

of the wider policies of that operation. This may require a carefully calibrated approach, for example where over-zealous pursuit of the human rights mandate could have a negative bearing on the cooperation of the parties on which the overall success of the peace-keeping operation may depend.” (Emphasis added)

Such qualified support is common throughout the UN, and is of course best resolved by detailed written mandates. Unfortunately, attempts to get such detailed authorization is almost impossible. Sometimes it is because member states or the parties to the conflict do in fact oppose such human rights action. More often, as evidenced by DPA's activities over the past 5 years, countries are happy for the UN to quietly take human rights action as long as the member states are not asked to publicly go into too much detail as to what a human rights mandate includes. ONUSAL was an exception to this, and in part this explains the greater success of ONUSAL as opposed to other HROs.

This situation is not about to change quickly. This lack of specific human rights mandate is particularly problematic for those parts of the UN or UN operations which are not fully aware of the broad range of practical applications of those unwritten UN human rights mandates. Often the mere mention of human rights conjures up visions of very vocal and tenacious human rights advocates like Amnesty International or Médecins sans Frontières, or international human rights tribunals and massive armed intervention to protect victims and incarcerate violators. Unaware of the multitude of other applications and gradations of human rights promotion and protection, many in UN headquarters and in UN field operations are not immediately aware of what their role is, and often see human rights as unnecessarily complicating their job.

In fact as is outlined below, their options are often both critical to advancing human rights, and a comfortable fit with what they already perceive as their main field objectives. It should be noted that frequently many UN field components are already carrying out human rights related work but have not recognized it as such. Certainly most military peace-keepers or CIVPOL, once the practical human rights options are laid out for them, recognize that much of what they do already is part and parcel of human rights protection and promotion.

Such human rights awareness, both of human rights per se and their option in protecting them, varies greatly. Depending on the cultural and training background of individuals and national contingents, such human rights awareness can range from abysmal to quite good, albeit often fragmented and culturally specific. For example, those measuring high on human rights awareness might be conversant with women's rights in their own country, but not so conversant about the operation country context nor what to do about it, if anything. Therefore, a common theme for all partners is the need for clearer human rights mandates combined with training on how to operationalize their human rights roles in particular operation country contexts.

Recommendation #21

It is recommended that all components of UN field operations be mandated and trained to play appropriate roles in human rights promotion and protection.