

# Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division

## Background

The OHCHR Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division (FOTCD), through its six geographic sections and two specialized sections (the National Institutions and Regional Mechanisms Section (NIRMS) and the Peace Missions Support and Rapid Response Section) supports the work of human rights field presences in detecting human rights challenges and opportunities in given country contexts, prioritizing key needs and gaps and identifying areas for engagement and strategies to address these in close cooperation with national, regional and international partners. The Division leads OHCHR's dialogue and activities at the national, regional and subregional levels.

In close collaboration with UN partners, government actors, NHRIs and civil society organizations and with the support of other parts of the Office, the Division supports implementation efforts on the ground. Priority is placed on efforts to strengthen national human rights protection systems; enhance and implement international human rights norms at the country level; and prevent and reduce human rights violations. In addition, the Office supports national-level follow-up action to recommendations issued from the international human rights system, including the treaty bodies, special procedures and the UPR. Specifically, FOTCD, in cooperation with other parts of the Office, seeks to ensure that national authorities and civil society actors have the capacity to address human rights concerns and are well informed about international human rights standards and how to translate these into laws, regulations and policies. The aim is to ensure that rights-holders are better protected and empowered. Through its National Institutions and Regional Mechanisms Section, the Division continued to assist the establishment and/or strengthening of NHRIs in close cooperation with OHCHR's country and regional offices, human rights components of UN peace missions and human rights advisers, including through legal advice and capacity-building. Cooperation between NHRIs and their networks and their engagement with the



People queuing to register at an IDP camp in South Sudan.

international human rights system have also been a priority area for NIRMS in 2013.

The Division took the lead in developing the Office's policy and strategy with regard to UPR follow-up and operationalized the Trust Fund for UPR implementation, including through the review of its terms of reference, the establishment of a Board of Trustees to oversee its management and establishing a procedure to review requests for funding. It also supported the convening of several regional workshops and seminars on UPR follow-up.

Throughout the biennium, the Division, through its Peace Missions Support and Rapid Response Section, continued consolidation of progress in the field of humanitarian action, peace mission support, mission planning and start up as well as early warning and information management. The Division continued to provide support to the human rights components of peacekeeping and special political missions, including through technical advice for the development and implementation of policies and operational guidance for these missions. FOTCD continued advancing OHCHR's capacity to ensure the integration of human rights protection in all humanitarian planning, preparedness, response and recovery efforts around the world. The Division

deployed human rights officers to crisis regions where a rapid response was needed, led OHCHR's engagement in the UN Operations and Crisis Centre (UNOCC) and contributed to the follow-up to the implementation of the Secretary-General's "Rights Up Front" Action Plan.

## Results

### National laws, policies and institutions (EA 1)

- ▶ Through its National Institutions and Regional Mechanisms Section, the Division provided legal advice and assistance for the establishment of NHRIs, notably in Benin, DRC, Djibouti, Lebanon, Lithuania, Myanmar, Niger, Turkey, Uruguay and Yemen. In Burundi and Cameroon, OHCHR's support permitted the respective NHRIs to maintain their 'A' status. In Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, the Republic of the Congo and Côte d'Ivoire, advice from OHCHR led to initial efforts to establish a NHRI. Through support provided to regional and global networks of NHRIs, including substantive and financial support to the International Coordination Committee of NHRIs (ICC-NHRI) and by serving as the Secretariat to the Sub-Committee on Accreditation, NHRIs were able to share their experiences and work towards increased compliance with the Paris principles.
- ▶ The Division continued to assist countries emerging from conflict and, in close cooperation with RRDD, provided support to transitional justice processes in several countries across the regions. In Nepal, OHCHR worked closely with the UNCT, the National Human Rights Commission and national organizations to provide advice and collate available information to advance transitional justice in the country. In particular, FOTCD and RRDD provided a detailed legal analysis of the Ordinance to establish a Truth Commission, highlighting that the power to grant amnesties for serious violations of human rights was contrary to international law. Subsequently, the Supreme Court ruled that the amnesty power was contrary to the Constitution and international law. In Libya, prior to the promulgation of the Law on Transitional Justice, OHCHR provided comments in collaboration with the Human Rights, Transitional Justice and Rule of Law Division of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), in particular relating to the establishment and functioning of the truth commission and of a separate reparations body, some of which were incorporated into the Law. In Tunisia, the Office facilitated a national consultation process and provided technical expertise which led to the adoption of

