Asia Pacific Perspectives on Gender-Responsive Indicators for Atrocity Prevention

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Introduction

This report collates information from parts of the Asia Pacific on early warning systems and conceptualises how gender-responsive indicators may be used to strengthen approaches to early warning early response (EWER), especially in the context of atrocity prevention. The findings are based on:

- Previous research published by the Asia Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (APR2P) and the Asia Pacific Partnership on Atrocity Prevention Gender Working Group;

- Expertise of APPAP Gender Working Group (APPAP GWG) members;

- Non-exhaustive literature review of existing EWER systems in the region;

- Country-level roundtables on gender and atrocity prevention held throughout 2022-2023; and

- A regional workshop attended by experts from the Asia Pacific on gender-responsive indicators for early warning of atrocity crimes.

The report recommends options for better integrating gender-sensitive information into early warning mechanisms and more generally, for adopting a gender responsive approach to atrocity prevention.

Background

What is atrocity prevention and early warning?

As atrocity crimes occur as a process, their prevention relies on the monitoring and assessment of risk factors, and early warning of triggers or escalation, along with effective and timely response. Risk factors are conditions that increase the likelihood of atrocity crimes being committed. Structural or upstream prevention involves identifying and addressing underlying root causes or contributing factors, such as weakness of state institutions, economic instability, socio-economic inequality, or a history of atrocities or armed conflict.

Early direct prevention involves monitoring and assessing emerging or escalating crises, taking note of early warnings, such as increasing human rights violations, escalating community tensions, or heightened political instability. Late-stage prevention and intervention responds to serious situations of escalating armed conflict, for example, and involves monitoring triggers that may elevate the risk of atrocities, such as a sudden regime change or coup, attacks against leaders, or incitement of violence against particular groups.

To date, the majority of atrocity prevention tools used for monitoring have been silent on the role of gender in the commission of atrocity crimes. This is despite significant research on the gendered differences in experiences and effects of atrocities, the recognition in international law of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) as a war crime, crime against humanity or tool of genocide, and several years of efforts on the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda which aims to increase awareness of both the ways in which women are targeted and affected by conflict, and their role in prevention and peacebuilding.

Research on gender and atrocity prevention

The 2020 UN Secretary General's report, "Prioritising prevention and strengthening response: women and the responsibility to protect", recognised that a gender perspective can "deepen understanding of the causes and dynamics of atrocity crimes (and)… help States, regional and other actors to better meet their responsibility to protect." This acknowledgement at the highest levels of the UN was a significant foundation for the integration of gender considerations into atrocity prevention. The report recognised that, "Gender inequality and discrimination can increase underlying risks of sexual and gender-based violence". It is important to note, however, that a gendered approach to early warning and atrocity prevention is not limited to SGBV, but rather looks at a broad range of gendered experiences across political, economic, social and other spheres.

Research over recent years has found that gender plays a significant role in the ways that atrocity crimes are carried out and experienced.

A landmark 2019 report by Sarah Teitt, Centralising Gender in Mass Atrocity Prevention: A Tool for Action in the Asia Pacific Region, outlined how SGBV is defined in international law and described how mainstreaming gender in atrocity prevention may help identify underlying risk factors for gender-based atrocity crimes. Drawing on other research that shows the level of violence against women is directly correlated with the country's level of peacefulness, the report identified six risk factors with gendered dimensions that are important for atrocity prevention:

- Armed conflict and other forms of crisis or instability

- Gender discrimination and inequality, and weak protection of the physical integrity rights of women

- Identity-based discrimination and extremist or supremacist ideologies

- Record of impunity for serious human rights violations, particularly SGBV

- Weak/unaccountable laws and institutions to protect against SGBV

- Marginalisation or absence of women from atrocity prevention

Options for structural prevention to address these risk factors were provided, ranging from legislative mechanisms to transitional justice and the implementation of WPS initiatives. In relation to early direct prevention, which is more focused on early warning signs and triggers for atrocities, the report suggested the following indicators focusing on SGBV:

Despite this and other research on gender and R2P such as by scholars Sara Davies and Jacqui True, early warning systems rarely include gender-responsive indicators. The 2021 Report Overview of Gender-Responsive Early Warning Systems Progress and Gaps by Louise Allen noted that in existing early warning systems, gender perspectives are either missing completely, or they are inconsistent, or they apply narrow definitions of gender equality. There is little that explicitly refers to SGBV as atrocity crimes despite recognition in international law.

In addition, when gender is considered in analytical tools, it often focuses on long-term structural indicators such as the number of women in parliament or women's involvement in the workforce, statistics on life expectancy/mortality rate for women or maternal health indicators, education participation rates, or specific aspects of SGBV. This risks overlooking other indicators or trends, such as community attitudes about gender equality or increasing discriminatory practices, and neglecting indicators of impending atrocities that are more proximate or short-term.

The same report suggested the broadening of gender-responsive EWER to include:

- Changing attitudes on gender inequality and combatting gender stereotypes that have been known to contribute to violence;

- Addressing gender-based violence in all its forms, in various spaces, perpetuated by many actors; and

- Paying attention to situations that limit women's rights and freedoms.

Table 4: Early Warning Indicators for Sexual & Gender Based Atrocity Crimes

1. Signs of instrumental/strategic use of SGBV	• Increased incidence of sexual violence by armed groups or state actors, particularly targeted against members of an identifiable group • Sex-selective killings • Gendered hate speech or incitement to SGBV, particularly against of an identifiable group • Cycles of retaliatory attacks against female members of a particular group
2. Patterns of human rights abuses associated with widespread use of SGBV	• Uptick in arbitrary detention and people being taken in for interrogation, particularly those accused of being 'enemy of state' • Forced recruitment/conscription in armed groups/military, particularly of children • Uptick in forced disappearance and kidnappings, particularly of women/girls of an identifiable group • Increase in human trafficking, particularly from refugee/IDP camps or conflict-affected communities • Reports of sexual assault, exploitation and abuse in refugee/displaced communities
3. Actions by military/armed groups linked to heightened risk of widespread SGBV	• Ground operations, house raids or installation of military check points (including at border crossings) • Forced separation of male and female members of a community • Major acquisition of arms by warring parties • High use of drugs and alcohol • Infiltration of armed actors in refugee/IDP camps, or military encampments around those areas or other civilian areas (e.g. schools, markets) • Soldiers not being renumerated or not given basic housing or provisions
4. Crisis-induced conditions linked to heightened risk of SGBV	• Mass displacement in refugee/IDP camps • Lack of gender programming or targeted resources for refugee/IDP camps (poor planning for latrines, fuel or water collection sites) • Increase in female-headed households
5. General indicators of higher tolerance for SGBV or gender indicators associated with increased risk of armed conflict or violent attacks	• Increased incidence of sexual violence against women, including uptick in domestic violence, honour killings, female genital mutilation, rape, etc. • Threats against or restrictions on politically active women or women civil society organizations (political leaders, teachers, human rights defenders) • Restrictions on sexual and reproductive health/autonomy • Changes to the normal patterns of women's lives (decreased girls school attendance; absence of women from public spaces, markets or harvests; self-imposed curfews)

