. Firstly, a lack of awareness or knowledge on gender issues in peace processes by different stakeholders is observed. Currently, more is needed to explore and collect information on gender issues in the conflict areas in Myanmar. There is no adequate information, so the importance of the issue is easily denied by male leaders.

The traditional mindset and attitude which says that 'peace is politics and it is a man's task' is still deeply rooted among women and men from the conflict affected communities. As the current peace processes are with ethnic groups, the ethnic people's traditional practices and the space allowed for women to participate need to be considered. Throughout history, ethnic struggles were usually led by male leaders. Women were regarded as the weaker sex, so the role of women was seen as being in the realm of secondary support and implementation. Moreover, people perceive the struggle for self-determination to have to be led by men. Actually, life of the combatant in the jungle is truly tough. It is thought that such kinds of conditions are only bearable by men. There is evidence that in the beginning years of the struggle, most of the ethnic armed groups had large numbers of women combatants. However, later on, the numbers of female combatants decreased and women were removed from combat to support units such as health and the general administration department. Nan Say Awar, Member of *Pyithu Hluttaw* from Phalon-Sawaw Democratic Party (PSDP), said that "rehabilitation for women and men from ethnic armed groups after the ceasefire is important, so women are needed to be included in peace talks".

The lack of consideration of the social integration of armed combatants by some of the EAOs is another huge challenge. A masculinity crisis is gradually observed among some male combatants from some of the NSAOs after the ceasefire. For example, some male soldiers, especially from the lower-ranks, do not know how to manage their livelihood after the ceasefire. This creates social integration challenges and some of them conduct acts of violence and abuse at home as well as in the community. It is understandable that soldiers were trained to be fighters in a highly militarized environment. So, the use of violence and weapons is considered acceptable and linked to masculinity. However, after entering into the peace process, they need to change their behavior and mentality, which means building trust with those they have fought. For example, the KNU proposed concrete steps for the implementation of the Ceasefire CoC, but these agreements are not able to deal with the masculinity crisis of the soldiers from both EAOs and the Tatmadaw. In this regard, the crisis of masculinity needs to be addressed and a space created for former male combatants providing psychological and social support.<sup>51</sup> Thus, Nai Tala Nyi, CEC member of the NMSP, comments that a peaceful social reintegration process for former male combatants is very important, otherwise, they easily utilize their weapons again to be a tool to make their livelihood and manhood.

The experiences of struggle of leaders, rank and file soldiers and community women and men are not the same either. Therefore, perspectives of peace processes will be different from one EAO to another based on their identities. The above shows that inclusive participation and addressing gender issues are integral for the meaningfulness of the peace process. Otherwise, the following risks are expected to be encountered:

51 Interview with Naw Blooming Night Zan.

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- Risk for unsustainability of the peace process: if women are not included, the peace process will not be sustainable.
  - Risk of a non-inclusive process: if women are not included, the peace process disrespects women's right to participation.
  - Risk of an inappropriate and ill-adapted peace for women and children: if the peace process does not mainstream gender issues, the ensuing peace risks to not address the different needs of women, men, girls and boys as peace is fundamentally local.
  - Risk of increasing the masculinity crisis: if women are not included and the peace process does not mainstream gender issues, the peace process cannot address the specific challenges that the militarization of the environment has brought with it. They need to be addressed if all members of society should return to civilian life.
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Indeed, the peace process in Myanmar must not only be a process between male leaders of two conflicting groups but a process of all – women, men, girls and boys.

## 6 Recommendations

The following recommendations are crucial in order to promote women's meaningful and effective participation and to ensure the mainstreaming of gender perspectives into the current peace processes in Myanmar.

To the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar:

1. Develop and adopt a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (UNSCR 1325) in accordance with the strategic plans described in the NSPAW through the participation of civil society and women's organizations and execute it accordingly while ensuring that it has proper funding to be implemented.
2. Before the National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 has been adopted, set up a temporary measure to include women as negotiators in the ceasefire and peace talks as well as as participants in the National Political Dialogue process.