legislation on transitional justice. In Côte d'Ivoire, the organization of national consultations was facilitated which helped facilitate the functioning of the transitional justice process. In DRC, the visit in May 2012 of the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights contributed to advancing the national fight against impunity. He advocated with national authorities, including the Public Prosecutor, to initiate investigations into allegations of violations of human rights which occurred in the context of the November 2011 elections. Since then, the Prosecutor initiated investigations with the support of the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office. In the Americas, the Division's continued advocacy for the establishment of National Preventive Mechanisms (NPMs) under the OP-CAT resulted in important efforts in Bolivia, Chile and Peru. In Peru, in particular, a draft law establishing such a mechanism, largely compliant with the OP-CAT, is being discussed by the Parliament. The Division, in coordination with the Regional Offices for Central and South America also contributed to the Protocol to investigate femicide.

### International and regional laws and institutions (EA 8)

- ▶ The Division continued working with partners, including regional human rights mechanisms, to ensure their compatibility with regional and international human rights standards. In this context, the Division provided the following support to regional mechanisms across regions:
  - Exchange of information and the coordination of actions with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights by liaising with the Commission's Secretariat and facilitating the submission of inputs from the Commission (in the cases of Chile, Dominican Republic



Human Rights Day celebration in Senegal, December 2013.

and Uruguay) and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (in the cases of Costa Rica and Nicaragua) to the UPR processes.

- Strengthening the human rights system of the League of Arab States, notably through an assessment mission to identify priority activities and areas for technical cooperation to be implemented by OHCHR and UNDP.
- Strengthening cooperation with the African Union (AU) human rights machinery through joint activities, including the organization of a dialogue between special procedures mandate-holders of the UN and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), convened in Addis Ababa in January 2012. As a result, a roadmap was adopted and regular and systematic modalities for sharing information between the special procedures of both organizations were put in place, including a joint working group to build synergies and develop joint actions of the mechanisms.
- ▶ FOTCD also strengthened the engagement of regional human rights mechanisms in the UPR process through initiating discussions with, inter alia, the European Union, the Council of Europe, the Fundamental Rights Agency and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights to encourage their increased engagement with the UPR process, both at the Council level and with regard to implementation at the national level. As a result, a number of these mechanisms increased their contributions to OHCHR's stakeholders' reports when their Member States were under review by the UPR. The discussions resulted in the systematization of contributions from the regional mechanisms to

the documentation of the UPR and the increased integration of recommendations issued by UN human rights bodies, including the UPR, in the work of regional organizations.

### Responsiveness of the international community (EA 10)

- ▶ The Division continued to contribute to the increased integration of critical human rights issues in global, regional and national responses to development, economic, food, and climate crises and other challenges, including in formulation of the post-2015 development agenda, as shown in the following examples:
  - In Myanmar, OHCHR's engagement with partners at the national, regional and international levels resulted in ensuring that human rights concerns were mainstreamed into responses to the deteriorating situation in Rakhine State.
  - With regard to the Syrian Arab Republic, OHCHR strengthened its monitoring and reporting capacities through the deployment of a team to the neighbouring countries as of March 2013. The High Commissioner was subsequently able to use the information collected and analyzed by the team for her briefings to the Security Council and the Human Rights Council and has regularly shared this information in the inter-agency task force on Syria. OHCHR also published reports on casualty figures in Syria as part of its efforts to provide indicators of the devastating scope of the human rights crisis and the protection challenges in the country.
  - In providing contributions to human rights reports prepared by different field presences and to reports of the Secretary-General, the Division helped to maintain the focus of the international community on crisis situations, draw attention to specific human rights issues and influence the debate on appropriate responses such as in the case of Sri Lanka and Central African Republic.
  - The Division provided human rights inputs to the United Nations Operations and Crisis Centre (UNOCC) and the IASC's Sub-Working Group on Preparedness, specifically to the Early Warning-Early Action report which provides early warning about high risk/high impact situations to relevant parts of the UN and recommends preparedness actions and contingency planning.
  - The Division supported the High Commissioner's engagement in situations of protracted conflicts, including in Europe. In this context, human rights principles were



