

Book Reviews/Comptes rendus

PATRICIA M. MARCHAK, *No Easy Fix: Global Responses to Internal Wars and Crimes Against Humanity*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008, xxiii + 375 p., index.

Drawing on field research in Cambodia, Rwanda, and the former Yugoslavia, Patricia Marchak critically assesses the relevance of post-cold war international interventions, the effectiveness of international criminal courts, and the conditions which determine how selective societies deal with the aftermath of internal war, genocide, and crimes against humanity. Marchak concludes that the “new wars” of the post-cold war era require interventions that take into account the unique situations of each warring society. She further criticizes the international community for responding – or failing to respond – to internal crises based on the national interests of intervening parties. With regards to international courts, Marchak argues that Western-dominated international law can hold leaders accountable for serious crimes against humanity; yet, as the case studies in her book illustrate, the international courts provide little by way of reconciliation to broken societies.

In Rwanda, the international community offered limited intervention, which prevented the United Nations’ “peacekeeping” operation from enforcing peace or stopping genocide. Although France failed to provide troops or equipment to support the UN mission, they eventually intervened. However, given France’s long history of “warm relationships with the Hutu government and traders,” they were hardly a neutral force, Marchak argues (154). Ultimately, the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) took control of Rwanda, enabling the Tutsis and the international community to clearly identify the Hutus as the perpetrators of genocide. Since the genocide, Marchak reveals that numerous Hutus have been jailed, while claims of Tutsi war crimes have been silenced. Despite recognizing state attempts to eradicate the colonially imposed categories of Hutu and Tutsi, Marchak criticizes the present government for centralizing authority and using a heavy-handed approach to enforce Hutu accountability, suggesting the current government is reestablishing the mistrust created under Belgium colonial rule.

In Cambodia, the Khmer Rouge are identified as the perpetrators, victimizing the rest of the population. Yet, as Marchak describes, the Khmer Rouge represent a large and well-integrated portion of the population making it difficult to identify culpability and to implement accountability. Thus, unlike Rwanda, many “perpetrators” remain in positions of authority after the demise of the Khmer Rouge. Despite applying Cambodian laws and international criminal laws, the proposed “extraordinary chambers” will only try a handful of Khmer Rouge leaders, leading Marchak to question whether these trials can remove the threat

of violence facing the Cambodian people. Marchak presents bleak prospects for Cambodians as long as former members of the Khmer Rouge continue to occupy government positions and the rule of law fails to protect the lives of ordinary citizens. Although offering no suggestions for the Cambodian case, Marchak's analysis effectively underscores the complicated nature of legal responses to serious crimes against humanity.

In the former Yugoslavia, there were no identifiable victors and each state blamed the others for perpetrating crimes against humanity. In this case, the international courts became a key agent of accountability, although they gained little legitimacy in Serbia and two key fugitives charged with the mass slaughter of Muslims at Srebrenica remain protected inside the borders of Serbia or Republika Srpska. As a result, Marchak suggests the courts have done little to persuade Serb hardliners to take responsibility for the breakup of Yugoslavia. Although the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia was limited in capacity by its temporary nature, the ICC promised the potential of a new phase in international justice. Yet, international courts offered predominately Western forms of justice and Marchak rightly questions the universal application of Western criminal law.

For Marchak, the inability of the international community to offer "disinterested" or neutral humanitarian intervention and a keen understanding of the unique situation presented by the conflict setting is the reason to create a parallel organization to the ICC. She proposes a Global Intervention Institute (GII) equipped with groups of specialists capable of providing case-specific advice on conflict prevention and, if necessary, appropriate forms of intervention that will limit casualties and promote dialogue among warring factions. If all else fails, the GII will have the capacity to require military intervention from North Atlantic Treaty Organization and UN forces and will dictate which parties should be suppressed by this military intervention.

Despite her compelling subtitle, *Global Responses to Internal Wars and Crimes Against Humanity*, and her critique of Western forms of international justice, Marchak's study fails to move beyond "Western" conceptions of intervention to take into account the capacity of the Global South to participate in the design and implementation of future humanitarian responses. Apart from ignoring the voices from the Global South and placing unwarranted trust in the ability of Western "scientific specialists," Marchak's suggestion of a Global Intervention Institute remains highly idealistic. When disinterested parties fail to contribute resources to prevent crimes against humanity, why would these parties agree to participate in an external arrangement that obligates them to contribute resources and military forces in the future? Perhaps Marchak might temper her ideal construction of the GII with suggestions on how to mobilize nationalistic interests towards sustaining costly long-term interventions in the internal wars of sovereign nations.

Marchak's analysis is also limited by the disorganized presentation of her book. Although her combined journalistic and academic style provides a significant amount of detail to the reader, her central arguments are reserved for the last two chapters of the book. This prevents the reader from engaging with her main ideas

while interacting with the three case studies, forcing readers to retrospectively assess her suggestions. Nonetheless, by complicating the often oversimplified issue of humanitarian intervention and raising a controversial alternative to contemporary institutional responses, Marchak's book provides a useful platform for discussion that will benefit senior undergraduate and graduate students studying in areas related to human rights, international criminal law, development, conflict, and peace. Marchak's work provides more questions than answers, but the valuable questions she raises will no doubt spur future research and conversation that will, hopefully, enable the international humanitarian community to overcome its current impotence in the face of genocide and serious crimes against humanity.

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