

Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division

Background

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

In close collaboration with UN partners, government actors, national human rights institutions (NHRIs) and civil society organizations, and with the assistance 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 Division supports national-level follow-up action to recommendations issued by the international human rights system, including the human rights treaty bodies, special procedures and the Universal Periodic Review (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 practically translate these standards into laws, regulations and policies. The objective of this work is to ensure that rights-holders are better empowered and protected. In 2014, the Division continued to assist with 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 the provision of legal



The Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Central African Republic, supported by OHCHR staff, visits Bangassou, April 2014.



Human rights officers monitoring municipal elections in Nebaj, Guatemala.

advice and capacity-building. Cooperation between NHRIs and their networks and their engagement with the international human rights system was a priority area of work.

Throughout the year, the Division consolidated progress in the fields of humanitarian action, peace mission support, early warning and information management. It extended 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 advanced 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 and contributed to the follow-up to the implementation of the Human Rights Up Front Action Plan.

Results

Strengthening international human rights mechanisms

- ▶ *Increased compliance and engagement of Member States with international human rights mechanisms (EA 6)*

FOTCD contributed to increasing the compliance of Member States with international human rights mechanisms through regular advocacy during meetings with State representatives and capacity-building activities. For example, OHCHR provided technical assistance to the Government of Namibia through the facilitation of a training workshop on the international human rights

system and reporting to the UN treaty bodies from 17-18 February. The training workshop brought together more than 30 representatives from the Government, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), the Ombudsman's Office and civil society. Following the workshop, the Government submitted its initial report to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, as well as its outstanding reports to the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

- ▶ *Enhanced synergies, complementarity and coherence within and between human rights mechanisms (EA 9)*

Increased cooperation and engagement between the UN human rights system and the regional human rights mechanisms were achieved through a workshop on regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights from 8-9 October (as mandated by Human Rights Council resolution A/HRC/24/19), as well as a meeting on the focal points of the regional human rights mechanisms held on 10 October to take stock of any new developments since the 2012 workshop. The High Commissioner's report on the workshop will be published in 2015.

Enhancing equality and countering discrimination

- ▶ *Legislation, policies and practices increasingly comply with anti-discrimination and equality standards (EA 4)*

OHCHR organized a number of events to raise awareness regarding discrimination faced by persons with albinism. In collaboration with the NGO Under the Same Sun, a side event was organized during the 25th session of the Human Rights Council. In addition, an expert meeting was organized in September to assess the situation of persons with albinism and identify appropriate responses to ensure the promotion and protection of their rights. OHCHR also launched an awareness-raising campaign on albinism, including the organization of a Google+ Hangout in July. Furthermore, in August, an OHCHR mission to Tanzania took place to meet with survivors of attacks and to visit two centres that are currently housing hundreds of children with albinism who fled their homes for fear of attacks or were abandoned by their families. These efforts contributed to increased attention paid to the situation of persons with albinism. Most notably, concerns about the rights of persons with albinism were raised during the UPR review of Côte d'Ivoire and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), included in the list of issues adopted by the Committee on the Rights

Christopher Dube comes from a San indigenous community in the Tsholotsho District in Zimbabwe. He says there are only 13 individuals left in his community who can still speak their mother tongue and only a few written records of the language exist. The community is making an effort to keep a written record of the language for teaching to the younger children, with the hope that they will keep the language alive. This was only one example of the information shared between participants at a launch of the publication *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: A Manual for National Human Rights Institutions*, which took place at a regional workshop in Cape Town, South Africa. The publication was a joint effort of OHCHR and the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions.

"I will now bring all the information on the rights of indigenous peoples

back home to my community," said Dube. "I will show the material we received to the village's Heads and I will read to them, trying to explain what I learned. I learned a lot but there is still so much that needs to be done."

During the workshop, participants were trained on how to better address indigenous peoples' rights, including by learning how to strengthen cooperation with national human rights institutions. "National human rights institutions have the duty to understand with whom they are working and to what purpose, when they are working with indigenous peoples. If they have no sensitivity and understanding, they might work against these communities, even if they had the best of intentions," emphasized Eileen Rakow from the Office of the Ombudsman of Namibia. In fact, when her office undertakes activities focusing on the indigenous peoples of Namibia, their motto is "put yourself in the

shoes of the indigenous peoples and then you can start to begin to understand their issues."