OHCHR staff travelling the Sinú river in Colombia to get to the territory of an indigenous population.



The High Commissioner meets relatives of missing or disappeared persons in Sri Lanka, August 2013.

incorporated in the Geneva International Discussions on the Conflict in Georgia which were launched following the August 2008 conflict between Georgia and the Russian Federation.

- A Commission of Inquiry on human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was created by the Human Rights Council as a result of long and targeted advocacy undertaken by OHCHR and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the DPRK. The Commission was established to investigate the systematic, widespread and grave violations of human rights in the DPRK and is supported by a Secretariat, provided by OHCHR. Its work and final recommendations, due in 2014, will ensure that strategies for accountability can be incorporated into global, regional and international policies related to the country.
- The combination of the High Commissioner's sustained advocacy, reports to the Human Rights Council and visit to Sri Lanka in August 2013 increased the awareness of the international community to long-standing human rights issues in the country and resulted in the extension of support to victims of human rights abuses and their families seeking justice and redress.

### **Human rights mainstreaming within the United Nations (EA 11)**

- ▶ Through, inter alia, support provided to human rights components of peace missions, the Division continued to promote the integration of international human rights standards in the work of peace missions as well as DPA and DPKO. The Division contributed to the establishment of new peace missions and the reconfiguration and review of existing missions to ensure the

inclusion of a solid human rights component. The Division also participated in DPKO/DPA Technical Assessment Missions and coordinated the recruitment and selection of candidates for human rights components, ensuring that they have a suitable profile.

- ▶ The Division regularly provided inputs to the UNOCC on human rights situations of concern and to the early warning initiatives. For instance, it contributed to the drafting of the UNOCC integrated analysis report on armed groups in the Sahel, which led to a common UN analysis of the security threat and integrated human rights aspects.
- ▶ FOTCD contributed to the implementation of the Secretary-General's "Rights Up Front" Action Plan which identifies ways to implement the recommendations of the Internal Review Panel on United Nations Action in Sri Lanka. The Plan is framed around prevention through the protection of human rights. In this context, pilot country reports which provide an analysis of foreseen risks to the human rights situation, have been drafted or are being finalized in relation to Bangladesh, Egypt, Guatemala, Myanmar and Tajikistan. In the Central African Republic and South Sudan, which have been designated by the Deputy Secretary-General as crisis countries, OHCHR provided enhanced human rights analyses, including through the deployment of a rapid response mission to the Central African Republic.
- ▶ The Division continued to work for the increased integration of human rights standards and principles in humanitarian action, particularly under the auspices of the Global Protection Cluster (GPC) and the IASC and notably through more systematic senior-level engagement with the IASC Principals, its Working Group and the Emergency Directors Group. Following a suggestion of the High Commissioner to the IASC Principals, and largely as a result of a process that was jointly driven by OHCHR and UNHCR, the implications of the UN Internal Review Panel report on Sri Lanka and the relevance of the "Rights Up Front" Action Plan for humanitarian action were discussed in 2013 by the IASC at the Principal and Working Group levels. Consequently, the IASC adopted protection as one of its priorities for 2014-2015 and central focus was given to ensuring that protection is undertaken in a manner that also prevents and responds to ongoing or potential violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. In this context, OHCHR and Interaction are co-chairing the GPC Task Team tasked to facilitate the implementation of this IASC protection

priority. In this capacity, the Office facilitated the drafting of a IASC Principals statement on the centrality of protection in humanitarian crises which was endorsed in December. In addition, and as a result of the High Commissioner's suggestion to the Emergency Relief Coordinator, the revised IASC terms of reference now include the "protection of the rights of affected people" as a core element of IASC's overall objective to improve the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

