

At the operational level the HCHR, including the Centre, should be involved in the actual creation of the HRO. For example, this could range from consultations on the formulation of operational goals and procedures, to the provision of expertise and input into HRO staffing. At times, it would be useful to loan Centre personnel to UN field operations. The High Commissioner's and Centre's consultative and input role should occur right from the beginning of any human rights field mechanism⁸⁴ or HRO, and continue throughout the duration of the operation. The HRO and the UN headquarters office of primary responsibility for mounting HROs such as the Department of Political Affairs, must treat this HCHR advisory role as substantive, not perfunctory. In fact, there should be a mandatory requirement to seek the advice of the HCHR.

Recommendation #14

It is recommended that the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Centre for Human Rights have a mandated role to advise, and facilitate where appropriate, those mounting UN human rights operations.

For both roles, monitoring and advising an HRO, the HCHR needs to have formal access to HRO operations. While the HCHR and the Centre would be expected to keep the SRSG or field operation head informed of their field activities, this would not include any formal reporting obligation towards the SRSG nor infer that the SRSG had authority over the HCHR's activities in the operation area.

In a broader sense, the High Commissioner's mandate includes a key role "To coordinate the human rights promotion and protection activities throughout the United Nations system"⁸⁵. There are a multitude of UN agencies and other UN bodies dealing with human rights issues or programs that can impact on a UN field operation. Invariably an HRO does not have the standing nor the capacity to coordinate all of these other UN activity centres. The HCHR on the other hand does, and should, coordinate all of these UN human rights activity centres.

Coordinating UN activities in human rights is a difficult task much akin to DHA's role in the coordination of all UN humanitarian activity. Like DHA, the HCHR has not been given the power to control or direct the rest of the UN in the human rights field. The High Commissioner has only been given the duty to coordinate. When attempting to coordinate through moral suasion, one must be seen as strictly neutral with no hidden agendas such as a desire to enlarge one's operational scope at the expense of others. Having their own HROs would lend credence to any perception that the HCHR and the Centre were attempting to expand their own operational 'turf' as opposed to being an 'honest broker' or coordinator.

As will be discussed in the next section, it appears that the optimum location for a UN HQ office of primary responsibility for HROs should be in UNNY. This however complicates the

⁸⁴ The HCHR and the Centre should play a similar role in the human rights activity of any part of the UN.

⁸⁵ para. 4(i), GA Res. 48/141, 20 December 1993.