In addition to increasing their knowledge about who is considered indigenous and what their specific rights are, participants learned about good practices of awareness-raising related to the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which was adopted by the General Assembly in 2007. "National human rights institutions have a critical responsibility to advocate for the rights of indigenous peoples and to promote knowledge, understanding and implementation of the Declaration," stressed Samia Slimane of OHCHR. "This consultation provided the opportunity to share our knowledge and experience and identify ways we can work most effectively to better promote and protect the rights of indigenous peoples in Southern Africa and the wider region."

of the Child in relation to Tanzania and were raised during the review of the State Party reports of Burundi by the Human Rights Committee and of Swaziland by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Finally, on the recommendation of the Human Rights Council,

the General Assembly decided on 18 November 2014 to proclaim 13 June as International Albinism Awareness Day.

Combating impunity and strengthening accountability and the rule of law

- *Increased number of States that have abolished the death penalty and/or, pending abolition, increasingly comply with relevant international human rights obligations (EA 1)*

OHCHR, in partnership with the Algerian National Consultative Commission for the Promotion and Protection for Human Rights, organized a two-day Regional Expert Meeting in December, in Algeria, on moving away from the death penalty in the Middle East and North Africa. The objective of the meeting was to contribute to steps being taken to move away from the death penalty, including by limiting executions; reducing the number of offences for which the death penalty can be imposed; and guaranteeing international safeguards protecting the rights of those facing capital punishment. More than 60 persons



Tribunal of Kalehe, South Kivu, Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the trial of senior officers of the Congolese armed forces took place.



Rohingya community members in an IDP camp.

participated in the event, including representatives of governments, NHRIs and civil society, as well as international experts. A follow-up event will take place in piloting countries in the region, including in countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council and Iraq.

Based on input from FOTCD and other OHCHR divisions, the High Commissioner publicly condemned several executions that took place in the United States of America. In 2014, executions decreased to 35 from 39 in 2013. In February, the Governor of Washington State established a moratorium on the death penalty and, in December, an Appeal Court suspended the execution of a prisoner with psychosocial disabilities after the intervention of special procedures mandate-holders.

- ▶ *Increased responsiveness of the international community in ensuring accountability for gross human rights violations (EA 10)*

The Commission of Inquiry on the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) presented its report to the March session of the Human Rights Council. The report was hailed as a paradigm shift in the international response to the human rights situation in the country. In its resolution 25/25, the Human Rights Council mandated OHCHR to follow up on the recommendations in the report, including through the establishment of a field-based structure in the region. Following consultations, the Republic of Korea agreed to host the structure and as of the end of 2014, recruitment and logistics preparations were nearly complete. The office is expected to open in Seoul in the first half of 2015. Furthermore, the Human Rights Council referred the report to the General Assembly, which in turn referred it to the Security Council to consider a subsequent referral to the International Criminal Court and the possibility of targeted sanctions. A total of 10 members of the Security Council

initiated the first formal discussion of the human rights situation in the country in December 2014. The discussion will remain on the Security Council agenda.

Integrating human rights in development and in the economic sphere

- ▶ *Constitutions, laws and policies increasingly protect human rights, especially land and housing rights, with particular attention paid to non-discrimination and gender equality, in the context of development and the exploitation of natural resources (EA 1)*

From 16 to 18 September, OHCHR and the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights convened an African Regional Forum on Business and Human Rights in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Building on a regional workshop organized in 2013 on the prevention of conflict and the exploitation of natural resources, the 2014 Forum contributed to increasing awareness about the human rights issues at stake and building consensus on the need to review State policies/legislation to ensure their compatibility with human rights standards in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Human Rights and Business. As a result of the Forum, the African Union established a task force to develop specific guiding principles which will take into account the specificities of the continent.

