

# **Development of Human Rights Mandate of UNPKO (2) :**

## **@PKO Now! No.25**

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Human rights mandate has been given to multi-dimensional UNPKO prior to establishment of Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights ( OHCHR ), principal United Nations office mandated to protect and promote human rights,<sup>1</sup> and accordingly peacebuilding as well as promotion and protection of human rights had already interlinked and it had been implemented through field presence of UNPKO.<sup>2</sup> Today, how does UNPKO function in order to fulfill its human rights mandate while cooperating with OHCHR?

### **The role of Human Rights Advisor to the Head of UNPKO mission**

Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) of the UNPKO mission mandated with human rights shall appoint a human rights advisor. The human rights advisor also plays a role as the head of the human rights component of the mission and as the representative of OHCHR in the country which is a part of the UN country team.<sup>3</sup> In this regard, human rights components of the UNPKO mission have dual reporting lines; one is to the head of the mission, i.e. SRSG , and another is to the High Commissioner for Human Rights.<sup>4</sup> In this way, it ensures efficient function and coordination between the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) as well as Department of Political Affairs (DPA) in New York and OHCHR 's office in Geneva while implementing consistent human rights policy under supervision of the Human Rights Advisor at the field. Most human rights officers in UNPKO missions are employed by DPKO or DPA, rather than OHCHR.<sup>5</sup>

## **The role of OHCHR in the UNPKO missions**

By the end of 2010, OHCHR supported 14 human rights components of UNPKO<sup>6</sup> through expert advice, technical assistance and functional support with close collaboration with DPKO and DPA<sup>7</sup> with four priorities: ensuring justice and accountability in peace processes; preventing and redressing human rights violations; building capacities and strengthening national institutions; and mainstreaming human rights in all UN programmes.<sup>8</sup> In addition, OHCHR has contributed to the funding of technical cooperation activities on human rights as well as human resources of some UNPKO missions through its extra-budgetary resources, and also participated in inter-departmental technical assessment missions in order to design and establish new UNPKO.<sup>9</sup>

Over the years, OHCHR has increased its field offices and presence on the ground in order to ensure implementation of international human rights standard and to reach out to the people who need it the most. In this, it can be said that OHCHR plays an essential role for promotion and protection of human rights within the UNPKO in close collaboration with respective actors.<sup>10</sup>

## End Notes

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<sup>1</sup> OHCHR was established in 1993 as a part of the United Nations Secretariat with its headquarters in Geneva.

<sup>2</sup> Refer @PKO Now! "Development of Human Rights Mandate of UNPKO ", Secretariat of the International Peace Cooperation Headquarters, (Accessed 2012-09-16).

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Peacekeeping. "Human Rights". United Nations Peacekeeping.  
<http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/issues/humanrights.shtm>, (Accessed 2012-08-30).

<sup>4</sup> For further details on OHCHR, refer: Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. "Who We Are". Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights,  
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/AboutUs/Pages/WhoWeAre.aspx>, (Accessed 2012-08-31).

<sup>5</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. "Human rights components of peace missions". Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights,  
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/Pages/PeaceMissionsIndex.aspx>, (Accessed 2012-08-30).

<sup>6</sup> By the end of 2010, OHCHR had sent more than 600 human rights officers and national staff to 14 human rights components in the UNPKO missions, such as Afghanistan, Burundi, Darfur, Haiti, Iraq and East-Timor. See more details at: Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. " OHCHR in the World: making human rights a reality on the ground". Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights,  
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/Pages/WorkInField.aspx>, (Accessed 2012-08-29).

<sup>7</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. " Human rights components of peace missions ". Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.  
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/Pages/PeaceMissionsIndex.aspx>, (Accessed 2012-08-30).

<sup>8</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. " OHCHR in the World: making human rights a reality on the ground". Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights,  
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/Pages/WorkInField.aspx>, (Accessed 2012-08-29).

<sup>9</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. " Human Rights Components of Peace Missions". Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights,  
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/Pages/PeaceMissionsIndex.aspx>. (Accessed 2012-09-16).

<sup>10</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. "What we do". Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/AboutUs/Pages/WhatWeDo.aspx>, (Accessed 2012-08-31).