- ▶ In response to the humanitarian emergency in the Philippines following Typhoon Haiyan, OHCHR staff were deployed in its aftermath to provide support to the Protection Cluster (including by co-leading with the Department for Social Welfare and Development two subregional Protection Cluster hubs in Borongan and Roxas) and the Humanitarian Country Team, to integrate human rights considerations across humanitarian efforts. In addition, OHCHR advocated for the involvement of affected communities in decision-making processes related to relocation and housing and provided legal expertise to national and local authorities during the development of various national policies and strategies, for example, on housing, land and property rights. Together with its partners, OHCHR supported the re-building of the capacity of the National Commission on Human Rights and other national actors, such as the local civil and military administrative officers, through training and orientation sessions on relevant human rights laws and standards.
- ▶ FOTCD contributed to the operationalization of the new UNDG Strategy for the Deployment of Human Rights Advisers and ensured timely and effective recruitment for these deployments

through the launching of a multi-duty station roster. In terms of examples of the integration of human rights standards into the work of the UN, in Mali, for instance, OHCHR dispatched a human rights officer to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)/African Union/UN military planning mission in 2012. As a result, a reference to the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy was integrated into the Concept of Operations for the deployment of the African-led International Support Mission to Mali. UNCTs and Resident Coordinators in Belarus, Turkey and Ukraine have increased their knowledge about a human rights-based approach through workshops. In Guyana, FOTCD contributed to a capacity-building training session on human rights in the context of the UPR recommendations. In Nepal, representatives from indigenous communities and UN staff were trained on international laws and standards relating to indigenous peoples, which encouraged collaboration among partners on the implementation of the rights of indigenous peoples.

## Global Management Outputs

### Integrating a gender perspective (GMO 3)

- ▶ The Division, with the support of RRDD, set up a network of gender facilitators. Consequently, all FOTCD's work plans for 2014 include an activity incorporating a gender perspective. The work of the gender facilitators also resulted in the systematic consideration of a gender perspective when reviewing reports of the High Commissioner, Deputy High Commissioner and Secretary-General and in the design of their respective country missions.



Meeting of the High Commissioner with national authorities in Poland during her first official visit to the country, October 2013.

#### Servicing human rights mechanisms (GMO 4)

- ▶ Systematic support provided to special procedures with country mandates contributed to the mandate-holders being able to make informed statements about the human rights situations pertaining to their respective mandates.
- ▶ FOTCD facilitated regular briefings to the treaty bodies which resulted in the members of the Committees being well informed about the human rights situation in a country under consideration.
- ▶ Good practices with regard to the implementation of the recommendations of the HRMs were systematically identified. Among others, a study on lessons learned was prepared which compiled examples of good practices related to the holistic implementation of the recommendations issued by HRMs. The study developed out of three subregional workshops held in the Europe and Central Asia region (Belgrade (2011), Tbilisi and Bishkek (2012)), with the participation of government representatives, civil society and NHRIs and contributions from all parts of OHCHR, especially HRTD and the Human Rights Council and Special Procedures Division. One of the outcomes of the workshops was a recommendation to establish a single high-level government entity with an overall coordinating role for holistic implementation to ensure the effective follow-up to recommendations. This entity would use the recommendations as a basis for prioritization and developing a detailed action plan outlining well-defined activities, responsible national actors, benchmarks and specific time frames for implementation. The entity would also be responsible for ensuring a broad participatory process that includes civil society, NHRIs and other relevant actors.