Widening the democratic space

- ▶ *National human rights institutions established and effectively functioning in accordance with the Paris Principles and other relevant international standards and recommendations (EA 1)*

OHCHR supported the establishment or strengthening of a number NHRIs. It assisted relevant stakeholders with raising awareness regarding the added value of having a Paris Principles-compliant NHRI and its role in complementing governmental activities in promoting and protecting human rights. As the secretariat of the International Coordinating Committee, OHCHR provided substantial support for the Sub-Committee on Accreditation's review of 26 NHRIs. The Office also provided advice to support NHRIs in their interaction with the international human rights system. As a result, more than 60 NHRIs interacted with the treaty bodies by submitting reports and 31 participated in sessions of the Human Rights Council. FOTCD offered a fellowship programme for staff of NHRIs and in 2014, fellows participated in the programme from a variety of 'A' status NHRIs, including from Albania, Egypt, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, the State of Palestine and Portugal.

In 2014, a total of 75 Master students, senior undergraduates and postgraduate students were selected from the Russian Federation to attend the second Summer School on Human Rights. The Summer School was organized within the framework of the Human Rights Master Programme that was implemented by the Consortium of Russian Universities, with the support of OHCHR and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.

The Summer School provided participants with interdisciplinary training to help expand their practical knowledge about international human rights standards and the international and regional human rights protection mechanisms, including the European Court of Human Rights. In addition to the Consortium's professors, the Summer School brought together experts from the federal and regional representatives of the Ombudsman's Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, representatives of the European Inter-University Centre for Human Rights and Democratization, prominent Russian human rights activists, NGO representatives and staff members of OHCHR.

Based on their successful experiences, a third edition is planned for 2015 in Kazan.

Early warning and protection of human rights in situations of conflict, violence and insecurity

- *Legal frameworks, public policies and institutions are in place and functioning to combat sexual and gender-based violence, trafficking and related exploitation (EA 1)*

FOTCD supported the planning for and the deployment of Women Protection Advisers to human rights components in the start-up of UN peacekeeping operations in the Central African Republic and Mali to monitor and report on conflict-related sexual violence in accordance with Security Council resolution 1960. In addition, it assessed the suitability of 125 candidates to fill future Women Protection Adviser vacancies in UN peace missions. The Division also provided guidance to the human rights component of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) for the preparation of the Secretary-General's 2014 report on conflict-related sexual violence, which ensured that the human rights component's activities to combat sexual violence in conflict were reflected and that progress and challenges were reported on. A consultative meeting between OHCHR and the African Union took place from 1-3 October to

discuss cooperation on human rights in the peace and security context. OHCHR also contributed to reviewing the implementation of the Addis Ababa Road Map on cooperation between the Special Procedures of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the UN Human Rights Council at a meeting which took place on 27 April in Angola. These activities contributed to maintaining dialogue between the two entities and encouraged the development of common strategies designed to ensure greater respect for human rights in the region. Furthermore, an outcome document was adopted at the October event with recommendations on how OHCHR and the African Union can strengthen their collaboration in the field of human rights in peace operations, including by ensuring the early integration of human rights in planning processes and the compliance of African Union and host government security forces with international human rights, humanitarian and refugee law standards. As a result of the April meeting, mandate-holders from the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Human Rights Council agreed on a set of actionable points which included contributing to early warning through joint engagement on peace and security issues.

- *Increased responsiveness of the international community to potential, emerging or existing human rights crisis situations, with human rights protection as an integral element of this response (EA 10)*

In 2014, OHCHR continued its work in the context of protracted conflicts in Europe, including through continued participation in the Geneva International Discussions. In May, the



Members of the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at a press conference after the presentation of the Commission's report to the Human Rights Council, March 2014.



OHCHR activity with indigenous children in Colombia, November 2014.

former High Commissioner visited Georgia where, inter alia, she stressed that de facto authorities bear the responsibility to ensure protection in the context of a protracted conflict. She also offered OHCHR's assistance in contributing to this protection through increased monitoring. OHCHR's efforts to follow up the High Commissioner's 2011 mission to the Republic of Moldova, including to the Transnistrian region, resulted in the 2014 establishment of Transnistria's first system of alternative civilian service for conscientious objectors, as well as its first shelter for victims of domestic violence. The Office continued reporting on an annual basis to the Human Rights Council on the human rights situation in Cyprus and stressed that the division of the island continues to constitute an obstacle to the full enjoyment, by the entire population of Cyprus, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In the context of the crisis in the Central African Republic, the Office supported the Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) to ensure a robust human rights mandate. In planning processes for both MINUSCA and MINUSMA, the Office contributed to the development of indicators on the protection of civilians. The Office also contributed to Security Council briefings on the DRC, Iraq and South Sudan.

