

Resources

In all of the activities of the Centre, finances remain a major factor. Some claim that the Centre itself does not have sufficient resources, many others claim they mis-spend what they get. All agree that not enough money is reaching human rights promotion and protection.

In this regard it is useful to quickly look at a Rwandan humanitarian 'success' story, UNHCR's service packages concept (see Ch.4 for details). The idea was UNHCR would identify a list of distinct tasks which countries could choose to carry out, such as supplying water to a particular refugee camp. While UNHCR wants to improve on how this process played out in the field, by and large the service packages worked well. They allowed countries and organizations to 'wave the flag' by carrying out well define 'national' tasks, while at the same time providing necessary humanitarian services. Countries provided cohesive 'service' teams who invariably arrived with pre-existing operational structures and functional working relations. The added bonus of course was that the packages were paid for by the donor nation.

This was very much akin to national peacekeeping units who remain as self contained companies or battalions etc., but who plug into and are controlled by multinational headquarters with force commanders and others who report directly to the UN. It is recognized that peacekeeping operational imperatives make this route relatively critical, and the desires of troop contributing nations make it a necessity.

Most of the roles of the UN Human Rights Centre can with innovative thinking lend themselves to a similar service packages approach. This is especially attractive since the Centre will continue to be starved of funds until it proves its can operate wisely and cost effectively. For example, early on in the Rwandan crisis, the US offered as human rights monitors approximately 300 ex Peace Corp individuals. All of them had worked in Rwanda and many of them spoke Kinyarwanda. Human Rights Watch and others had already started to train them, and 40 had received the necessary medical inoculations. It is not clear why the UN decided not to use them. One can surmise that such a massive US presence, when there were only 5 UN human rights monitors on the ground at the time, would have sent the wrong message. However, one wonders whether Rwandans would have differentiated much between Americans, Canadians, Europeans, Latin Americans, etc. Was there not some way in which some of the US monitors could have been used by the UN eg. in a small sector of Rwanda, and an appeal put out to other potential funders to provide similar teams?

Without getting too caught up on that particular example, it appears obvious that the Centre should seriously look at that and other potential areas where human rights service packages can be designed to allow individual countries or organizations to 'buy into' a program. For example, assuming that the Human Rights Centre developed sufficiently comprehensive operational procedures, reporting procedures, and field headquarters capacity, it seems quite feasible that countries could sent distinct teams of human rights monitors who would be assigned to particular