

Commissioner although some of his staff initially suggested the creation of a field operations unit set up apart from the Centre and reporting directly to the High Commissioner. It appears that they have since reconsidered that option and agree that such an option faces both political and operational impediments. Just the difficulty of starting up yet another UN field operations responsibility centre, combined with the obvious likelihood of duplication, appears to be sufficient grounds to rule out such an option.

These conclusions as to the inadvisability of the HCHR attempting to develop HRO support capacity, does not at all negate the fundamental importance of the HCHR and the Centre to future HROs. Their suggested role was discussed in the previous section. However, this leaves the outstanding question as to who should be the UN's primary office of responsibility for mounting HROs?

Certainly for the time being, DPA should remain that office of primary responsibility for mounting and administering human rights field operations. Not only have they been successfully operating as the HQ office of primary responsibility for four of the past five HROs, they are conveniently co-located with the Department of Peace-Keeping Operations. The close links between DPA and DPKO will enhance the coordination of human rights operations with military peace-keeping operations and CIVPOL operations.

In addition, DPA can easily delegate various taskings to New York Secretariat based units such as FALD which in turn can achieve substantial economy of scale and purpose as it already would be servicing many UN operation components, in particular military peace-keepers. For example, a common HQ facility such as FALD is much better placed to furnish communications equipment for an HRO. Common sourcing will ensure that such communications equipment is compatible with any larger UN operation and often speed its provision, as they are able to shift resources/equipment from elsewhere in the UN system or operation so as to avoid time consuming and costly efforts to purchase new equipment. Equally, DPA links with DHA which is also co-located in New York will facilitate coordination with humanitarian operations, although direct contact with agencies like UNHCR, UNDP and WFP will be extremely important.

Recommendation #16

It is recommended that the Department of Political Affairs be tasked as the UN Headquarters office of primary responsibility for mounting and administering human rights operations (HROs).

There would be benefits in DPA itself creating a specific division to act as the focus for human rights operations. Failure to clearly mandate a new or existing part of DPA to take overall responsibility for HROs has a number of management and organizational drawbacks. It also gives the impression that there is an operational vacuum, and naturally other parts of the UN will move to fill it. For example, and as discussed below in 4.6 and 6.1, Personnel Management Support Service (PMSS/FALD/DPKO) has been properly delegated and is filling parts of the HQ staffing function for HROs. PMSS could easily move beyond its competency