

Gendered Impacts of Explosive Ordnance in Chin State

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Abstract

This study examines the gendered dimensions of unexploded ordnance exposure in Chin State, Myanmar, in the context of escalating conflict following the 2021 military coup. Developed as an institutional research project of TheHILLS Myanmar through its Chin State Academic Research Network (CSARN), the study responds to the urgent need for locally grounded evidence on how landmine contamination and explosive remnants of war reshape everyday life in conflict-affected communities. As contamination has expanded across civilian areas, it has undermined mobility, public safety, agricultural work, and livelihood practices. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research draws on quantitative data collected through a Kobo-based survey across nine townships, alongside qualitative focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews conducted across multiple conflict-affected communities. The study examines how gender roles and divisions of labour shape interaction with contaminated environments, access to risk information, and participation in mine risk education and community decision-making. It also seeks to contribute to broader scholarly debates on gendered human security and civilian protection in protracted internal conflicts, situating the Chin case within wider discussions on conflict governance and humanitarian response. Findings indicate that gendered responsibilities structure patterns of exposure and coping strategies, while structural, cultural, and institutional barriers limit inclusive engagement in risk mitigation and recovery planning. By centering the experiences, knowledge, and priorities of Chin communities themselves, the study advances a research approach grounded in the principle that policies and interventions concerning affected populations must be informed by their lived realities. The paper argues that humanitarian and reconstruction strategies must integrate gender-sensitive, community-informed approaches to strengthen preparedness, equitable participation, and long-term resilience in post-conflict recovery processes.