

It may be more difficult to gather information on the human rights situation in countries where you are accredited, but where there is no Canadian presence. One of the most reliable sources of information are Canadian aid workers, who often appreciate Canada-based mission personnel visits. These aid workers are often willing to help set up meetings with potential sources of information.

When meeting contacts to discuss human rights concerns, officers are encouraged to emphasize the confidentiality of the discussions.

Officers will find below a list of suggested sources they can draw upon to gather information. The list is by no means exhaustive. Officers should remember that the more the information is cross-referenced, the better.

#### **Local sources**

- Private citizens and their families and associates claiming violations of their rights;
- Human rights activists;
- Politicians and government officials;
- Members of the official and unofficial political opposition;
- National human rights institutions and ombuds;
- Electoral commissions;
- Congressional or parliamentary librarians (may exchange local legislative and constitutional texts for equivalent Canadian material);
- Military sources, police and prison officials;
- Judges and lawyers, bar associations;
- The media and members of the press;
- Academics and members of student organizations, writers and artists;
- Research institutes and other think-tanks;
- Medical associations;
- Members of local NGOs that have a human rights interest (women's groups, ethnic associations, community organizations, trade unions, peasants' associations);
- Members of the local clergy and church organizations;
- Honourary Consuls.

#### **Foreign sources**

- Like-minded diplomats;
- CIDA consultants and personnel in the field;
- Canadian and other journalists;
- Members of Canadian and other foreign NGOs working in the country (especially those with ground-level contacts);
- Members of foreign missionary societies;
- Representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (Officers should be aware that ICRC representatives very often operate under strict rules of confidentiality in order to gain access to political prisoners or territories otherwise inaccessible);