#### Supporting field operations (GMO 5)

- ▶ By the end of 2013, the Division had provided support to 59 field presences as well as 12 country special rapporteurs, including substantive, administrative and programmatic advice. In terms of policy support, the Division contributed to and facilitated the conduct of the independent study, entitled *Influence on the ground*, which reviewed the work of human rights field presences and provided recommendations for improvement.
- ▶ During the biennium, FOTCD, with the strong involvement of field presences and the advice of the Board of Trustees for the Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation, which the Division continues to serve, developed further guidance for technical cooperation in the field of human rights. This provided field presences with a tool to assist them in the design and implementation of their technical cooperation work.



OHCHR and UN-Habitat workshop on housing rights with local communities in South Hebron, State of Palestine, March 2013.

- ▶ The Division strengthened its conceptual support to the different types of field presences. Within the framework of the UNDG-HRM, support was increased for the deployment of human rights advisers within UNCTs, resulting in their improved capacities to effectively mainstream human rights in UN country programmes.
- ▶ A high number of rapid response interventions were also required in the past biennium, including commissions of inquiry and fact-finding missions. To strengthen the response of OHCHR to deteriorating human rights situations, a workshop on lessons learned was organized with the participation of former coordinators of different CoI and FFM Secretariats.
- ▶ Throughout the biennium, the Division worked on the implementation of OHCHR's strategy on engagement in humanitarian action aimed at ensuring effective, efficient and appropriate engagement in this field. An improved organization, coordination and use of resources to respond to crises increased the effectiveness of the Office in supporting field operations through the prompt activation of OHCHR's rapid response facility in the case of emerging, new or deteriorating humanitarian crises such as in the Central African Republic, Mali, Myanmar, the Philippines, the Sahel (at regional level) and Syria. This also resulted in effectively leading the Protection Clusters in Haiti, Mauritania and the State of Palestine; co-leading the Protection Cluster at the regional level in the Pacific and leading a Sub-Cluster on access to justice in Mali. In December, OHCHR led a Protection Cluster hub at the subnational level in the Philippines. Furthermore, FOTCD's continued support to the field presences resulted in a number of submissions to the humanitarian strategic

response plans, including with regard to Mali, Mauritania, Myanmar, Niger and Yemen.

#### **Skills and competencies (GMO 6)**

- ▶ Given OHCHR's budgetary constraints and its reduced capacity to undertake training for staff, including from the field, FOTCD used the opportunity of relevant events, such as the annual Heads of Field Presences meeting, to build the capacity of field staff with regard to key competencies.
- ▶ The organization of the annual training on human rights investigation by the Peace Missions Support and Rapid Response Section and the Methodology, Education and Training Section, enabled a sufficient number of colleagues to gain the necessary investigation skills.

#### **Increased awareness of and support to OHCHR (GMO 7)**

- ▶ The work of the Division resulted in improved awareness and understanding of and support to OHCHR's mission and programmes by Member States and other stakeholders, including through the continued maintenance of the Office's website in Chinese; the organization of information

meetings on the work of CoIs; and the systematic attention paid to increasing the understanding of OHCHR's mission during visits by staff members to countries.

#### **Resources (GMO 8)**

- ▶ The issuance of a number of rosters for needs related to rapid response, including CoIs, resulted in the enhanced capacity of the Division to respond to urgent needs. The establishment of an Inspira roster for human rights advisers has led to the efficient filling of these vacancies.

During the 26th annual meeting of the ICC-NHRI, held in Geneva from 6 to 8 May 2013, a session was dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the Paris Principles which were adopted by the General Assembly in 1993. During the event, national human rights institutions shared their lessons learned during the previous twenty years. In addition, UNDP, OHCHR and the ICC-NHRI organized an event on 12 July in New York to reflect on the progress achieved since the adoption of the Paris Principles and the challenges and gaps that remain to be addressed.