
ICRC's Strategy In Addressing Victims Of Explosive Remnants Of War (ERW) In The Myanmar Civil War In 2022-2023

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis strategi ICRC dalam menangani korban ERW pada konflik sipil Myanmar periode 2022–2023. Komite Internasional Palang Merah (ICRC) berperan sebagai aktor kemanusiaan netral yang memiliki mandat internasional untuk melindungi dan membantu korban konflik Explosive Remnants of War (ERW). Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus dan teknik pengumpulan data melalui studi literatur. Kerangka analisis yang digunakan adalah konsep Transnational Advocacy Networks dari Keck dan Sikkink, yang meliputi information politics, symbolic politics, leverage politics, dan accountability politics dan juga Humanitarian Actors dari Micheal Barnett. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ICRC menjalankan peran bantuan kemanusiaan langsung melalui layanan medis, rehabilitasi fisik, dan edukasi risiko ERW. ICRC juga berperan aktif dalam advokasi transnasional untuk mendorong kepatuhan terhadap hukum humaniter internasional melalui penyebaran informasi dan juga program pendidikan bahaya peledak remnants, penggunaan simbol landmine survivors, mobilization of shame dan juga penegasan Convention on Certain Weapons (CCW).

Keywords :

ICRC, Myanmar's Civil War,
Explosive Remnants of War,
Transnational Advocacy
Networks

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the ICRC's strategy in dealing with ERW victims in Myanmar's civil conflict for the 2022–2023 period. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) acts as a neutral humanitarian actor with an international mandate to protect and assist victims of the Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) conflict. This study uses a qualitative method with a case study approach and data collection techniques through literature studies. The analytical framework used is the concept of Transnational Advocacy Networks from Keck and Sikkink, which includes information politics, symbolic politics, leverage politics, and accountability politics and also Humanitarian Actors from Micheal Barnett. The results show that the ICRC carries out a direct

humanitarian assistance role through medical services, physical rehabilitation, and ERW risk education. The ICRC also plays an active role in transnational advocacy to encourage compliance with international humanitarian law through the dissemination of information and also educational programs on the dangers of explosive remnants, the use of landmine survivors symbols, mobilization of shame and also the affirmation of the Convention on Certain Weapons (CCW).



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INTRODUCTION

The conflict that has occurred in Myanmar in recent years has involved many civilians who do not belong to ethnic groups or armed groups in Myanmar. The country's protracted conflict has caused significant humanitarian impacts, especially for civilians who have no direct involvement in the fighting between armed and ethnic groups in Myanmar. Many of them fell victim to the explosion of landmines or explosives left after the battle ended, causing serious injury, disability, or even death.

Myanmar has long faced complex dynamics with the presence of various armed and ethnic groups. Over the past four years, several criminal cartels have managed to increase their influence in Myanmar. Unfortunately, instead of uniting against the military junta, these groups are often involved in conflicts with each other and with other ethnic groups. Armed groups and ethnic groups in Myanmar already existed before the coup began. About 24 armed groups in Myanmar and also hundreds of military in Myanmar. Since the coup, there have been about 300 troops called *the People Defense Force* or commonly abbreviated PDF. This PDF group is under the control of the National Unity Government (NUG). From the data obtained during the wave of demonstrations, the military is estimated to have committed violent acts that resulted in the deaths of around hundreds of people. These non-international armed tensions and conflicts have caused a tense and turbulent situation in Myanmar, with far-reaching impacts on civil society, human rights. The situation has also attracted international attention, and many countries and international organizations have expressed their concern over developments in Myanmar and urged a peaceful resolution of the conflict and a return to the path of democracy.

Since carrying out a coup on February 1, 2021, Myanmar's military has carried out brutal repression across the country against millions of people who oppose its rule. The junta's security forces have committed mass killings, arbitrary arrests, torture, sexual violence, and other violations amounting to crimes against humanity. Freedom of speech and assembly faces strict restrictions. In July 2022, Amnesty International reported that the military's use of prohibited landmines in Karenni State amounted to war crimes. The human rights organization Fortify Rights also reported that attacks on civilians in Karenni State constituted war crimes. The military also increased the use of internationally banned anti-personnel landmines, placing them in or around

homes, toilets, churches, and on trails leading to rice fields and other locations frequented by civilians.(International, n.d.)

