

with a view to creating a manual for field operations²¹⁶. They envisage that part of this project would create a roster of potential field staff, and institutions around the world would be tasked to carry out some of their initial training.

To a degree it is irrelevant whether the Centre, or DPA, take the lead in creating such model SOPs, although both need to collaborate. However, if DPA is designated as the primary office of responsibility for future HROs, then it makes sense that they take the lead on this project. At any rate, as we move into the fifth year of UN HROs, somebody at the UN has to take the initiative.

Recommendation #64

It is recommended that Department of Political Affairs or the Centre for Human Rights take the responsibility, in collaboration with the other, for the compilation of past HROs standing operating procedures (SOPs), and the creation of model SOPs for all stages of an HRO including advance missions, deployment, and field operations.

Proven principles and procedures can be drawn from the SOPs of related field operations, both UN and non-UN. This is particularly true for those HRO field activities that are generic in nature, as opposed to involving human rights issues per se. Such sources of proven procedures can be drawn from such bodies as military peace-keeping, CIVPOL operations, DHA (eg. its rapid reaction unit), UNHCR, and the many non-UN organizations that run field operations.

For SOPs dealing with substantive human rights issues, HROs can usefully draw on expertise from other human rights entities for ideas on guidelines and procedures to deal with issues such as human rights investigations, or protecting sources of information. Relevant agencies or bodies to consult would include UN treaty bodies, the Centre for Human Rights, and NGOs such as Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch.

It goes without saying that the rationale and value of model SOPs for HROs, as set out above, apply equally to HRO field partners such as CIVPOL and military peace-keepers. In addition, most of those partners are not aware of their human rights options, and SOPs will serve to further clarify what they can and should do. Hopefully those partners will become that much more comfortable with their human rights roles.

codes of conduct

Much like SOPs, codes of conduct provide important guidance for members of an HRO, or for other UN members of a larger UN field operation for when they are dealing with human

²¹⁶ In April 1996, the Norwegian Institute of Human Rights, at the behest of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, started to produce a manual for human rights monitoring and investigation, which will assist the preparation of stand-by forces, volunteers, and experts, doing short-term assignments for the HCHR and others in the UN.