

SOPs is that since most will only incur minor customization, incoming personnel that have served on other HROs will orient themselves and become operationally effective that much more rapidly.

Model SOPs can be usefully developed for various operational aspects of almost all HRO activities. For example, SOPs can be developed for the very first stage of any HRO, the pre-mission reconnaissance. The Department of Political Affairs (DPA) has evolved an ad-hoc practice of sending an advance team which should include the designated head of the HRO and their senior staff. They are in the field for 2-3 weeks and then return to UN headquarters to spend another 2-3 weeks drafting their report. The advance team comes up with detailed recommendations as to the structure and the work of the future HRO. Ad hoc check lists have been created for what they need to be looking at when in the field, and what issues their report should cover.

There then needs to be detailed SOPs for both the deployment and the conduct of the HRO in mission. There do not appear to be even ad hoc SOPs for the deployment stage of HROs. More promising are the evolving SOPs for the conduct of HROs once in the field. Quite understandably, as it was effectively the first HRO, the ONUSAL human rights division belatedly produced its operational manual only 18 months after it had deployed. Their relatively brief and incomplete methodological guide provided personnel with some minimal standard criteria and procedures. It dealt with admissibility of evidence, investigations, closing cases, and greater definition of various rights and violations.

The MICIVIH manual, building upon the ONUSAL manual and the experience of ONUSAL and UNTAC personnel, was produced much more quickly and was much more detailed. This 80 page Manuel d'Haiti, completed in July 1993, dealt with mandate, operation priorities, guidance on investigation and reporting, advising asylum-seekers, and, dealing with media, NGOs, and local authorities. Their SOPs for investigations or what they term 'active verification'<sup>215</sup> are noteworthy. The MICIVIH manual has been further refined and tailored by the HRO component of MINUGUA in Guatemala, and includes some innovated new sections such as the section on institution building.

What is needed is a full and official set of model HRO SOPs which can be adapted to the particular needs of specific HROs, and which are regularly refined in light of the growing knowledge of 'best practices' and procedures. At a minimum, there is a need for a central compilation of past HRO procedures so as to provide an authoritative and easily accessible bank of options from which others can draw.

DPA is presently the logical responsibility centre to bring together the SOPs from previous HROs, having effectively run four of the first five. Also, the HCHR and the Centre for Human Rights have run an HRO, and in June and October of 1995 they indicated they were planning to initiate a \$200,000 project to assemble the past heads of all human rights operations

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<sup>215</sup> See section 8.2 *Field Partners and SOPs* above.