The ICRC, as a leading international humanitarian organization with a mandate known for its neutrality and commitment to providing medical, rehabilitation, and educational assistance in conflict areas, has an important role to play in helping victims in Myanmar. The ICRC is active in dealing with victims of mine explosions and other explosives. The ICRC is concerned that explosive hazards continue to affect the lives of many communities across Myanmar. Explosive devices remain active for decades, even after combat is over or changes locations. The ICRC believes that information can save lives and that risk awareness sessions will help communities develop better life-saving practices. To reach those most in need, it is critical to maintain space for humanitarian action in Myanmar.

METHODS

In this study, the author uses two conceptual frameworks, the first is Humanitarian Actors include a wide range of organizations, agencies, and interagency networks that work together to ensure international humanitarian aid can be delivered to the places and people who need it.(Slim, 2019, p. 26) The second is Transnational Advocacy Networks. Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink explain that Transnational Advocacy Networks are defined as a form of organization consisting of actors who work internationally with the aim of promoting common causes or values.(Keck & Sikkink, 2019a, p. 20)

This study uses a qualitative research method with a type of case study research through the collection of all related variables in the theory and concepts used. The object of this research focuses on the ICRC's strategy in dealing with victims *Explosive Remnants* in Myanmar in 2023, the data collection method used is a literature study and utilizes relevant secondary data sources, and The study analyzed the data in three stages using the Miles and Huberman models.(Sugiyono, 2013)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

THE IMPACT OF EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS OF WAR ON CIVILIANS IN MYANMAR'S CIVIL WAR AND THE ICRC'S ROLE

Impact of the Military Junta Coup on the Government

The February 1, 2021 coup dramatically derailed the peace process of the past decade and triggered a new wave of violence. The Crisis Group noted that the coup "intensified the deadly conflict and ended the peace process of the previous decade". Armed ethnic groups that were previously hesitant are now actively opposing the junta. For example, the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) immediately condemned the coup and launched a counteroffensive to retake the territory that had been lost. The KIA managed to shoot

down military helicopters and seize strategic posts in the north, while the KNLA massacred dozens of junta soldiers in a shootout in late March 2021. (International Crisis Group, 2022a, pp. 1–2) Other joint attacks appeared in other border regions. The Karenni (Kayah) army together with the PDF militia killed dozens of junta soldiers in Kayah State in May 2021, while the Chinland Defense Force clashed repeatedly in Mindat (Chin State) in April–May 2021. (Ong, 2021, p. 5)

Due to the coup carried out and the many resistances in various regions, it caused instability in the country and made its citizens feel less safe about it. Some of the impacts are as follows:

1. Intensification and a New Wave of Violent Conflict which intensifies deadly conflicts and triggers new waves of violence across the country;
2. The end of a decade-long peace process, involving many ethnic armed groups in Myanmar;
3. The prospect of prolonged conflict;
4. Deployment of Conflict Fronts and Stretched Military Capacity with the multiplication of new fronts that stretch their capacity;
5. A more complex and fluid landscape of conflict. The lines between the anti-coup resistance and the long-standing ethnic armed groups are increasingly blurred;
6. Internal divisions and a legacy of mistrust: despite efforts to form a united front, the prospects are unrealistic given the diversity and historical rivalry among ethnic armed groups;
7. The risk of state collapse makes this situation put Myanmar on the verge of state collapse. (International Crisis Group, 2022b)

The coup that occurred in Myanmar caused many victims. Thousands of civilians, including children, have been victims of violence. In addition, armed conflicts between the military and armed ethnic groups have also increased sharply, leading to a wave of displacement and a widespread humanitarian crisis in various parts of Myanmar. This has drastically worsened the security, health, and economic situation in Myanmar, creating prolonged suffering for millions of its citizens.

Spread of Explosive Remnants of War in Myanmar

In 2021, Myanmar recorded at least 368 victims of Explosive Remnants of War (ERW), an increase from 280 victims in the previous year. Of these, 257 people were injured, 108 people died, and 3 people whose final outcome is unknown. Most of the casualties—239 cases—were caused by antipersonnel mines, while 81 were caused by ERW and the rest by improvised or unknown mines. The region that recorded the most casualties was Shan state (121 casualties), followed by Rakhine (52), Kachin (48), and Kayin (45). (Landmine & Cluster Munition monitor, 2022)

