

I am Dr Zoe Bedford and I have completed a thesis on the peace process in Myanmar.

If it is relevant to your inquiry I could speak on the flaws in the 21st Century Panglong peace process - this is a process that has been supported by Australia via DFAT.

However, the issues are numerous – in summary:

1) The peace process focuses on Unity

- this is not an engaging prospect to minority people who feel threatened by the army of the majority people.

2) The Peace process had 3 main parties being: the Tatmadaw (Myanmar Military), the Myanmar Government and the Ethnic Minorities Army representatives.

- This process was too ‘Top Heavy’ and did not consider Lederach’s peacebuilding pyramid which recommends inclusion of middle level leadership such as Ethnic and religious leaders, academics and humanitarian leaders and the inclusion of Grassroots leadership such as local leaders, refugee camp leaders and leaders of Indigenous NGOs.
- This process failed to be gender inclusive with very little women represented and no process for engaging women in the process.

3) The peace process was limited in its scope and would not engage on critical issues that were key to the success of the process such as:

- The 2008 constitution which secures power in the hands of the military (Tatmadaw) and leave the country vulnerable to military coups (as we have seen in 2021)
- The military refused to engage on a key demand of ethnic leadership which was Federalisation (or at least the de-centralisation of Myanmar power structures)

The failure of the peace process has been indicative of the coup – which has exposed that the Tatmadaw still have too much power under the 2008 constitution and will use that power to take over the country at any time they please, in a violent manner.