APPAP Gender Working Group

To progress work on the integration of gender into atrocity crime prevention, the APPAP GWG was formed in 2018. Since its establishment, the Working Group has been active in capacity development on sexual and gender-based atrocity crimes such as through workshops and training conducted in 2019 for human rights defenders in the Southeast Asian region, and training for the security sector in the Philippines from 2020 to 2022.

Women, peace and security (WPS) and atrocity prevention in the Asia Pacific

The Working Group commissioned and contributed to the 2021 Report, Gender-based atrocity crime prevention: Linking the Responsibility to Protect; Women, Peace and Security; and women's rights agendas in the Asia Pacific, by Louise Allen. This overview report, which looked at the situation in Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Fiji, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Thailand, and Vanuatu, found that the current capacity of Asia Pacific countries to prevent gender-based atrocity crimes is low:

- Nearly two thirds of countries have rates higher than 60 percent of women who have experienced SGBV by a partner;

- Eight countries allow gender discrimination based on religious or cultural practices;

- In nearly 40 percent of these countries, LGBTQ+ individuals experience harassment and discrimination, including by police;

- In half of the countries there are increasing threats, reprisals and crackdowns against women human rights defenders and activists;

- There is impunity for grave violations including sexual violence in four of the countries; and

- In nearly half, security sector personnel have been accused of committing SGBV.

To explore the report findings in more detail at the national level, the APR2P Centre, in partnership with members of the APPAP GWG and other regional partners, held country-specific roundtables on Myanmar, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, Fiji and Bangladesh. These brought together key prevention experts from academia and civil society (and where appropriate, government representatives) to discuss how to best advance the report recommendations at the country level.

Overall, the roundtables validated the report's recommendations and highlighted the need to conduct local analysis alongside women peacebuilders and local women's organisations, to identify context-specific risk factors of gender-based atrocity crimes (GBAC) and strategies to address these. While the specifics varied across the different countries, key and common issues included:

- Shrinking civic space and increased targeting of women's rights organisations and women peacebuilders;

- Importance of involving women, including those from ethnic, religious and cultural minorities in the design, implementation and monitoring or prevention efforts;

- Urgent need to strengthen the gender responsive capacity of security sector and accountability;

- Advocacy and monitoring on the implementation of the WPS agenda and NAPs (where relevant) at the national and local levels;

- Addressing existing gaps in services to survivors of GBV;

- Placing the promotion of gender equality at the centre of all preventative efforts, including as it relates to working with local religious and community leaders and engaging with men and boys.

Gender-responsive EWER

Recommendation 4 of the report was to develop in consultation with women's organisations, gender-responsive early warning indicators which monitor:

1. changing attitudes to gender equality and the enforcement of harmful gender stereotypes, norms and roles for women and men, including through sexist, homophobic and misogynist hate speech and propaganda;

2. gender-based violence in all of its forms including intimate partner violence, violence perpetrated by state officials and non-state actors, online and in-person violence, and against women in public roles such as women activists, journalists and politicians; and

3. increased restrictions on women's freedoms and movement including attempts by state and non-state actors to limit women's rights, pressure women to leave the workforce or have more children, changes to land access, movement, education, or sudden changes to limit women's economic independence.

To progress this recommendation, a regional workshop was held in October 2023 which brought together the APPAP GWG members and local gender experts from the Asia Pacific, with the following objectives:

1. To be updated on recent and emerging research on gender responsive early warning indicators;

2. To explore context-specific experiences relating to early warning and gender- based atrocity prevention;

3. To identify broader gender responsive indicators or enhance existing ones.

The outcomes of this workshop will be discussed later in this report, however prior to that it is important to provide some background on early warning systems (EWS), how these are used across disciplines, and their application in the Asia Pacific region. This report provides a non-exhaustive review and examples of existing systems as context for discussion on the importance of gender-responsive indicators in atrocity prevention.

Early Warning Systems

EWS are used to facilitate the identification of warning signs of a particular issue or threat; alert communities, governments and other decision makers to certain situations; and mobilise timely and appropriate responses (prevention, early intervention, late-stage response), including local level initiatives, national policy or program responses, or regional/international intervention.

EWS are predominantly used in relation to health, such as the outbreak of infectious diseases, or for weather-related events or natural and humanitarian disasters. EWS are sometimes used for forecasting the outbreak or escalation of conflict[1], either at the national level or for local areas, and there are some specific tools to assess the risk of atrocity crimes.

Earlier EWS tended to have a centralised structure with one organisation that would conduct analysis to provide to government, which would in turn develop a policy response. In time, EWS became more localised with the aim of local input, agency and ownership, though the disadvantage was often a limited ability to influence government or other responses. More recent systems have attempted to combine both types, by focusing on grassroots monitoring and analysis, while developing response capacity at the local level as well. This sort of approach can facilitate accurate, consistent and timely information from a wide range of sources. Ideally it is able to monitor changing dynamics, by training and supporting networks of monitors in the field which also creates a sense of local ownership of the process. This approach relies on participation by many different actors, and the

data collected can be both quantitative and qualitative. Digital or ICT based models provide timely information and allow various actors to feed information in, but there are access issues for remote areas or communities with limited communications and internet infrastructure. It is important for EWS to be able to communicate data to stakeholders and decision makers, as early warning is futile without an adequate and timely response.[2]

In summary, an effective EWS empowers local actors who have an understanding of their community dynamics, to be able to monitor clear indicators, collect and input accurate data in real time or in a timely manner, and for that data to be communicated to people who have the authority to develop and implement responses, preferably in partnership with community.

