

## WHAT NEXT ON THE PATH FOR ACCOUNTABILITY FOR ABUSES INCLUDING SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN RAKHINE STATE?

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### OVERVIEW

The pursuit of accountability following the military operations in Rakhine state, Myanmar, in 2017 has triggered both international and locally grown truth- and justice-seeking mechanisms. These are attempting to hold perpetrators to account and to bridge national and international narratives of events. Women have disproportionately suffered the impacts of the conflict. It is also important to consider what justice means for victims, including victims of sexual and gender-based violence. At the same time, the context in Rakhine state has become more complex. In addition to the poor prospects for return in the near future, there has been a recent surge in confrontation between the Arakan Army and the Myanmar military. The session explored what these new dynamics mean for accountability and efforts towards eventual reconciliation in Rakhine state.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- To move forward on the path towards accountability, certain points need to be considered.
- Rohingya voices are important: both those who remain in Rakhine and those that are in camps. These voices can be heard through representation in international forums, for example.
- Interim measures can be taken while accountability is being pursued: education and freedom of movement are part of protecting people.
- The discussion around reparations is starting, but it needs to be expanded.
- As parallel investigations are being pursued, methodological issues arise. Investigations must be undertaken from a ‘do no harm’ perspective. They also require translation, creation of a common understanding and collective memory.
- A bottom-up civil society approach should be adopted. The situation should be looked at from long-term perspective.
- The regional perspective is already being thought of, but it needs to be expanded on. This requires being pragmatic about who has leverage on military.

### SESSION QUOTES

‘When we defer accountability, it has consequences’

‘We want the women to be the holders of their story’