To the NSAOs:

1. Develop and adopt a Policy Framework on Women, Peace and Security (UNSCR 1325) in accordance with the Geneva Calls' Deeds of Commitment through the participation of civil societies and women's organizations and execute it accordingly while ensuring that it has proper funding to be implemented.
2. Before the National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 has been adopted, set up a temporary measure to include women as negotiators in the ceasefire and peace talks as well as as participants in the National Political Dialogue process.
3. Put the issue of peaceful and sustainable lives free from fear of local women and men in the post-conflict areas on the agenda for discussion in the coming talks.

To both government and the NSAOs:

1. Appoint a gender advisor(s) as soon as possible to the respective negotiation teams.
2. Address gender issues including negative masculinity issues during the ceasefire and peace talks and ensure that all agreements are gender sensitive.
3. Build awareness, exposure and provide adequate education to the respective negotiation teams about International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights treaties, including the Geneva Conventions as well as the UN Conventions and Resolutions, such as CEDAW, CRC and UNSCR 1325 and its sister Resolutions, and monitor their practice.
4. Develop and execute clear, safe and well-informed procedures or mechanisms for conflict affected communities and civil society organizations, including community based women organizations to participate in and support the activities of ceasefire and peacemaking processes at the community, state and Union levels.
5. Safeguard and support community based civil society organizations, specifically gender and women's organizations for promoting gender integration in the peace process.
6. Continue to engage in constant dissemination of information about the current stages of the peace process (negotiation, agreements and implementation) to local women and men from conflict affected communities in an open and transparent manner.

To international actors, including donors who are supporting the current peace processes in Myanmar:

1. Engage and influence policy and practices of the Government of Myanmar as well as NSAOs for mainstreaming gender perspectives in ceasefire and peace negotiations processes.
2. Partner and collaborate with insiders, civil societies and community-based organizations that are working with and for gender mainstreaming in peace processes in a transparent and accountable manner; ensure capacity building programs are well integrated in the partnerships.

To national NGOs and local civil societies, including gender and women's organizations:

1. Develop and implement the programs with conflict and gender sensitivity and apply the principles of 'do no harm' while executing all community development and humanitarian projects in conflict and post-conflict areas.
2. Conduct research on issues such as gender, gender-based violence, and negative masculinities in the conflict and post-conflict areas.
3. Continue to advocate gender mainstreaming and women's participation in the current peace processes in Myanmar in partnership and collaboration with various national and international stakeholders and partners.

## Annex: List of Interviewees

### Annex

No	Respondents	Sex	Position	Interview Date
1	H.E. U Aung Min	M	Union Minister at Office of the President, Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar	11 August 2013
2	Blooming Night Zan, Naw	F	Joint Secretary of Karen Refugee Committee	20 July 2013
3	Cheery Zahau	F	Human Rights activist	4 July 2013
4	Cherry Soe, Mi	F	Human Rights Foundation of Monland (Hurform)	4 July 2013
5	Chin Chin, Mai	F	Member of Chin Peace and Tranquility Committee	3 July 2013
6	Doi Bu	F	Member of Pyithu Hluttaw from N'Jang Yang Constituency, Kachin State, Secretary of Pyithu Hluttaw Committee on Ethnic Affairs, and member of Unity and Democracy Party (Kachin State) (UDPKS)	14 July 2013
7	Hla Kyaw, Sai	M	General Secretary of Shan Nationalities Democratic Party (SNDP) and Member of Pyithu Hluttaw from Linkhay Constituency, Shan State	19 June 2013
8	Hla Maung Shwe, U	F	Senior Advisor, Myanmar Peace Center	11 August 2013
9	Hnin Phyu	F	Mon Women's Organization	5 July 2013
10	Htaw Nyan, Mi	F	Mon Women's Organization	5 July 2013

