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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Global Justice Center Announces the Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1820 and the Report's Noteworthy Inclusion of Burma

In 2008, in a groundbreaking move to change the global dialogue on sexual violence, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1820 on sexual violence in armed conflict; this July, signaling yet another important development on the recognition of sexual violence as an international crime of concern and tactic of war around the world, the Secretary General released his first report (Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1820) to UN leadership on SCR 1820. This report includes recognition of areas of the world in which widespread sexual violence is of international concern, primarily Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan, all three of which are now under investigation by the ICC. Notably, the GJC would like to highlight the Secretary General's inclusion of the situation in Burma/Myanmar in this seminal report, as well as the other areas of concern where impunity for these crimes continues. This first report sets the standard for how SCR 1820 will be reviewed in the future, and thus, it must be appropriately representative of the international presence of this heinous crime.

Recent developments in international law, including the passage in 2000 of Resolution 1325 which was the first Security Council Resolution ever to focus on women, and, specifically, their critical role in establishing and keeping peace, are part of a growing recognition of the importance of ending impunity for sexual violence and of ensuring equality considerations in ending conflict and building peaceful societies. United Nation's Security Council Resolution 1820 on Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict took this development further by reaffirming the Security Council's commitment to ending sexual violence as a weapon of war and genocide.

In an effort to rectify the consequential omission of Burma/Myanmar from the report, prior to the publication of the final draft the Global Justice Center and the Women's League of Burma submitted a joint brief (Global Justice Center and Women's League of Burma's Joint Brief) in May 2009 to the Secretary General's Office on the gravity of the human rights violations and sexual violence in Burma/Myanmar, and the obligation of the Secretary General to recognize the plight of this region in his commitment to effectiveness and accuracy. While the final report does not go so far as to call for a commission of inquiry for Burma as it does for other nations, the Global Justice Center wants to applaud the committee for its inclusion of Burma in this report and encourage continued and increased efforts to address the ongoing crimes against women. Furthermore, based on the findings this report has recognized, the Global Justice Center encourages the Security Council to proceed with a commission of inquiry on Burma/Myanmar.

The Global Justice Center is a New York based international human rights organization. In partnership with the Burma Lawyers' Council and the Women's League of Burma, it is heading up a global campaign seeking a full investigation, as required by international law, into the ongoing heinous crimes in Burma.

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