

## **When Berlin and Soweto Meet Karenni: Designing an Intersectional Vetting Framework for Revolutionary Governance**

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### **Abstract**

The 2021 military coup has triggered an unprecedented wave of defections from state institutions, with many civil servants and security personnel joining the resistance movement. While existing literature on Myanmar has documented the humanitarian consequences and the social and political divisions generated by the conflict, limited attention has been paid to how defectors can be integrated into accountable, civilian-led federal institutions while the conflict is still ongoing rather than after a political transition.

This research examines contemporary vetting practices employed by Myanmar resistance actors in integrating defectors from state security institutions. Drawing on qualitative interviews with defectors residing in Thailand and personnel from the Karenni State Police, including residents in Karenni State, the study explores how trust, political commitment, and social identities, including rank, ethnicity, gender, and previous roles, shape processes of assessment and inclusion.

The paper reflects these findings alongside the experiences of Germany and South Africa as comparative reference points for understanding integration of personnel in transitional contexts. The study further applies an intersectional and Women, Peace and Security (WPS) lens to inform a future screening framework that strengthens accountability, institutional trust, and inclusive governance while avoiding arbitrary exclusion, collective punishment, and retaliatory purges.

This study contributes to the literature by providing empirical insights into how resistance actors currently assess, verify, and integrate defectors within emerging security and governance institutions in Myanmar. The study contributes to the broader discussion on vetting, inclusion, and institutional legitimacy by reflecting contemporary wartime practices in relation to the experiences of Germany and South Africa in transitional contexts.

This study also offers evidence-based recommendations for resistance actors and policymakers, including the National Unity Government (NUG) and Ethnic Resistance Organizations (EROs), involved in developing future federal democratic governance and security sector institutions.