

act as the central clearing house in the field, and the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Centre for Human Rights could act as the clearing house for UN headquarters.

The more politically sensitive aspect of reporting within the UN involves informing senior UN bodies such as the Security Council and the General Assembly; informing senior UN staff including the field operation head (eg. SRSG); informing local government; and informing the public both locally and internationally. The HRO should have strong input into decisions on if and when such 'political' reporting should take place. Usually the HRO will be delegated the overall responsibility for preparing the reports. It is important that the HRO head or the SRSG actively undertake public reporting albeit conditioned by the human rights operational implications of what is reported as well as when and how.

In particular, relations with the local authorities can be particularly sensitive. On human rights issues, it is logical that the larger UN operation normally be represented by the HRO, who would liaise regularly with local government to raise human rights cases and make recommendations for government action. In doing so, it should be remembered that an over rigid focus on the timing and content of HRO public reports could jeopardize the advancement of human rights objectives. When issues are taken forward by the SRSG or other senior UN operation staff, they should only do so after receiving a full briefing from the HRO.

Equally problematic is the political and moral pressuring of member states and senior UN HQ staff. An HRO or its human rights field partners such as the military or CIVPOL, are not in the optimum position to exert such pressure. The High Commissioner for Human Rights on the other hand is particularly well placed and mandated to pressure member states and senior UN HQ staff, so as to "play an active role in removing the current obstacles and in meeting the challenges to the full realization of all human rights and in preventing the continuation of human rights violations throughout the world..."¹⁸⁴

Monitoring for effect will always be full of grey areas and political dangers. Diplomacy and circumspection on the part of HROs and other UN operations staff will always be essential. However, they must never lose sight of their goal of protecting human rights, and it is incumbent upon them to innovatively press for action on the violations being monitored.

¹⁸⁴ para 4(f), GA Res. 48/141, 20 December 1993.