In 2023, the Monitor recorded at least 1,003 victims of mine/ERW explosions. The monitor has recorded a total of 7,177 victims (1,287 dead, 5,764 injured, and 126 with unknown survival outcomes) from 1999 to the end of 2023. The total number of

mine explosion/ERW victims in Myanmar over time is unknown.(Landmine Monitor, 2023) Reports *Landmine Monitor* The year 2023 documented dozens of incidents in which civilians were victimized, including children, women, and farmers. Most of the incidents occurred in active conflict areas such as Kachin, Kayin, Rakhine, Shan, and Sagaing states. In the period from January 2022 to September 2023 alone, more than 45 incidents of mine-grabbing by non-state armed groups (NSAGs) from the Myanmar military have been reported, with hundreds of antipersonnel mines found, demonstrating the extent of the spread of mines in civilian areas.(Landmine Monitor, 2023, p. 5)

Victims not only suffered severe injuries and amputations, but also often died on the spot due to delays in aid due to military restrictions in the minefield. One of the most tragic incidents was on July 25, 2023, when four children were killed by stepping on a mine near the village of In Pin Thar, Bago region. The report also noted that Myanmar's military actively planted mines around strategic infrastructure as well as residential areas and places of worship, sometimes even using civilians as life shields to detect mines—a serious violation of international humanitarian law.(Landmine Monitor, 2023, p. 7)

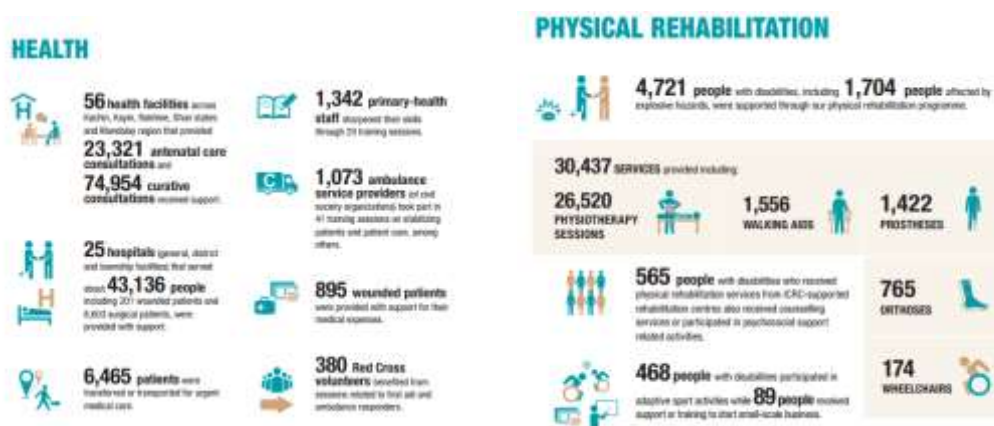
ICRC's Role in Addressing Victims of Explosive Remnants of War in Myanmar's Civil War

One of the ICRC assistance that has been carried out is escort in the case of Explosive Remnants to be more careful with landmines. Since 2015, the ICRC has been monitoring the risk of explosions in Myanmar. The ICRC is working with The Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) in this action.(ICRC, n.d.-b) The ICRC and MRCS carry out Risk Awareness and Safer Behaviour (RASB) which provides life-saving information to the public and helps reduce the risk of injury or even death. The RASB approach outlines the key components and indicators for a comprehensive program. This includes risk identification and assessment, the development of appropriate risk awareness messages, facilitating safer behaviors, and the monitoring and evaluation of risks and RASB interventions.(Contamination & Education, n.d., p. 51)

Together with MRCS, the ICRC works directly with affected communities to promote landmine and ERW safety practices. By holding information sessions and community workshops, they educate the community on how to recognize and avoid the dangers that occur, which are aimed at vulnerable groups such as girls, who in 2023, 37% of the total victims are children.(ICRC, 2025) And to expand the impact of prevention, they also use several media such as newspapers, radio advertisements, social media, brochures and others. In this way, people can be more careful about the dangers around them. In 2022, as many as 63,039 people have learned about the dangers of explosions and landmines that are still scattered and also around 1,424 have held counseling sessions. Meanwhile, in 2023 the ICRC will increase in dissemination of explosion hazard prevention up to 65,949 people.(ICRC, 2023)

