

Global Justice Center

Human Rights Through the Rule of Law

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Dear Friends,

September has obviously been a time of great turmoil, as we dealt with the slow leaks of news, the horrific pictures of atrocity and the deafening silence of the military crackdown in Burma. GJC has the fortune of having a Burmese woman working in our office and during the first few days of the crisis, she was able to speak to some people on the phone in Burma and she read all the Burmese blogs. As the junta cut off cell phones and internet access, her ability to get information from inside Burma was severely, and then totally, curtailed.

Due to our recent trip to Thailand, where GJC staff met with the Burma Lawyer's Council, we are in a position to offer an informed opinion on aspects of this recent crisis. On September 29th, GJC and the BLC issued a joint press release calling for criminal accountability for members of the SPDC cabal. Following the issuance of the press release, on September 28th, GJC president Janet Benshoof was invited to speak on BBC "News 24" during their 8pm program. Additionally, The Nation, South East Asia's English language 'paper of record' printed our press release in full.

http://www.nationmultimedia.com/2007/09/29/opinion/opinion_30050677.php

Our calls for criminal accountability help rebut those claims that this is a purely internal state matter. The images of people risking their lives and the regime's willingness to kill peaceful demonstrators are an affront to the world and signal a threat beyond Burma's borders. In fact, the BLC just published an article by Janet, "Heinous Crimes in Burma and the International Criminal Court."

<http://www.globaljusticecenter.net/janetlawpapalajornalexcept.pdf>

Finally the Washington Post printed a letter to the editor written by Janet, criticizing an editorial by Fred Hiatt, which proposed potential amnesty for junta leaders.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/10/04/AR2007100402225.html>

GJC attended the Gambari briefing of the Security Council this morning, and applauds Slovakia for raising the issue of mass rapes that have characterized the carnage by the SPDC. Although the SC members recognized the abhorrent and unacceptable situation inside Burma, the discussion fell short of asking for criminal accountability for the crimes committed by the junta. France stated that if Myanmar refuses to cooperate and continues the repression then the SC would have to take "all action necessary." GJC applauds France's efforts and courage for demanding that condemnation is not enough!

As the situation in Burma stalls and the press coverage dims, the international community must not turn its back on the people of Burma. The world has now been fully alerted to the level of brutality which the Burmese military thugs freely use on unarmed, peaceful civilians. To quote the title of the famous book, the international community must accept that "London has been informed" and that the time for action is now.

Our thoughts remain with the people of Burma,
GJC