

EU: Act on UN Inquiry into international crimes in Burma Human Rights Watch 18 October 2010 Governments
governments concerned about war crimes and crimes against humanity in Burma should move beyond mere condemnation and establish a United Nations commission of inquiry as follow-up to a UN expert's report on Burma released today, Human Rights Watch said today. In a letter to European Union High Representative Catherine Ashton released today, Human Rights Watch called for Ashton and the EU to back the report of the UN special rapporteur on Burma, Thomas Quintana, and show leadership in support of a commission of inquiry (...)

(...) Burma's security forces have committed deliberate attacks on civilians, summary executions, sexual violence, torture, use of child soldiers, attacks on populations' food supplies, forced displacement of populations, and use of anti-personnel landmines. Ethnic minority armed groups have been responsible for summary executions, used child soldiers, and deployed anti-personnel landmines. These abuses have gone unpunished for decades.

In his latest report released on October 18, Quintana expanded and strengthened his call for a commission of inquiry. His report states: "If the Government fails to assume this responsibility [to investigate international crimes

], then the responsibility falls to the international community... [T]he United Nations can establish a commission of inquiry into crimes against humanity through resolutions adopted by the Human Rights Council, the General Assembly or the Security Council, or the Secretary-General could establish it on his own initiative. Justice and accountability are the very foundation of the United Nations system rooted in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which calls for an international order in which the rights and freedoms set out in the Declaration can be fully realized. Failing to act on accountability in Myanmar will embolden the perpetrators of international crimes and further postpone long-overdue justice." (...)

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