In addition to providing education and insights, the ICRC also provides health assistance to civilians affected by the ERW. A total of 63 people in 2022 provided financial assistance for victims affected by explosive devices. Not only that, the ICRC also helped 1,121 people affected by the explosion hazards with a physical rehabilitation program.(ICRC, 2022) And in 2023, assistance for civilians affected by the explosion increased to 1,704 people. The ICRC also provided prophecy assistance to victims who lost body parts affected by the explosion. Assisted by The Leprosy

Figure 1. Significant improvement in the provision of health facilities and physical rehabilitation



Mission Myanmar (TLMM), the ICRC provides prosthetic aids for people with disabilities, the elderly, pregnant women and children who have been forced to flee due to armed conflict. These services include counseling, medical referrals, and support for those who need prostheses, mobility aids and wheelchairs.(ICRC, n.d.-c)

The ICRC also provides several health facilities in the form of hospitals, health posts and others. From 2022 to 2023, the ICRC built 56 health facilities in Kachin, Kayah, Rakhine, Shan and Mandalay regions.(ICRC, n.d.-a) Then they also provide 1,342 health personnel and also 1,073 ambulances for hospital needs and others.(ICRC, 2023) About 43,136 people including 201 injured patients and 8,603 surgical patients have been provided with assistance by health facilities built by the ICRC.

ICRC'S STRATEGY IN ASSISTING VICTIMS OF EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS OF WAR IN THE 2022-2023 CIVIL WAR IN MYANMAR

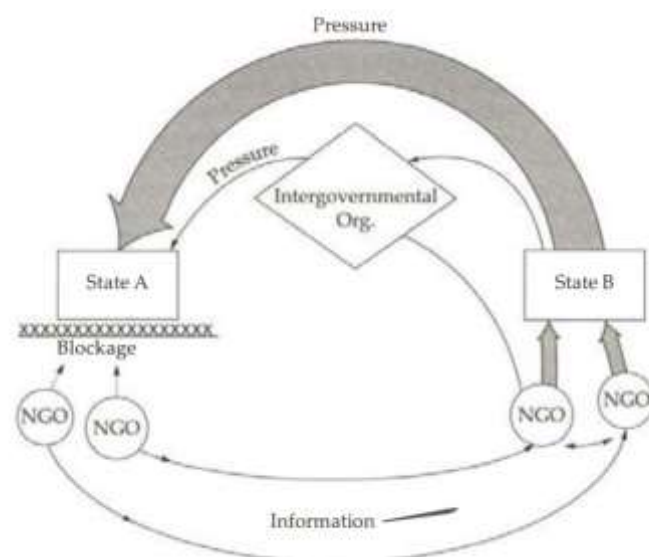
Advocacy Networks in Humanitarian Protection

The reason why using the TAN concept is because NGOs are a core component in any advocacy network. It is marked by the growing number of NGOs that focus on social change increasing every year. The ICRC therefore has an important role to play in helping communication channels between communities and governments or armed groups that are blocked, hampered or ineffective in resolving the problems they face. This role forms a pattern called Boomerang Pattern.

The boomerang pattern is a central concept in the study of transnational advocacy networks (TANs), introduced by Keck and Sikkink to explain how domestic actors bypass blocked or ineffective state institutions by appealing to international allies in order to influence state behavior. This pattern emerges when local civil society groups or non-governmental organizations are unable to directly pressure their own governments due to political repression, lack of access, or weak institutional channels. (Keck & Sikkink, 2019a, p. 12)

In the boomerang pattern, domestic actors transmit information about rights violations or humanitarian concerns to international advocacy networks, including international NGOs, media organizations, and intergovernmental institutions. These external actors then mobilize international pressure through diplomatic channels, public campaigns, and normative framing, toward the target state. As a result, pressure “returns” to the originating state from the outside, much like a boomerang, compelling governments to reconsider their policies or practices.

Figure 2. Boomerang Pattern



Strategy Based on the Transnational Advocacy Network Framework

This study took a case study in 2022-2023 because at that time the escalation of the civil war in Myanmar reached its lowest point with the increased use of landmines and remnants of war (ERW), which led to many civilian casualties, especially women and children. And also in that year, the number of ERWs jumped significantly which meant that humanitarian actors, including the ICRC, needed to step up their humanitarian interventions. In addition, this time marks the consolidation phase of the ICRC's strategy in medical assistance, physical rehabilitation, and risk counseling through cooperation with the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS). Therefore, it is important to assess how effective the ICRC's role as a neutral humanitarian actor is in the midst of Myanmar's complex civil war.

