TALKING TO IIMM:
WHAT WITNESSES SHOULD KNOW

WHO ARE WE AND WHY ARE WE TALKING TO YOU?

We are the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (known as IIMM or Myanmar Mechanism) which is part of the United Nations. Our main role is to help ensure justice for people in Myanmar who have suffered serious international crimes, such as war crimes, crimes against humanity or genocide. To do this, we need to speak to people like you who experienced, witnessed or know about these crimes.

We are not a court or the police, and we cannot arrest, prosecute or hold trials. Instead, we collect, analyse and safely store information so that there is strong evidence available to share with courts, if they take up these cases. We collect information such as photos, videos and documents, and speak to people like you so that we can investigate what happened and who is responsible for the crimes.

WHO IS AN INVESTIGATOR?

An investigator is someone who listens carefully to your experiences and takes detailed notes to record everything you have said. They will ask many questions and review the information with you to make sure your information can be used in court.

WHO IS AN INTERPRETER?

An interpreter is a bridge between you and us. We still speak directly to each other, but the interpreter conveys our questions in your language and your answers back into English so that we can understand each other clearly.

WHAT IS EVIDENCE?

Evidence is information that helps show what happened and who may be responsible. It can include what people saw and heard, what they experienced, as well as documents, photos, videos, maps, medical records or other materials.

WHAT IS A COURT?

A court is a place where judges decide, using evidence, whether a person, an entity or a government is responsible for crimes. Courts may be national, including courts in Myanmar, or international, such as the International Court of Justice. They follow formal procedures and both sides present evidence and arguments before the judges reach a decision.

It may take a number of years for cases to be heard in courts, which is why we safely store what you tell us, and other evidence, so that it can be used any time in the future.

WHO IS A WITNESS AND WHAT IS A WITNESS STATEMENT?

A witness is a person, like you, who shares what they saw, experienced or know. A witness statement is a written record of what you tell us, which we read back to you so you can correct it or add it to it. If you are satisfied that the content of the statement accurately reflects what you told us, you will be asked to sign it. These statements are important for helping courts understand the crimes that were committed in Myanmar.

WHAT IF I DON'T KNOW OR DON'T REMEMBER SOMETHING?

If you do not know or do not remember something, it is completely okay to say that. Please do not guess, and if something is based on what you heard from someone else rather than what you experienced yourself, please tell us that.

Participating in this interview is your choice. You can ask questions, pause, take breaks or stop the interview at any time.

HOW AM I SUPPORTED DURING THE INTERVIEW PROCESS?

Our investigators work with our Witness Protection and Support Team to assess your safety, security and well-being when engaging with us. They will work with you before the interview to understand your situation and put measures in place to help ensure your safety and well-being throughout the interview process. This can include support aimed at reducing stress linked to sharing difficult experiences.

WHAT DOES "INFORMED CONSENT" AND "CONFIDENTIALITY" MEAN?

Informed consent means that we explain to you what we would like to do with your information, and you decide whether you are comfortable with that. We will ask you if we can share your identity and the information you give us with specific courts or authorities. We will explain what this could involve, and you can ask questions at any time. If you agree to share your information, it may be used in the future in court cases or other legal processes.

Confidentiality means that we handle what you tell us carefully, and that we will never share any information that identifies you unless you agree. This is to ensure your safety and protect our investigations. We strongly recommend that you do not discuss the content of our meetings with anyone else.

WHAT DOES THE MECHANISM DO WITH THE INFORMATION I SHARE?

We store your information securely and look at it carefully together with other information we have collected. If you agree, we may share relevant information with national or international authorities that are investigating crimes committed in Myanmar. We will only do this if we believe your information will be handled safely and used in a fair legal process. This includes checking that there are protections in place for witnesses and victims, especially if there are concerns about safety.