No	Respondents	Sex	Position	Interview Date
11	Jarai Non, Mi	F	Mon Women's Organization	5 July 2013
12	Khin Aye Oo, Nant	F	Member of Karen Affairs' Committee and Co-coordinator of Karen Peace Support Network (PSDP)	19 June 2013
13	Khin Ohmar	F	Coordinator of Burma Partnerships	24 June 2013
14	Kun Chan Non, Mi	F	Vice-Chair of Mon Women's Organization	15 June 2013
15	Kyaw Zwar, Saw	M	Member of Karen Affairs Committee	12 June 2013
16	Rev. Mathew Aye	M	Director of KDN and Observer at the KNU peace talks	24 June 2013
17	May Hnin Kyaw, Nang	F	Director of Kanbawza Youth Library and Reading Club in Taungyi	15 June 2013
18	Min Min New	M	Executive Committee member of Mon Social Development Network	5 July 2013
19	Dr. Min Zaw Oo	M	Senior Advisor, Myanmar Peace Center	11 August 2013
20	Mya Waddy, Sao	F	Lawyer and member of Monitoring Committee for the Peace process with the RCSS/SSA	14 July 2013

No	Respondents	Sex	Position	Interview Date
21	Myint Myint Than, Mi	F	Member of Pyithu Hluttaw from Ye Constituency, Mon State, and member of All Mon Regions Democracy Party (AMDP)	14 July 2013
22	Dr. Nyo Nyo Thinn	F	Member of Parliament from Bahan (2) Constituency, Yangon Region	11 August 2013
23	Nyo Ohn Myint, U	M	Senior Advisor, Myanmar Peace Center	4 July 2013
24	Ohn Kyar, Sao	M	Shan politician	27 June 2013
25	Paw Lian Luai, Pu	M	Member of Amyothar Hluttaw, Chin State Constituency (9) and Member of Parliamentary Committee on Peace and Ethnic Affairs, and member of Chin Progressive Party (CPP)	13 July 2013
26	Phaw Gay, Nan	F	Director of Karen Information Center (KIC)	14 July 2013
27	Sar Dar, Mi	F	Central Committee member of New Mon State Party and NMSP Peace Negotiation Team member	5 July 2013
28	Maj. Sai Oo	M	Liaison Officer of the RCSS/SSA Peace Committee Liaison Office in Taunggyi	27 June 2013
29	Saryar, Mi	F	Mon Women's Organization	5 July 2013
30	Say Awar, Nan	F	Member of Pyithu Hluttaw from Hpa-an Constituency, Kayin State, and member of Phalon-Sawaw Democratic Party (PSDP)	20 June 2013

No	Respondents	Sex	Position	Interview Date
31	Dr. Sui Khar	M	Assistant General Secretary of Chin National Front	21 June 2013
32	Susanna Hla Hla Soe, Naw	F	Director of Karen Women Empowerment Group and Co-coordinator of Karen Peace Network (KPSN)	17 June 2013
33	Tala Nyi, Nai	M	Central Executive Committee member of New Mon State Party	5 July 2013
34	Tamla Saw, Naw	F	Joint Secretary (1) of Karen Women Organization	20 July 2013
35	Rev. Tluang Ceu	M	Secretary of Chin Peace and Tranquility Committee	12 June 2013
36	Vo Kham, Nang	F	Retired Professor of Geography Department in University of Taunggyi and Monitoring Committee Member for Peace process with RCSS/SSA	27 June 2013
37	Za Tlem, Pi	F	Member of Pyithu Hluttaw from Thantlang Constituency, Chin State, member of Chin National Party (CNP)	13 July 2013
38	Zipporah Sein, Padoh Naw	F	Vice-Chairperson of Karen National Union (KNU) and Former KNU Peace Negotiation Team Leader (2011/12)	19 July 2013

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swisspeace was founded in 1988 as the "Swiss Peace Foundation" with the goal of promoting independent peace research in Switzerland. Today swisspeace engages about 40 staff members. Its most important clients include the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) and the Swiss National Science Foundation. Its activities are further assisted by contributions from its Support Association. The supreme swisspeace body is the Foundation Council, which is comprised of representatives from politics, science, and the government.

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