That way, it is hoped that with 4 strategies in TAN, namely *information politics*, *symbolic politics*, *leverage politics*, and *accountability politics*, can explain the ICRC's assistance to civilians affected by the Explosive Remnants of War voicing their complaints through third-party organizations:

1. Mass and Media Education and Dissemination Programs as Information Politics Strategy

One of the roles carried out by the ICRC is to collaborate with the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) in conducting the Risk Awareness and Safer Behaviour (RASB) program. The program was held to campaign about the dangers of explosives spread in several districts of Myanmar. This program is held in several cities and also villages that are still not reached. Around 80 cities have held this educational program. (Cross, 2025, p. 6) With this education, information related to the dangers of mines and ERW can be channeled to the community and reduce the risk of these hazards.

Together with local partners, the ICRC assists in organizing this program. In addition to using face-to-face methods, information related to the dangers of ERW is also distributed through the distribution of simple brochures, posters and booklets that are easy for the local community to understand. Not only that, local radio is also used for remote communities that are difficult to pass by transportation. Social media also helps in helping the spread of the dangers of ERW for urban communities and also the younger generation. (Landmine Monitor, 2023, p. 25)

This strategy has also succeeded in raising public awareness about the dangers of Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) through community-based counseling, information campaigns, and documentation of survivors' experiences that elicit international empathy. The use of credible field data provides a strong basis for the ICRC to conduct humanitarian advocacy and expand the reach of its programs in conflict-affected areas. On the other hand, this strategy also faces various challenges, such as limited access to conflict areas, restrictions by the military junta, and obstacles to the distribution of information in remote areas.

2. Narratives of Victims of Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) and "Landmine Survivors" as a Symbolic Politics Strategy

One of the striking things in this strategy is the use of the Red Cross emblem as a symbol of neutrality, impartiality, and protection, especially in conflict areas. The emblem is used as a sign of special protection provided by International Humanitarian Law (IHL) to workers, medical personnel, facilities and transportation facilities. (Issues, n.d., p. 52) Not only that, this symbol is also used as a special protection for the injured victims. This makes the symbol of the red cross a symbol of protection for ERW victims in Myanmar.

The ICRC also uses narratives and sad or tragic stories from some of the victims affected by the ERW. These stories are documented so that the real suffering experienced by the victims can be conveyed. These sufferings are such as injuries, loss of family or permanent disability. One example is the story of U Maung Thein Htay

from the city of Rakhine, Myanmar. He lost one leg in 2022 when he was about to pick up materials for his hat craft when he accidentally stepped on a landmine hidden by foliage. And finally he was taken to Kan Htaung Gyi hospital and met with the ICRC medical team. She was given special treatment and given prosthetics to replace her lost leg and was finally able to return to her beloved family. (ICRC, n.d.-c) Then the story is documented so that it becomes a lesson and influences public opinion and then encourages support for humanitarian efforts.

Symbolic Politics is a policy that is basically neither good nor bad. According to Bordieau, Symbolic Politics is an essential component of political communication. Not only generate community media, but also modern mass media through their extensive presence and visual presentation format, providing a means of influence and 'Symbolic Power'. (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 163) This was used by the ICRC to make the stories obtained as an influence for greater actors.

3. Mobilization of Shame, Form of Leverage Strategy Utilization Politics

The ICRC uses Moral Leverage as a strategy in forming government awareness and also armed groups. Moral leverage is a form of pressure that is based on the power of norms and ethics, with the aim of making actors feel ashamed and guilty so that they are encouraged to change a policy or action they make. Some observers called it a "mobilization of shame" of the actor in question being shown under the spotlight of international scrutiny. (Keck & Sikkink, 2019b, p. 24)

The Moral Leverage Strategy is used based on the norms and principles of International Humanitarian Law (IHL). The ICRC, as an agency established by the Geneva conventions, reminds the parties concerned (the military junta and other armed parties) of their obligation to protect civilians from the impact of the ERW. The ICRC has consistently emphasized that the use of landmines is a serious violation. Documenting and portraying victims affected by the ERW is one strategy to build moral pressure for armed groups to comply with normative commitments. This pressure is aimed at making the warring parties feel ethically and morally responsible for stopping the use of landmines and facilitating the handling of casualties.