During 2014, through its Rapid Deployment Roster, OHCHR deployed staff to respond to emergencies in the Central African Republic, Lebanon, Palestine, the Philippines, Thailand and Ukraine. The Roster is composed of 144 human rights officers and 19 administrative staff.

Work is underway to establish an Emergency Response Roster, aimed at providing a pool of internal and external candidates for all types of human rights-related emergency deployments. The Office engaged with inter-agency early warning processes, including the UN Operations Crisis Centre, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Task Team on Preparedness and Resilience and Human Rights Up Front mechanisms. Among other activities, the Office is leading an inter-agency task force to put forward recommendations to establish a common UN information management system on violations and broader threats to populations.

- ▶ *The protection of human rights is an integral part of the international community's preparedness, response and recovery efforts in the context of humanitarian crises and is effectively integrated in the mandates, policies and actions of United Nations peacekeeping operations and special political missions (EA 11)*

The Office maintained its role as a key protection actor in humanitarian action and ensured that the protection of human rights was firmly placed on the humanitarian system's agenda. This was primarily done through its active participation in decision-making and operational fora, particularly with the IASC, at the Principal, Working Group and Emergency Directors Group levels, as well as with Humanitarian Coordinators, Humanitarian Country Teams and Protection Clusters at the field level. OHCHR fulfilled its co-chair role on the Global Protection Cluster Task Team responsible for facilitating the implementation of the IASC Protection Priority, resulting in the roll out of an independent, whole-of-system review of protection in humanitarian crises. In addition

to maintaining the leadership of the Protection Clusters in Haiti, Palestine and the Pacific (jointly with UNHCR), OHCHR maintained a leadership role in Liberia (during the Ebola crisis) and in Ukraine and in two regional Protection Clusters in the Philippines.

OHCHR closely followed developments in Ukraine since the onset of the unrest. The former High Commissioner publicly voiced her concerns regarding human rights violations, urged inclusive and sustainable dialogue and called for an investigation into cases of alleged killings, disappearances and other violations. Following the intensification of the crisis in February 2014, a Human Rights Mission in Ukraine (HRMU), in full compliance with the requirements of the Secretary-General's Human Rights Up Front Action Plan, was deployed to the country. Through this deployment, OHCHR introduced a critical element to the UN presence in Ukraine, including through the publication of monthly public reports on the human rights situation that were based on monitoring and documentation of the human rights situation. The reports of the HRMU are recognized as an important source of

credible information on the human rights situation in Ukraine and have been cited by Member States, UN human rights mechanisms, civil society and the international media.

In terms of peace missions, the Office contributed to strategic planning for new and transitioning peace operations by providing advice on mandate design and concepts of operations, the identification of resource requirements and budget discussions and by undertaking staffing analysis and mandate reviews. The Office engaged with Member States to secure resources from the UN Peacekeeping Support Account. As a result, MINUSCA's mandate included strong provisions for the protection of human rights, combating impunity and ensuring adequate human rights resources for the 2014-2015 budget cycle. The strategic review process of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) resulted in upholding the mission's focus on human rights and combating impunity and the acknowledgement that the mission's Joint Human Rights Office required additional resources to carry out these critical tasks.

On 30 June 2014, 22 civilians, including a 15-year-old girl, were killed during a clash between the military and alleged members of organized crime gangs in Tlatlaya, Mexico. A member of the army was injured.

Three women who had allegedly been kidnapped were present during the raid and were freed during the military operation. Two of them were immediately detained, however, then imprisoned for more than five months in a federal prison. They were investigated for a series of crimes, including association with organized crime and possession of weapons.

In the months after the clash, the press began to run stories indicating that extrajudicial killings had taken place during the military

operation. Investigations carried out by federal authorities were initiated several weeks after the killings. Investigations undertaken at the state level did not indicate any type of abuse committed by the army.

Following its own investigation of the Tlatlaya case, the National Human Rights Commission issued its findings on 21 October. In its report, the Commission established that at least 12 of the 22 persons had been extrajudicially killed by the army and the crime scene had been altered. The two women who were interrogated by state-level prosecution authorities had been tortured. The witnesses were forced to sign statements in which they made no mention of excessive use of force by the army.