Atrocity prevention tools

There are few mechanisms that relate specifically to atrocity crime prevention, and these mechanisms tend to have a broader risk assessment focus rather than early warning. The UN Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Prevention, for example, provides a number of broad risk factor categories under which several specific indicators are grouped. This tool can be useful for providing longer-term tracking of changes across a broad range of social, economic, and political areas to determine the level of risk in a particular country. Usually an analysis like this would rely on open source material, such as media articles and NGO reports; this is rather a different process than an EWS which would gather information in real time to feed into analysis. The APR2P's risk assessment and regional outlook processes are guided by the Framework of Analysis.

Similarly, the Simon-Skjodt Center for the Prevention of Genocide at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum runs an Early Warning Project[3] that produces an annual Statistical Risk Assessment specifically for mass killing. Communicated via an interactive map of countries showing the level of risk across 162 countries, and provided to government and decision-makers, the project bases its assessments on public information such as reports on freedom of religion and freedom of movement, health statistics, inequality data, reports on civil society repression, and information on the history of conflict or ethnic fractionalisation.

The Atrocity Forecasting Project,[4] run through the Australian National University, produces a forecast every couple of years on countries most at risk of genocide or politicide, using quantitative methods that track past events and analyse various factors.

An EWS for armed conflict is ACLED (The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project), a disaggregated data collection, analysis, and crisis mapping project. Its Early Warning Dashboard involves assessment of volatility and

risk, conflict mapping, threat trackers and emerging actor monitoring. ACLED also provides a conflict forecasting tool that predicts future political violence for every country.[5]

While these projects have a global focus, other initiatives exist at the local and national levels. APPAP members have developed and implemented early warning projects with a focus on different aspects of atrocity risk, such as violence and hate speech databases in Indonesia, and Timor Leste's Belun project [6] which used a volunteer monitoring network to gather data and information about violent incidents and situational change. A project by Research Initiatives Bangladesh (RIB) focusing on the Cox Bazar refugee camps is one of the few to look specifically at SGBV in the context of atrocity prevention (see case study on page 16).

Atrocity prevention EWS tend to focus on current or past violence or armed conflict, human rights violations, socio-economic factors, political instability, ethnic or religious tensions, and more specifically on triggers like hate speech or discrimination against a particular ethnic or religious group. While SGBV is frequently an early indicator of impending or escalating conflict and violence, it is rarely officially included in risk assessment or early warning tools. Similarly, broader gendered indicators are usually absent from conflict or atrocity crime EWS, despite research linking a range of gendered factors and warning signs.

For example, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems published a report in 2021, "Gender-Sensitive Indicators for Early Warning of Violence and Conflict: A Global Framework", which examined early warning signs in the context of election periods. This report provides a detailed list of potentially useful indicators of conflict, many of which would be useful also in an atrocity prevention context.[7]

EWS in the Asia Pacific

Lessons from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region

The region of Southeast Asia has always been at risk of natural calamities: from typhoons to earthquakes, from droughts to floods and haze. Additionally, some states in the region are more prone to natural disasters than others. Therefore, natural disaster response varies in terms of societal system and coordinative national-local infrastructure. In an ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) thematic study on "Women in Natural Disaster: Indicative Findings in Unravelling Gender in Institutional Responses," it was documented that all ASEAN Member States (AMS) mainstream gender in natural disaster preparedness and response, albeit with differing levels of gender integration:

"(a) incipient efforts (i.e. initial recognition but not yet institutionalized at the strategic level); modest efforts (i.e. early stages of inclusion at the strategic level and/or efforts done more in practice by government or non-government organizations); moderate efforts (i.e. gender-mainstreaming evident at the strategic level); and strong efforts (i.e. gender-mainstreaming evident at both strategic and operational levels)."[8]

Furthermore, the study noted the contribution of grassroots women's response to natural disaster preparedness and response in light of "early warning and prevention, the intersection of gender and culture in disaster relief and response, gender dimensions of migration, and women's access to resources in post-disaster situations."[9]

Unfortunately, the study focused on natural disasters and did not cover human made crisis such as armed conflict situations. Only a few AMS experiences made passing comment on this concern, such as Cambodia on the legacy of armed conflict intersecting with natural disasters in some areas in the country; [10] Lao Peoples Democratic Republic (PDR) on the emergence of unexploded bombs after flooding that increases the risk for women tending to post-disaster work;[11] and Myanmar in connection with Typhoon Nargis and the interventions of the military on humanitarian assistance.[12]

With the risk of natural disasters, it is not surprising that EWS would also tend to focus on weather events. For example, the ASEAN Specialized Meteorological Centre (ASMC) in coordination with the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) monitors and provides early warning on the incidence and movement of transboundary haze in the region; the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) has the Disaster Monitoring and Response System (DMRS); and the ASEAN Disaster Information Network (ADInet) looks into "disaster-related research products for Southeast Asia, and connects disaster management practitioners and policy makers with scientists and researchers." [13]

Nonetheless, there have been a few initiatives advocating for armed conflict-related EWER systems. To date, these are incipient initiatives, though laudable, and only go as far as describing what EWER is and its implications in the region. The ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (ASEAN-IPR), for example, conducted a webinar in April 2022 entitled Early Warning Capabilities: Effective Conflict Prevention to explore the "development of possible early warning capabilities, systems and mechanisms are significantly important in anticipating and preventing local, regional, and international conflicts to occur and/or escalate within the region." [14] According to the presentation of Alexander Douglas from the Centre for Humanitarian

Dialogue, there are examples of EWER in AMS such as Myanmar's Center for Diversity and National Harmony that monitors social media for hate speech and the Philippines' Tumikang Sama-Sama, a network of volunteers in Sulu that monitors clan wars. For Douglas, practices and building capacities at the local level are key to successful EWS.

