

PREFACE

This study was commissioned by the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Division of Human Rights and Justice. The purpose was to provide the Department and interested Canadians with a comprehensive overview of human rights in UN field operations. It was felt that there was a need for a modicum of theory and fundamental principles so as to clarify the moral, ethical and legal grounds for such UN activity. The study however, concentrates on operational imperatives and practices. Sometimes this will consist of commenting on present practice by the UN or others. At other times, there is a need to recommend procedures or practices to meet gaps in the application of human rights in UN field operations.

This will not be a history of past operations, for this has been done far more comprehensively in five key works. The first two which started many of us thinking more seriously about the issue, are *The Lost Agenda: Human Rights and UN Field Operations* by Human Rights Watch 1993, and, *Peace-Keeping and Human Rights* by Amnesty International, January 1994 (including several early drafts). The three other major works which have taken us forward again in understanding what happened in the field are: *Honoring Human Rights and Keeping the Peace* by the Aspen Institute 1995; *Haiti: Learning the Hard Way: The UN/OAS Human Rights Monitoring Operation in Haiti 1993-94*, Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, 1995; and, *Improvising History: A Critical Evaluation of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador*, Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, 1995. All five are essential readings.

This study has gone through a number of drafts, and has benefitted enormously from literally hundreds of individuals who were kind enough to meet with me, or send me, their comments or pertinent information. I would like to particularly thank a number of individuals who generously spent an inordinate amount of time reviewing my drafts and suggested a myriad of changes or additions. I hope that I have reflected their comments properly, or where disagreeing, made my position clearer and perhaps more persuasive:

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This study is very much an initial foray into an extremely complex issue, that got more complex by the day. I hope that readers will send in critical comments, and additional material or readings that I should look at and include in subsequent versions. You can contact me at:

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Thanks,

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