Through a moral leverage strategy, the ICRC leverages the power of norms and principles contained in International Humanitarian Law (IHL) to remind warring parties of their obligations to protect civilians. The true stories of ERW victims were documented and publicized, increasing moral distress around the world. This moral pressure is not only symbolic, but also has a significant political effect as it can strengthen the ICRC's position in humanitarian diplomacy and enhance the reputation of parties who violate humanitarian law. This method in Myanmar helps open up space for humanitarian discussion and encourages the armed forces to provide limited humanitarian access to deal with victims.

However, the Leverage Politics strategy implemented by the ICRC in dealing with ERW victims in Myanmar faces various obstacles that limit its effectiveness. As a neutral humanitarian organization, the ICRC has no direct political or material pressure instruments and is highly dependent on external actors such as donor

countries and international advocacy networks. Myanmar's authoritarian and closed political conditions make the ICRC's moral pressure often not responded to substantially, weakening its strategic thrust. (Watch Human Rights, n.d.) In addition, if the violation continues to recur without any real consequences, moral pressure has the potential to lose legitimacy and be considered mere rhetoric. The dilemma between maintaining neutrality and exerting political pressure also limits the ICRC's room for maneuver in urging structural policy changes. As a result, the impact of political leverage on ERW victim protection is more indirect and long-term, while victims' needs are urgent and require swift action.

4. Emphasis on Accountability Politics in the Convention on Certain Weapons (CCW)

Accountability Politics works by highlighting the gap between formal promises and real practices on the ground, so that the actors concerned are encouraged to comply with the obligations they have agreed upon. First, the ICRC emphasizes Myanmar's obligations as a party to the Convention on Certain Weapons (CCW), Protocol V., which requires parties involved in the conflict to take steps to reduce the harm posed by the remnants of war explosives. (ICRC, 2014) The contents of protocol V are as follows

The Protocol obliges each party involved in an armed conflict to:

- a. Marking and clearing ERWs in the territories they control after the conflict. (Art. 3(2))
- b. Provides technical, material, and financial assistance to facilitate the cleanup of residual war explosives (ERWs) generated from its operations and located in areas not under its control. This assistance can be provided directly to the parties controlling the territory or through third parties such as the United Nations, international agencies, or non-governmental organizations. (Art. 3(1))
- c. Take all possible precautions to protect civilians from the impact of the ERW. This can include fencing and monitoring of areas affected by the ERW, as well as the provision of risk warnings and education. (Art. 5)
- d. Records information about explosives used by its armed forces and, after the end of active combat, shares that information with other parties involved in the conflict and organizations involved in the cleanup of residual explosives (ERWs) or programs to warn civilians of the dangers of such devices. (Art. 4) (ICRC, 2014, p. 4)

This is the reason to influence a policy of a government to regulate the cleaning, tagging, and dissemination of information related to ERW. Through bilateral communications, the ICRC routinely reminds the Myanmar government and armed groups of their obligations to protect civilians and prevent the use of antipersonnel mines. Although Myanmar has not ratified *Ottawa Treaty (Mine Ban Treaty)*, (Landmine

& Cluster Munition monitor, 2022, p. 4) The ICRC uses CCW Protocol V as a normative basis for demanding state accountability to victims.

ICRC uses *accountability politics* to advocate for humanitarian access. By reminding the military junta of the basic principles of international humanitarian law, the ICRC seeks to assert that denying access to medical and rehabilitation services for victims of ERW is a violation of international obligations. Although its influence is limited due to the closed nature of Myanmar's military regime, this strategy has still resulted in some achievements, such as limited permits for the ICRC and the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) to run Risk Awareness and Safer Behaviour (RASB) programs and physical rehabilitation services in certain areas. (Landmine & Cluster Munition monitor, 2022, p. 23)

The Accountability Politics strategy implemented by the ICRC in dealing with ERW in Myanmar has an important significance in affirming international legal responsibilities addressed to the military junta and other armed entities, although its effectiveness is still limited. Through this methodology, the ICRC consistently emphasized to the junta the principles of IHL, particularly regarding the state's obligation to ensure access to medical care and rehabilitation for those affected by armed conflict. This strategic approach strengthens the ICRC's position as a neutral and independent organization that is firmly grounded in the principles of international law, both morally and legally. The concrete results of this advocacy can be seen from the ICRC's success in obtaining limited permits to carry out Risk Awareness and Safe Behaviour (RASB) programmes along with physical rehabilitation services in various regions, despite continued strict government oversight.

