

Far less problematic, and far more amenable to resolution, are the UN's internal constraints on effective monitoring. For example, does an HRO have sufficient staff with sufficient resources to fully observe human rights or even receive and process a possible flood of communications? How can other UN field partners help, and how can this be coordinated?

8.2 Field Partners and SOPs

Many 'monitoring' activities can and will be carried out by the UN operations' human rights 'specialists', largely located in the HRO if there is one. However the broad range of UN partners as set out in Chapter 5 above will also feed into this monitoring. In particular, both CIVPOL and the military often provide particularly numerous, widespread, and logical 'monitoring' partners. They will dramatically enlarge the ambit of an HRO's monitoring scope, and clear communications channels and mechanisms are needed to enhance this cooperative monitoring. Appropriate taskings will vary for different human rights field partners and for different operations, so standing operating procedures (SOPs) and reporting channels need to be customized to avoid duplication and to maximize UN field capacity.

For example it is important within the larger UN operation to clarify who is undertaking particular investigations. Separate UN investigatory responsibility centres need to cooperate and share information. In ONUSAL, there were problems with the division of labour between the HRO and CIVPOL. Particularly in the first year of the operation, there were several instances where duplicate parallel investigations were being conducted. Such cooperation and coordination within a UN operation will benefit from common standing operating procedures (SOPs) and open lines of communication. Operational links with 'monitors' outside of the UN operation proper, eg. UN tribunals, NGOs, etc., would also benefit from some common procedures and regular communications, albeit tailored to reflect their different functions, issues of confidentiality, and the need for operational 'distance' to avoid conflicts of interest.

However, despite the potential for involving a wide range of 'partners', there is still a need for a centralized staff capacity "to systematize information coming in from regional offices, to provide guidance to those offices and to address queries and difficult cases" and there is probably the need to create "a special investigations unit to deal with complex cases, or cases affecting more than one region."¹⁷⁶

Recommendation #52

It is recommended that HROs create a central information gathering and investigation support capacity, including where necessary a special investigations unit to deal with complex cases.

¹⁷⁶ p.154, *Haiti: Learning the Hard Way*, Lawyers Committee 1995 op cit.