A similar initiative was undertaken by the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) through the conduct of seminars on preventive diplomacy and EWS. The aim of the seminar series was to explore measures for identifying situations that may escalate into violent conflict within or between AMS. This initiative is in accordance with the ASEAN Political and Security Community (APSC) Blueprint specific to action point B.4.4.ii on the "conduct regional and international seminars and workshops on confidence-building measures, preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict peacebuilding." [15] Congruently, under the 2015 APSC Plan of Action on conflict prevention, it was suggested that there was a need to strengthen preventive measures through the possible development of early warning systems based on the ASEAN context and existing mechanisms for the prevention of the occurrence or escalation of conflicts.

Conflict-Related EWS in ASEAN

The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (DEVAW) was adopted by ASEAN in 2012. Discursively, its key objective is to address violence against women (VAW) through different approaches such as

research, legislation, gender mainstreaming, and regional collaboration. In this instrument, there is no mention of gender as related to conflict early warning

In contrast, the 2023 ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on Women, Peace and Security (ASEAN RPA WPS), under the prevention pillar, identifies gender and CEWER as an outcome indicator. Specifically, it states that there should be a "number of AMS with gender-responsive early warning

mechanisms, including the regular collection and analysis of data on conflict and violence and the monitoring and tracking of conflict and other peace and security indicators, including data from women, men, youth and marginalised groups, to support early intervention and risk mitigation." [16] The table below quotes the particular output target of gender and CEWER along with its priority actions:[17]

Country cases

The development of EWS faces notable challenges across Southeast Asia. While individual nations lack robust early warning mechanisms, there exists reliance on international organisations for such systems. The APR2P Centre has been a key supporter of the development of locally-led EWS in the region. For the following analysis, an array of documents has been reviewed: journal articles, news articles, government reports, and the APR2P Centre country baseline assessments of R2P implementation.

Methodologically, the approach involved desk research focusing on early warning systems within each country. In instances where specific resources on early warning systems were scarce, general resources were consulted, highlighting peripheral details surrounding these systems and gender-related initiatives within the context of the R2P framework. This inclusive methodology ensures a birds eye view of the landscape surrounding early warning systems in Southeast Asia.

Cambodia

Cambodia's CEWER mechanisms have incorporated gender-mainstreaming efforts for natural disasters like droughts, flooding, and storms. Women and children are recognised as vulnerable groups in these situations. However, tools like the Index of Risk Management (INFORM) highlight a gap: 'current highly violent conflict intensity' is not explicitly listed as a hazard or exposure. This omission is concerning since situations of armed conflict, instability, violations of IHRL and IHL, weak state structures, and a demonstrated

Output 3.1. Early warning mechanisms and actions to prevent conflict and other risks to peace and security (such as disaster mitigation/displacement, trafficking in persons, pandemics, cybersecurity threats, climate change and violent extremism) have increased capacity to analyse and understand the different roles, experiences, needs and impacts for women and men, especially those from marginalised groups.

Priority Action 3.1.1. Undertake technical cooperation to exchange expertise, best practices, lessons learned and experiences across ASEAN region (between sectoral bodies, entities, institutions, and member states) in mainstreaming gender and engaging women in peacebuilding and efforts to prevent conflict, including prevention of violent extremism, disaster management and emergency response, prevention of cybersecurity threats, trafficking in persons, and other emerging threats to peace and security.

Priority Action 3.1.2. Conduct evidence-based research to identify and fill gaps in understanding the ways in which the daily practices of women and men (including those from marginalised communities) exacerbate tensions and insecurity, or (on the contrary) mitigate risk, and explore ways they are engaged and can be further supported and involved in preventing violence, conflict, SGBV, and other risks to human and environmental security.

Priority Action 3.1.3. Increase engagement and partnerships through the use of concrete mechanisms such as regular scheduled consultations (digital and otherwise) on policy and programmatic proposals (on prevention) with women mediators and peacebuilders, CSOs and women's organisations, including faith-based communities working on conflict prevention, local peacebuilding and mediation, to increase understanding of the needs and perspectives of women and to support their participation and inputs into conflict prevention policy-formulation and other prevention efforts referenced above.

Priority Action 3.1.4. Establish regular meetings/consultations with ASEAN regional WPS community of practice among government, the security sector, academic experts and CSOs, including youth, to offer review and support to WPS integration into ASEAN and AMS initiatives related to peacebuilding and conflict prevention as well as other risk mitigation policies and programmes

capacity to commit atrocity crimes are all significant risk factors that could disproportionately impact women and children.

Indonesia

There exists a lack of explicit support for international or local-level efforts in atrocity early warning systems and capacity building. Early warning systems in Indonesia focus on natural disasters, like the Indonesian Tsunami Early Warning System and programs for disaster risk reduction. While early warning mechanisms for these natural disasters demonstrate progress in gender mainstreaming, a critical gap exists in NGO-led initiatives against mass atrocities, where gender perspectives are often overlooked. For example, the Institut Titian Perdamaian's CEWER system, while aiming to link early warning with long-term peacebuilding, fails to meaningfully consult women as key stakeholders.

While Indonesia lacks a formal gender-responsive EWS for atrocity prevention, the country recognises the threat of hate speech, including forms that incite violence against women or specific groups. In regional forums, Indonesia has supported the need for localised EWS to combat harmful speech. For example, in a forum in October 2022,

the Indonesian representative to AICHR reiterated that freedom of religion and beliefs is guaranteed under the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration and that the COVID-19 pandemic has undermined this freedom. This is relevant to EWER in the sense that the forum also voiced the need for a contextualised and localised EWS to counter hate speech that is and owned by state and non-state actors. The Indonesian representative was also an active participant in a June 2022 ASEAN forum where the need

to establish a crisis EWS for human rights in ASEAN was affirmed. All these pronouncements offer a potential basis for collaborating with Indonesia to develop a EWS that incorporates gender-responsive indicators.

Despite the challenges within the country related to GBV and discrimination, there is potential for progress. Active CSOs and the 'A' accreditation of Indonesia's National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM) suggest a potential space for human rights advocacy, potentially leading to more gender-sensitive CEWER development. Additionally, tools like the CSIS Hate Speech Dashboard, which tracks online hate speech trends in Indonesia, and the Collective Violence Early Warning Dataset, which collects and categorises data and assesses the prevalence of risk factors, offer valuable insights into identifying patterns of hate speech that could escalate violence, particularly with disproportionate impacts on women and vulnerable minorities.

