

such as tribunals or sanctions. Invariably most activities can be undertaken more cost effectively by others, especially NGOs. That division of human rights tasks to those best placed to achieve them will be discussed later in this chapter and in Chapter 5 on human rights field partners. Meanwhile, this discussion of the role and responsibility of HROs should be viewed in the context of that larger human rights constellation and field partnerships.

A UN HRO has roughly two primary roles. The first which we can loosely style as the **operation role**, consists of HRO staff themselves carrying out human rights promotion and protection tasks that require particular human rights expertise. This would include technical knowledge of international human rights standards and procedures, operational skills on how to monitor and at times implement such standards, and political acumen on how to achieve the most in that country's particular political/cultural context. A key operational role would include investigations, possibly ranging all of the way from interviewing alleged victims or witnesses, to forensic investigations of massacres. Each operation will face different degrees and types of human rights violations, and will have different mandates. Part three of the study looking at the *how* of working on human rights in field operations, particularly chapters seven through nine, will overview many of these activities that an HRO might be expected to conduct.

The second HRO primary role can be styled as a **cooperation/coordination role**, where an HRO works with and through its field partners. A human rights operation will never be as large as it could or should be. The UN has scarce resources⁶⁹ and often limited political will, so that the size of HROs will reflect that reality. For these reasons, but more importantly to optimize the use of UN field capacity to maximize human rights, an HRO must understand both the role and the potential of UN and other field partners such as the military, CIVPOL,⁷⁰ or local government and NGOs. Chapter 5 following, will examine who those partners are, and their potential.

HRO staff must motivate, liaise with, work through, and facilitate the work of all of those partners. This involves a degree of cooperation and coordination that is extremely difficult to implement in the absence of any formal control by an HRO over what those partners actually do. HRO staff could usefully consult with the Department of Humanitarian Affairs on how they attempt, without any delegated control powers, to effect their humanitarian assistance coordination mandate.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Golub tentatively recommends the establishment of "a fund upon which the Secretary-General could draw to launch assessment and planning missions and to undertake other preparatory activity in reasonable anticipation of receiving approval to launch an [HRO]". p.45, Golub op. cit. Not only valuable in its own right to enhance UN rapid reaction to early warnings, such a capacity would allow the SG to more effectively put the issue of a possible HRO on the political agenda.

⁷⁰ CIVPOL has particular skills for various human rights task, eg. forensic investigations, and individual CIVPOL often will be on staff with an HRO, in addition to the UN CIVPOL operation itself providing a potentially key human rights field partner.

⁷¹ In 1991 the UN Secretariat Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) was given the mandate of "coordinating and facilitating" UN humanitarian assistance, and even more problematically, NGO and bilateral humanitarian assistance. What they were not given was the ability to coordinate by command. GA Res 46/182 Dec. 17 1991 (Strengthening of the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Emergency Assistance of the United Nations)