

Justice in Burma

Friday, October 5, 2007; A20

In his Oct. 1 op-ed column, "[What We Owe the Burmese](#)," [Fred Hiatt](#) said that the recent upheaval in [Burma](#) shakes the certainty of the "primacy of justice," but that is precisely the point. The events must act as a reminder to all of us that terror, not justice, has been the modus operandi of the military juntas controlling Burma for more than 45 years. Rape, torture, forced labor and now the killing of monks are the tools of criminal thugs posing as a regime.

The column said that Gen. [Than Shwe](#)'s actions call for a trial but then went on to say that an amnesty for members of the junta would be acceptable if it brought political concessions. Mr. Hiatt mentioned Russian and Indian arms sales to the "monsters" without calling for action in response, and, as to [China](#), he only called for a boycott of the Olympics. The people of Burma deserve to have their rights promoted, not restricted by amnesty provisions that would preclude them from seeking access to the [International Criminal Court](#) via a Security Council referral. Eliminating criminal accountability for the junta thugs would encourage dictators elsewhere to seek such Faustian deals.

We should try to atone for not stopping genocide in the past by having the [U.N. Security Council](#) take firm actions to help the people of Burma, including considering sending peacekeeping forces to stop bloodshed and creating a commission to investigate war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

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