Malaysia

Malaysia has EWER mechanisms for natural disasters, but these currently lack a strong gender mainstreaming focus. However, there are efforts to address this gap, with agencies like the UNDP leading initiatives to integrate gender perspectives into disaster-related EWER systems.

Formal EWS for atrocity prevention seem to be lacking in Malaysia. However, several data sources provide insights for building such a system. First, the country has shown some level of support for early warning and capacity building efforts (such as in its 2015 statement to the Informal Interactive Dialogue on R2P). This support extends to non-military measures aimed at preventing or responding to atrocities, encompassing mediation, monitoring and

Case study: Anggota Steering Committee of the Working Group on Women and Preventing/ Countering Violent Extremism, Indonesia

Since the rise of ISIS, women have become more involved in the battlefield and other active aspects of violent extremism (VE). The number of suicide bombing and other incidents involving women have increased. In response to this, 28 civil society organisations (CSOs) partnered to form the WGWC in 2017. In 2021, the Indonesian Government adopted the National Action Plan on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (NAP on P/CVE). As mandated by this NAP, a Thematic Working Group on P/CVE made up of CSOs and government agencies was created in 2023.

Some EWER projects have been created in several Indonesian provinces by CSOs specifically in relation to P/CVE. Sistem Deteksi dan Penanganan Dini (SITI) (lit. early warning system) was developed in 2019 by the Empatiku Foundation and C-Save. In 2022, the Asian Muslim Action Network (AMAN) Indonesia and the Empatiku Foundation developed the Reflective Structure Dialogue (RSD) and the Establishment of Resilient Families. In 2023, the Division for Applied Social Psychology Research (DASPR) began the Resilient Women's Support Forum (FOSPETA) – a forum made up of the wives of former violent extremists. However, Indonesia has yet to mainstream gender in any of its EWER policies.

To aid this gap, the WGWC developed the Matrix Gender Analysis on Violent Extremism (MAGE), which is aimed to guide government and CSOs in implementing their programs and formulating policies related to P/CVE. MAGE is made up of seven (7) aspects, focusing on women's agency in P/CVE. These aspects are: (1) whether women have access to resources for PVE, (2) whether women have authority or control over their feelings, thoughts, and decision making, (3) whether women have significant others that influence them, (4) women's social and political environment and whether that environment encourages them to participate in violent extremism, (5) women's self-awareness, (6) women's needs, and (7) women's participation in decision making processes.
Several guide questions were also developed under each aspect, including:
- What are the general and specific roles of women when they join in VE groups?
- To what extent does women's self-awareness influence them into taking those roles?
- What kind of narratives have influenced women to participate in VE?
- What are some of the offers made by VE groups to persuade women to join?
- What gender norms influence women's level of participation in VE activities?
- To what extent can women exercise their influence in a VE group?
- What kind of support system given by significant others that encourages women to sacrifice resources to support VE groups?
- What policies or aspects of her social environment are used by a woman to legitimise her decision to get involved in VE groups?

observer missions, fact-finding missions, commissions of inquiry, and public advocacy by international officials. Second, NGOs in Malaysia such as Beyond Borders Malaysia and the Malaysian Centre for Constitutionalism and Human Rights track human rights issues and advocate for atrocity prevention mechanisms.

Myanmar

Myanmar's EWER mechanisms for natural disasters demonstrate a degree of gender mainstreaming. The country's exposure to hazards such as earthquakes, tsunamis, droughts, fires, landslides, floods, cyclones, storm surges, and industrial/technological hazards reinforces the importance of this approach. Notably, the INFORM

index explicitly lists both current conflict intensity and projected conflict as risks. This inclusion is crucial since risk factors for potential atrocities include armed conflict, instability, serious violations of IHRL and IHL, weak state structures, motives or incentives to commit such crimes, and demonstrated capacity to carry them out.

It is important to note the interaction between between gender, climate, and natural resource exploitation, and specifically the role of military economic interest. For example, economic interests of the military and military-linked companies in some parts of Myanmar may correlate with an increase or intensification of vulnerability in those areas. One Myanmar-based organisation's community peace support program has initiated an EWER mechanism, however it lacks an integrated gender component.

Philippines

The Philippines' EWER mechanisms are focused on natural

disasters, for which efforts are being implemented to increase gender mainstreaming. This includes initiatives like women-focused evacuation sites, community-based responses with women leaders, and laws/policies aimed at integrating gender perspectives into disaster response. However, implementation gaps remain a challenge. While women's involvement in community-level EWER is notable, their participation in formal structures is less defined.

Vulnerabilities within potential EWER systems currently manifest in the country including a lack of focus on gender within the Philippines' R2P strategy, despite laws protecting vulnerable groups, and a lack of fully inclusive and comprehensive human rights legislation, including legalised divorce and protection for LGBTQ+ individuals.

Despite this, a promising local project in the Philippines demonstrates the potential for EWS to address human rights within an atrocity prevention context. A transitional justice and reconciliation project, involving LGUs, CSOs, and the security sector, includes a gender component focused on GBV in conflict settings. The reported decrease in security sector violations since its 2022 implementation is a significant outcome. This project offers a localised model that could inform the expansion of gender responsive EWS throughout the Philippines.

Thailand

Thailand's EWS focus on natural disasters, and while the work of NGOs like the UNDP and Gender and Disaster Network demonstrates progress on the gender element, the absence of formal EWS for atrocity prevention remains. The shrinking space for civil society in Thailand is a challenge for atrocity prevention EWS. These systems rely on community input and monitoring, which may be

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Case Study: Research Initiatives Bangladesh

Research Initiatives Bangladesh (RIB) is running a two-phase EWER project on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in Rohingya refugee and host communities in Southeastern Bangladesh. The project aims to create an app-based EWER system. The first phase focused on understanding the context of SGBV in the region and giving inputs to create a template for the app's development. The second phase focused on risk mitigation and the mapping of specific indicators of SGBV over a six-month period. The objectives of the project were: (1) to develop and implement an EWER system for SGBV through in-field data-collection and analysis, (2) to enable local stakeholders to respond to SGBV through this system, and (3) to put in place a monitoring system through training and the dissemination of the report. The first phase had a total of 500 respondents—202 from the Rohingya communities and 298 from the host Bangladeshi communities.