However, this strategy also shows structural and political limitations. The closed nature of Myanmar's military regime and the absence of ratification of the Ottawa Treaty limit the ICRC's room to pressure the country to make substantive policy changes related to the use of landmines and the protection of ERW victims. Accountability Politics in this context functions more as a mechanism for affirming moral and legal responsibilities, rather than a tool to encourage major policy changes directly. Nevertheless, the success of this strategy remains evident in its ability to safeguard the humanitarian space, maintain the legitimacy of the ICRC in the eyes of the international community, and ensure that ERW victims receive basic services such as rehabilitation and risk training. In other words, the effectiveness of Accountability Politics in Myanmar is more limited.

Challenge of the ICRC Strategy on the Military Junta and the Group Armed in Myanmar

The impact of the International Committee of the Red Cross' (ICRC) strategy on the military junta and armed groups in Myanmar in 2022–2023 shows that although these institutions have managed to defend the humanitarian space, their influence on structural and policy changes is still very limited. The ICRC as the humanitarian actors seeks to use *moral leverage* through victim documentation, mine danger awareness

campaigns, and humanitarian diplomacy approaches to pressure the junta to stop the use of landmines. However, the military government still shows high resistance to such normative pressures. Restricted access to conflict areas and strict supervision of humanitarian activities have narrowed the ICRC's space of movement. (Jazeera, n.d.) This indicates that the junta is systematically rejecting humanitarian aid in conflict-affected areas.

Myanmar's lack of commitment to international humanitarian law has also hampered the effectiveness of the ICRC's strategy. Myanmar has no international legal obligation to clear landmines or pay compensation to victims because the country is not a signatory to the Ottawa Treaty. Often, the ICRC's efforts to remind the junta of the principles of the Geneva Conventions are only formally accepted with no results on the ground. The report also stated that the junta rejected the ICRC's request to resume visits to prisons, indicating that the regime was unwilling to cooperate with international humanitarian agencies. (Irrawaddy.com, n.d.)

The ICRC's strategy seems to focus more on the normative level than the structural level of policy. Although victim awareness and documentation campaigns have succeeded in drawing attention to the issue of ERW, there has been no substantial change in the military or guerrilla regimes in terms of policy shifts. The accessibility of humanitarian organizations as well as the ICRC seems to depend heavily on the political context. These factors suggest that the ICRC's approach to advocacy still faces challenges in authoritarian countries that reject international accountability.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the success of the strategy of the ICRC in serving persons affected by ERW in Myanmar during the period 2022–2023 is relatively substantial in the midst of extremely complex political and security circumstances. The ICRC is able to utilize four main strategies (information politics, symbolic politics, leverage politics, and accountability politics) in a complementary manner to defend the humanitarian space and fight for the protection of war-affected civilians. Through information politics, the ICRC has succeeded in building credibility as a trusted source of data and disseminating relevant information to the public and the international community. Symbolic politics reinforces humanitarian messages through the use of Red Cross symbols and victim narratives that elicit global public empathy, thereby encouraging moral and political support for humanitarian issues in Myanmar.

Meanwhile, leverage politics serves as a means of moral pressure to remind armed actors of their obligations under international humanitarian law, although its influence is limited due to the military junta's lack of commitment and Myanmar's repressive political conditions. On the other hand, accountability politics strengthens the moral legitimacy of the ICRC by affirming the principle of state responsibility and obligation to war victims, while ensuring that medical and rehabilitation services can continue to be carried out in the affected areas. However, Myanmar's closed military regime and failure to ratify the Ottawa Agreement limits the ICRC's ability to pressure

the country to change key policies regarding the use of landmines and the protection of ERW victims. Therefore, the two politically related strategies have not been able to assist many ICRCs in achieving significant policy changes in Myanmar. In addition, the ICRC's position of maintaining neutrality and impartiality makes it impossible for the organization to use direct political or material pressure on the armed forces. As a result, these two strategies are only able to function at the normative level, namely as moral and ethical reminders for the parties to the conflict without having sufficient coercive power to encourage structural change. These four strategies collectively succeeded in maintaining the continuity of the ICRC's humanitarian mission amid limited access and high political risks. The TAN approach makes the ICRC not only an aid implementer, but also a transnational advocacy actor capable of mobilizing international opinion and expanding cross-border humanitarian solidarity.

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