

## **Call for Papers**

### **Rebuilding Prospects for Peace: Gender, Civil Society and Informal Peace Spaces in Post-Coup Myanmar**

Since the military coup that unfolded on 1 February 2021, the humanitarian and political crisis in Myanmar has intensified. Ethnic armed organizations (EAOs)/Ethnic resistance organizations (EROs) as well as new actors such as the People's Defense Force have responded to the crisis through new political dynamics and practices. Amidst the ongoing and worsening conflict, (in)formal dialogue, grassroots establishment of multi-ethnic alliances, and ongoing peacebuilding efforts from women-led civil society organizations (CSOs) and community-based organizations, have gained renewed urgency for the country's future. However, due to the rapidly changing context and challenges related to managing information, security and safety and political risks from 2021 onwards, a research gap remains as to the impact (and potential impact) of women's movements in the prospective Myanmar peace process.

This gap largely stems from the fact that the coup has forced many of the gender-equality projects (talks, advocacy etc.) that were ongoing to either disband, relocate, or shift efforts in response to the new threats posed by the coup and worsening conflict. As a result, it is crucial for the international community to explore new and emerging approaches to support women while also drawing from past experiences and learning from previous mistakes, as highlighted by Olivius, E., Hedström, J., & Mar Phyo, Z. (2022). With government institutions becoming ineffective, there is an opportunity to redirect international funding towards civil society efforts and seek out new actors.

Moreover, the situation in Myanmar is exceptionally fluid and facing ongoing media blackouts and persecution of activists, preventing analysis from occurring. There remains rich literature on women's rights and movements more broadly, including literature on the inclusion/exclusion of ethnic minority women in broader movements (Pepper 2018, McKay & Win 2018), specific advocacy tactics (Cárdenas & Olivius 2021), and reception of women's groups by the formal peace process (Muehlenbeck & Palmiano Federer 2016, Buranajaroenkij 2020). These analyses remain useful resources for re-examining these topics in the current Myanmar landscape.

To address this gap through critical, gendered and feminist perspectives, the Ottawa Dialogue<sup>1</sup> invites abstracts for an edited volume on women's informal

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<sup>1</sup> The Ottawa Dialogue is a university-based organization that brings together research and action in the field of dialogue and mediation. Guided by the needs of the parties in conflict, Ottawa Dialogue develops and carries out quiet and long-term, dialogue-driven initiatives around the world. As a complement to its field work, Ottawa Dialogue pursues a rich research agenda focused on conflict analysis, third party dialogue-based interventions, and best practices relating to "Track Two Diplomacy".

peacebuilding/peacemaking role(s) in Myanmar since the 2021 coup. Myanmar has a well-demonstrated community of women-led Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), however, this co-exists with equally as well-documented gender-based exclusion into the formal peace process(es), both before and after the coup.

This Call for Papers hopes to assess the influence and contribution of women-led CSOs on the formal peace process, keeping in mind the diversity and division(s) in Myanmar's various political movements and sub-communities, and post-COVID realities of peace processes and civil action, including digital diplomacy and social media activism. We encourage both theoretical and empirical contributions from scholars and practitioners, including graduate students, and practitioners across the region on a variety of topics falling under the broad thematic area of **“How are women’s movements (in all forms) influencing peace efforts in post-coup Myanmar?”**

This can include but is not limited to: mapping of ongoing efforts and responses from women-led Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), informal groups and religious communities, monitoring and evaluation frameworks for informal women-led peace movements, new strategies of women’s activism in response to the coup (both within Myanmar and from exile); national activism vs. activism in the regions; the role(s) of international movements and governments in supporting women’s peace activism in Myanmar; how new technologies (and technological blackouts) are affecting women’s peace activism; and others.

## Paper Guidelines

Please send your abstracts of no more than 250 words to [loconnor@uottawa.ca](mailto:loconnor@uottawa.ca) no later than 1 August 2022. We look forward to organising an author workshop November 2023. Full articles are due for submission in early 2024.

We look forward to receiving your abstracts.

Dr. Julia Palmiano Federer (Ottawa Dialogue/University of Ottawa)

## References

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- Pepper, M. (2018). Ethnic Minority Women, Diversity, and Informal Participation in Peacebuilding in Myanmar. *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development*, 13(2), 61–75. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15423166.2018.1472030>