Beating was identified as the most common form of SGBV in both communities. A large majority in both also knew the identity of the perpetrator/s, with more than half of the Bangladeshi respondents identifying the spouse. Similarly, almost half of the Rohingya respondents identified the same, however a significant percentage (about 30%) of the Rohingya respondents identified the police or army as the perpetrators. A significant number of these cases were not reported, with the majority of Bangladeshi respondents identifying a fear of repercussion or stigmatisation. Meanwhile more than half of the Rohingya respondents believed that no action or justice would come from reporting.

The project identified structural issues that exacerbate SGBV such as the low age of marriage (about 13-19), the pervasiveness of the dowry system (despite the existence of the anti-dowry law), human trafficking, and polygamy. Based on the findings, RIB recommended that gender-based house-hold dynamics need to be considered in the distribution of resources. Social cohesion also needs be viewed from a diverse perspective that includes gender, multiple ethnicities, and local customary practices. SGBV support should also be considered as a critical service during emergencies such as pandemics.

The second phase of the project had a sample size of 200, with 100 from each community, and found no increase in SGBV, child marriage, or the policing of women outside the home (although a majority of the Rohingya saw some increase in anti-female messaging). The majority of respondents from both communities identified that educational opportunities and the number of girls attending school increased (although the majority was smaller for the Rohingya). Despite these positive findings however, the responses for this phase were largely based on the perspectives of the general members of the communities rather than victims of SGBV. RIB recommended awareness programs for refugee camp leaders (including religious leaders) and further engagement with the local governments and the Camp in Charge (CIC), among others.

stifled by restrictions facing NGOs in the country. Similarly, downgrades in accreditation for the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand raise concerns about monitoring and reporting capabilities. Despite these challenges, avenues like the independent Office of the Ombudsman, as well as local NGO initiatives, offer potential channels for advocacy and collaboration with the government to develop gender-inclusive EWS.

Pacific Islands

A number of EWS exist in the Pacific region, though like ASEAN countries, these are mainly related to weather events, natural disasters and resulting humanitarian situations. Disaster risk reduction is a well-advanced discipline in the disaster-prone Pacific region, and will be ever more critical as climate change effects increase.

It is established in the literature that SGBV, including domestic and family violence, increases in the context of natural disasters, and these risks are taken into account in various EWS in the Pacific, especially given the high base level rates of SGBV across the Pacific. Input from a diverse range of groups is taken into account in several of these EWS, which have adopted gender-inclusive and participatory approaches.

A UNDRR report titled "Inclusive and Accessible Multi-Hazard Early-Warning Systems: Learning from Women-Led Early-Warning Systems in the Pacific"[18] looked at Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Tonga and Vanuatu, in particular women-led Multi-Hazard Early-Warning Systems (MHEWS) such as Fiji Women's Weather Watch, Vanuatu's Women Western Weta, Papua New Guinea's Meri Got Infomesen, and Fiji's Disabled People's Federation Emergency Operations Centre. Noting the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and the priority of inclusive and accessible MHEWS, the report notes that using community networks and different technologies have assisted in communicating information in real time to diverse groups of women and communities. This has, the report found, helped communities to prepare and take early action before disasters, and that the women-led aspect has helped to promote gender equality and empower local women including those from marginalised groups. The report contains a number of recommendations that reflect the importance of gender-responsive early warning.

At the regional level, the Pacific Islands Association of NGOs (PIANGO), in partnership with Humanitarian Advisory Group, released a report in 2023, titled "On the Front Foot: Envisioning a Model for Anticipatory Action in the Pacific". [19] The report explores good practice anticipatory action approaches to prevent or mitigate the impact of disasters. It notes that "linking early warning information and foreseeable impacts to pre-emptive action" can better protect lives and livelihoods. The distinction between anticipatory action and general disaster preparedness is that it is "based on a forecast or early warning."

The report considers the following risk information and forecasting tools: water forecasts, seasonal outlooks, impact analysis, situational monitoring, and pre-disaster risk assessments, and the connection to disaster. Existing initiatives appear to be large, regional networks rather than local community-led responses, and the report notes it is important to elevate local leadership and input, and to integrate Indigenous knowledge, values and practices in EWS for weather-related events. Interactions with gender are taken into account: "The design and management of any system will have implications for gender, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI). When developing anticipatory action systems, it is critical to engage different inclusion-

Case Study: Fiji (FCOSS)

At the "Workshop on Atrocity Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect", co-hosted by the APR2P Centre and the Fiji Council of Social Services (FCOSS) in Nadi in 2021, the Civil Society Outcome Statement committed to "work collaboratively towards the development of mechanisms for early warning and early response at the local, national and regional level to consolidate stakeholder efforts in upholding human rights and preventing atrocities." Discussions are progressing in Fiji on the development of an early warning mechanism for atrocity crimes specifically building on the foundation of an existing EWS, operated by FCOSS.

FCOSS was established in 1957 and emerged as an umbrella body for civil society organisations in the 1980's. As a CSO platform and representing body with 7 National NGOs and 282 CSOs across 17 districts, it engages beyond its membership to leverage effective development approaches. The majority of its members are women, and it is affiliated with PIANGO, Civicus, Forus, AGNA, HelpAge Int, CSO Partnership for Development Effective-ness, and is a partner of the APR2P Centre.

FCOSS coordinates early warning monitoring and response in Fiji for weather-related events, natural disasters and humanitarian crises. Data for the system is community generated, and collected via 'community observation reports' and via an email network of DCOSS and CSOs across the country. The current FCOSS EWS relies on Community Observation Reports and Project Surveys to assess risks in the community. These reports are then shared and communicated in order to mobilise responses at the local and national level. Communications occur between DCOSS and the sub-nation-al
government, to FCOSS and in turn to the media; project surveys are communicated by FCOSS to the government, development partners such as the National Disaster Management Council, UN Cluster System, and National Coordinating Committee for Children. FCOSS has 5 CSO agreements that are directly related to prevention and early warning mechanisms. There is one gendered early warning indicator relating to an increase in GBV especially targeted towards particular groups, though this is in the context of humanitarian data collection rather than conflict prevention.