OHCHR closely followed the case from the outset. Days after

the event, staff from the Office visited the site and undertook interviews with authorities and three witnesses. Based on the information gathered, OHCHR called for an impartial investigation into the alleged extrajudicial executions and acts of torture and for accountability for human rights violations committed by military personnel. OHCHR also advocated for protection measures for the three witnesses.

On 15 December, a federal judge ordered that the two witnesses under investigation for possession of weapons be freed and that all charges be dropped. OHCHR welcomed this development and continues to advocate for the prosecution and sanctioning of all those involved in the human rights violations committed in Tlatlaya.

Global Management Outputs

A gender perspective is effectively integrated into all OHCHR policies, programmes and relevant processes (GMO 3)

► Gender considerations were integrated into all rapid deployment activities, including in the drafting of the concept of operations, selection of staff and identification of violations to be investigated. All emergency response teams had female staff members and monitoring activities included those related to the specific human rights violations of women. For all commissions of inquiry and fact-finding missions, a gender advisor was seconded by UN Women. As per the OHCHR strategy on engagement in humanitarian action, specific attention was paid to the needs of certain groups of persons affected by humanitarian crises who may be more vulnerable to protection risks. This required a systematic analysis of the specific needs of women, girls, boys and men. In addition, it was mandatory for all participants undertaking the annual OHCHR training programme on human rights in humanitarian action to take the IASC Online Course on Gender and Humanitarian Action: Different Needs - Equal Opportunities. Furthermore, the review of draft public reports by human rights components of UN peace missions in Iraq, Liberia, Libya, Mali, South Sudan and Sudan led to the enhancement of gender analysis and the inclusion of sex-disaggregated data.

Increased effectiveness in supporting human rights mechanisms (GMO 4)

► In addition to assisting the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the completion of its mandate, OHCHR supported the extension of the Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic and the establishment of five new commissions or fact-finding missions related to the Central African Republic, Eritrea, Iraq, the occupied Palestinian territories and Sri Lanka. This included developing programme budget implication documents and concepts of operations; assisting in the identification of high-level members; identifying and recruiting staff; requesting the activation of OHCHR's contingency fund as needed; tailoring information management systems and training staff on their use; conducting briefing sessions and providing technical and professional backstopping and support. OHCHR developed a standard operating procedure to regulate the process leading to the selection of members of commissions of inquiry to increase transparency and strengthen quality control over such sensitive appointments.

Increased effectiveness in supporting field operations (GMO 5)

► The Division continued to deliver policy and operational support to field presences, including through guidance in relation to specific areas of fieldwork, such as technical cooperation



Awareness-raising event organized by the OHCHR Regional Office for West Africa to commemorate Human Rights Day.

and protection and with regard to the policy frameworks for the functioning of different types of field presences.

- ▶ The annual meeting in Geneva of Heads of OHCHR field presences was cancelled due to financial constraints. Nevertheless, online consultations took place through web conferencing tools. The consultations between the newly appointed High Commissioner and the Heads of field presences enabled the sharing of views on a number of current issues such as the OHCHR fundraising strategy and engagement in the field as well as challenges related to protection in crisis situations.
- ▶ FOTCD, with the involvement of field presences and the advice of the Board of Trustees for the Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation, developed further guidance for technical cooperation in the field of human rights which resulted in the strengthened capacity of the field presences to design and implement technical cooperation work.
- ▶ FOTCD continued contributing to the operationalization of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) Strategy for the Deployment of Human Rights Advisers and ensured the timely and effective recruitment for these deployments. In 2014, FOTCD facilitated the deployment and/or extensions of human rights advisers to 10 UNCTs and to UNDG regional teams for Latin America and Asia and the Pacific.



Participants of an OHCHR regional consultation on minority rights in the Middle East and North Africa region carried out in Tunisia, December 2014.

OHCHR staff has the necessary competencies and skills to effectively implement the OHCHR programme (GMO 6)

- ▶ Only 18 members of the Rapid Deployment Roster could be trained due to financial constraints. Four members benefited from the Inter-Agency Protection Capacity Training. Given that training sessions were conducted in previous years, an important number of Roster members were already equipped with the necessary competences and experience.