FCOSS views early warning as directly connected to human right and R2P, and sees the potential for existing EWS to be expanded to monitor human rights and provide early warning of potential community tensions, violence, social unrest, and other triggers for atrocity crimes.

focused groups – including women's groups and OPDs – to predict and mitigate any negative impacts on GEDSI… Women, girls and people with disability are affected disproportionately by disasters and in the post-disaster phase…"

Like other Pacific EWS and frameworks, the focus is on disasters and their humanitarian effect, however the anticipatory action approach is highly relevant and applicable to conflict and atrocity prevention. Indeed, the strong foundation of natural disaster and weather focused EWS in the Pacific, with their consideration of gendered dimensions and prioritisation of gender inclusiveness, may be used as a basis for developing conflict and atrocity crime EWS for the region.

PIANGO itself runs an initiative called "The Facility Aiding Locally Led Engagement (FALE)-Pasifika", a locally led humanitarian system that empowers communities to lead decision-making during crisis response. It focuses on ensuring that local and national CSOs are represented in UN and national humanitarian systems, and is also exploring the integration of traditional knowledge in EWS.

In addition, a 2023 report, "Gender-Responsive and Disability Inclusive Early Warning and Early Action in the Pacific Region 2023"[20] asserts that EWS should be people-centred and consider the needs and capacities of different groups, including those who are marginalised. The report recommends a human rights-based approach to facilitate participation of vulnerable and marginalised groups in the design and implementation of people-centred and inclusive EWS. It also recommends communities are involved from the outset in developing EWS, echoing findings from APR2P consultations and reports.

While DRR tools and EWS for weather events have been developed and are in use in the Pacific, limitations have been noted, such as inadequate implementation of guidance on the prevention of GBV in emergency shelters. Further, there is far less available in terms of conflict and atrocity early warning. A tragic case in point is the February 2024 massacre in Papua New Guinea's highlands that killed 49 people, despite videos circulating less than a month earlier of well-armed members of warring tribes, and an increasing pattern of deadly tribal violence and other risk factors. [21]

Regional summary

While EWS exist in the Asia Pacific, a focus on conflict or atrocity prevention is lacking, and gender perspectives have only recently begun to be integrated. Most of the time, EWER efforts exist only at the local and community level, especially for conflict early warning. Women often participate in these community-level CEWER efforts, but their involvement remains largely informal.

The documents in the desk research affirm that most early warning systems are focused on natural disaster. This, however, can be used as a basis to advance gender-responsive atrocity prevention early warning. There is potential to use the existing natural disaster-centric EWS as models for developing CEWER frameworks, if the political will exists.

To date, many disaster EWS are spearheaded by NGOs or local CSOs, in itself highlighting the lack of government commitment. To be truly effective, conflict-affected and vulnerable regions should prioritise establishing gender-responsive CEWER systems, developed with meaningful consultation with and participation of women.

APPAP Gender Responsive Indicators Workshop

The Development of Gender-Responsive Early Warning Indicators for the Prevention of Atrocity Crimes: An Online Workshop for the Asia Pacific Partnership for Atrocity Prevention (APPAP) Gender Working Group and Local Gender Experts was held on 4 October 2023. The workshop aimed to brainstorm and collect local expert knowledge on gendered early warning signs that may indicate an escalating situation towards atrocity crime. The workshop was structured around the following activities:

Key Questions (responses preferably in light of participants' contexts and experiences)	Possible Prompts/Examples
What are our suggested indicators for gender-responsive early warning?	Gender early warning during potential risk stage? Gender early warning during impending risk stage? Gender early warning during imminent urgent risk stage?
What are the relevant data we should be collecting/monitoring/verifying in relation to gender responsive early warning?	Data may be dependent on the context and locale.
What institutional mechanisms should be in place to ensure gender-responsive early warning?	Should it be from the national to the local, from the local to the national or both? In terms of the flow of information: who are the sources and what information is needed from them? Who is designated to monitor, analyze, and relay the information to mandated authorities to respond to the situation?
What are recommended steps enhancing gender-responsive early warning?	Who should develop and implement a gender EWER? How can collective, consultative, and participatory design of gender EWER be ensured? What resources are needed to craft a gender responsive EWER?

Workshop participants were asked to consider a range of categories for developing gendered indicators compiled from various existing reports. The categories included health, women's rights, marginalised groups, economic factors, SGBV, security/military, legislation and justice, politics, and environment.

Participants recognised the need to localise indicators and to tailor them to each country and community's individual contexts. Some suggested indicators were structural or long-term in nature, while others may be useful as dynamic early warning indicators.

Some indicators that were explored included:

Health

- Increases in the number of miscarriages, abortions, unwanted pregnancies, cases of sexually transmitted diseases or STD-testing;

- Increases in the number of women (especially migrant or displaced women) experiencing mental health issues such as depression or anxiety disorders (among others) or increases in the number of cases of suicide;

- Sudden increases in women seeking contraception or other reproductive or sexual health care, as this could be an indicator of increased fear or threat of sexual violence;

- Degree to which women (especially pregnant, migrant, or disabled women) have access to gender-based health care;

- Degree to which women and communities have access to clean water and sanitation, especially in IDP camps and whether those camps have separate sanitation systems for men and women; and

- Degree of women's and communities' access to physical and mental health services.

Politics/governance

- Decrease in women's participation in policymaking / peacebuilding;

- Decreases in the extent women can exercise leadership;

- Exclusion of, or increase in the number of women who are not part of negotiating tables;

- Lack of community involvement of women in peacebuilding mechanisms or the increase in the number of safety and security issues faced by women engaged in peacebuilding.

- Lack of participation of women in decision making processes or increased barriers to their participation;

- The number of women representatives from the refugee community; and

- Degree of political will to implement gender policies and commitments.

Economic

- Changes in the employment patterns of men and women (especially sudden changes), for example, when a large number of men leave their jobs to enlist in the military or in other armed forces and women suddenly take on male-dominated occupations;

- Increase in the number of women becoming unemployed or leaving/being forced to leave their jobs, especially due to work-related violence or sexual harassment, or a lack of safeguarding culture;

- Increase in the number of women taking on loans or selling possessions;

- Increase in coerced sex work or other exploitative work;

- Increase in the pressure on women to find resources due to economic factors such as resource scarcity and competition;

- Increased number of women crossing borders to seek employment;

- Degree of income inequality between genders;

- Degree to which women and youth have access to education, training, and livelihood;

- Degree to which women have access to labour unions and the extent to which women participate in them;

- Degree to which women have access to livelihood and employment; and

- Degree of women's access to resources such as food, water, information technologies, communication or internet, media, legal services, health care, etc.

Climate/environment

- Increase in the number of women who are victims of disaster-related migration/ trafficking or the displacement of communities from climate-induced natural disasters;

- Lack of or decrease in the number of women participating in discussions on conservation and the prevention of environmental damage;

- The occurrence of natural disasters and increase in cases of violence against women during and after (such as in evacuation zones).

Social norms / human rights

- Increase in cases of human trafficking;

- Increase in child marriages or the number of girls being betrothed at a young age;

- Increase in the number of women experiencing domestic violence;

- Increase in the cases of ethnic, religious, or other kinds of discrimination;

- Increase in the number of assistance requests by/to local women's organisations or women's shelters;

- Increase in the number of cases and victims of sexual harassment;

- Increase in the number of cases of SGBV against LGBTQ+ individuals;

- Increase in the number of girls being pulled out of schooling;

- Lack of separate bathrooms for girls and boys at school;

- Increase in the number of households headed by women;

- Increase in the number of refugees in an area (especially women);

- Increase in the number of women who are estranged from their families;

- Increase in the number of women who are forced to actively participate in armed rebel groups;

- Increase in online hate speech or other online violence against women such as 'doxxing';

- Targeted attacks against women in public roles or positions of power or leadership;

- Crackdown or silencing of media and human rights defenders, especially women and members of ethnic or religious minority groups;

- Level of coordination in terms of moving women and girls to safer areas in cases of conflict;

- Migration, evacuation, or displacement of persons (especially sudden) from an area, and especially if the purpose of the movement is to avoid detention, attacks, or other violence;

- Number of women humanitarian responders;

- Extent of safe operating environment for NGOs and CSOs;

- Restrictions on religious freedom.

Security sector/legislative justice

- Increase in the number of reprisals against or silencing of women who are 'whistleblowers' or who highlight cases of corruption, especially in a country's justice system;

- Increase in women turning towards traditional systems of justice as opposed to formal courts;

- Legislative changes that discriminate against women (whether overt or covert) such as changes in inheritance laws that remove or decrease the right of women to inherit;

- Increases in the number of military or police checkpoints in an area (which may in turn lead to more cases of sexual harassment, robbery, or killings by the security sector);

- The lack of anti-SGBV laws;

- The number of SGBV cases committed by state actors against civilians;

- Extent of access to justice and legal recourse;

- Increase in incidents of torture or SGBV in detention.

Data collection

Participants recommended that data collected should be both quantitative and qualitative. All 'ordinary' data should be sex-disaggregated, and differences between age groups should be noted. Nuanced data on cultural mindsets, for example, the number of polygamous marriages, should be collected. Specific data on the needs of IDPs and refugees is important.

Laws and regulations, specifically the addition of those that discriminate against women (such as some countries' inheritance laws) or the removal of those promoting equality and the protection of women should be reviewed and included as data. Participants noted the importance of monitoring the existence and enforcement of policy frameworks, country reports, reports from government ministries or agencies that deal with women's affairs, national action plans, and other government documents relating to women. Police reports and court cases are valuable sources of data, for instance in tracking the number of arrests of 'illegal' migrants.

Social media posts are also valuable data that should be collected and analysed, such as the number of posts on a social media website targeting women (especially those in positions of power) or the number of posts policing women's bodies. This is especially important for tracking gender-based hate speech online and its impact on real-world violence. NGO and civil society report, such as those

that report data on the number of requests for assistance by/to local women's shelters, should also be tracked.

In terms of gender-responsive early warning, participants suggested the following be collected and monitored/ verified:

- Data concerning access to resources and services including media and digital technologies;

- Data on access to social protection programs;

- Data on participation in the labour force (a factor which may be affected by maternity);

- Data on sexual exploitation and violence, and SGBV rates;

- Data on marriage;

- Data on socio-economic impacts of economic shocks and access to opportunities;

- Data on the number of refugees / arrests of migrants;

- Data on the participation and engagement of persons in decision-making processes;

- Audit of legislation for unintended or structural discrimination (eg inheritance);

- Overall rates of violence, including broader human rights violations;

- Psychological data (especially of those affected by conflict);

- The identity of those in leadership and decision-making roles;

- Labour force participation;

- Number of women in community leadership roles;

- Social media hate speech, eg, number of tweets/ posts targeting women, especially women in power;

- Transitional justice and reconciliation-related data.

Workshop outcomes

In order to progress the development of gender-responsive early warning indicators for atrocity crime, the APPAP Gender Working Group will explore next steps and options at their 2024 meeting. This will include suggested gendered indicators for early warning that emerged from the workshop, mechanisms for integrating these into existing and new risk assessment and early warning systems, and strategies for advancing other key workshop outcomes as follows:

- Increasing the meaningful participation of women across all peace spaces and processes, since women's presence ensures their experiences and insights are taken into account.

- Enhancing mechanisms that aid in data monitoring. The monitoring of data is an integral part of EWS because relevant information can provide early response.

- Strengthening mechanisms that protect women from violence, for example, quick response teams that provide mediation and psychosocial first aid.

- Investing in capacity building in women's knowledge, skills, and confidence, and in institutionalising training for governments and public servants.

- Adopting a multilateral approach in identifying issues and clearly stipulating the structure and responsibilities of the actors involved.

- Ensuring the needs of marginalised groups are considered.

- Promoting the use of gender-responsive budgeting and funding, and supporting smaller local CSOs to access resources.

- Protecting civic spaces and local organisations.

- Ensuring cultural sensitivity, sustained engagements, and regular feedback and updates.

- Improved coordination and alliances between and among government agencies and civil society, as well as inter-institutional coordination.

- Effective implementation of national legislation.

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