



UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

Ural School of human rights

16 September 2014

Senior Human Rights Adviser
to the UN Country Team
in the Russian Federation
Ryszard Komenda



OHCHR



“Along with the new consciousness of human rights that we are witnessing, grows a new confidence in self-worth and respect for others.”

United Nations High Commissioner
for Human Rights, Navi Pillay



OHCHR

WHO WE ARE

- OHCHR represents the world's commitment to universal ideals of human dignity
- We have a unique mandate from the international community to promote and protect all human rights.

The High Commissioner for Human Rights

- is the principal human rights official of the United Nations
- heads OHCHR and the United Nations' human rights efforts
- is assisted by staff members in Geneva, New York and in the field

THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein (as of September 1, 2014)



THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

- Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein brings to his new role as the United Nations most senior human rights exponent, lengthy experience in human rights work, across a number of countries, including in some of the most difficult and complex global situations of the past two decades. For many years he specialized in peacekeeping issues: working in the former Yugoslavia, as a political officer with the UN Protection Force and following allegations of widespread abuse by UN peacekeepers, in 2004 taking up an appointment as Advisor on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse to the then Secretary-General Kofi Annan.



HOW WE WORK

OHCHR:

- advocates and promotes the rights of women, children, minorities, the disabled, and other vulnerable groups
- assist States in meeting their human rights obligations under international human rights law
- works with local authorities to ensure conditions for people in detention meet minimum standards and also supports access to justice and transitional justice processes to fight impunity and strengthen accountability
- . speaks out publicly when necessary to highlight human rights violations and best practices
- acts as the secretariat to the Human Rights Council



Human Rights Council

- the key United Nations intergovernmental body responsible for the promotion and protection of human rights.
- is made up of representatives of 47 Member States of the United Nations, elected by the General Assembly for three years, with the possibility of one renewal.
- addresses violations, works to prevent human rights abuses, responds to emergencies, serves as an international forum for human rights dialogue, and makes recommendations to the General Assembly for developing international human rights law.



The Council's Universal Periodic Review (UPR)

- assesses the human rights records of all 193 United Nations Member States every four years
- the Office provides advice and expertise to States to assist them in meeting their UPR reporting requirements and in implementing its recommendations and those of other human rights mechanisms.



Special Procedures

- independent human rights experts
- investigating and reporting on 36 specific human rights thematic mandates (water and sanitation, food, involuntary disappearances, migrants, torture and human trafficking)
- 12 mandates relating to countries or territories



Office Priorities

Office's priorities are set out in two key strategic documents:

- OHCHR Plan of Action
- OHCHR Management Plan

OHCHR

- aims to make the protection and promotion of human rights a reality in the lives of people everywhere
- plays a crucial role in safeguarding the integrity of the three pillars of the United Nations: peace and security, human rights, and development



OHCHR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- human rights standard-setting
- global human rights advocacy
- human rights guidance
- human rights monitoring and supporting human rights implementation at country level

OHCHR PRIORITIES

- Countering discrimination
- Combating impunity and strengthening accountability
- Pursuing economic, social and cultural rights and combating poverty
- Protecting human rights in the context of migration
- Protecting human rights during armed conflict, violence and insecurity
- Strengthening international human rights mechanisms and the progressive development of international human rights law



GLOBAL PRESENCE

The Human Rights Office is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland and has 58 field presences:

- 12 country/stand-alone offices,
- 12 regional offices,
- 18 human rights advisers and 16 human rights components of United Nations peace missions

FUNDING

- The Office is funded from the United Nations regular budget and from contributions volunteered by donors who are primarily Member States. In 2010-11, the ratio of regular budget versus voluntary contributions was approximately 40 to 60 percent.
- For 2012-13, total resource requirements are expected to reach \$448 million. Of this amount, regular budget funding is expected to cover \$156 million. Donors are called upon to generously commit to provide the remaining \$292 million to fully implement the programme of work.
- Almost half of the total budget is devoted to the field operations of the Office.



OHCHR Field Activities

Office of the SHRA to the UN Country Team in the Russian Federation



*UN House
in Moscow*



OHCHR

Background

- **2005-2006:** the HC's two visits to the Russian Federation; consolidated and strengthened cooperation with national partners
- **January 2006:** human rights presence established within the UN Country Team (UNCT) in the RF
- **August 2007:** *Framework for Cooperation with the Russian Federation for 2007 and beyond approved*
- **March 2008:** SHRA deployed in Moscow
- **February 2011:** the HC's visit; enhanced cooperation with Russia



OHCHR in Russia

- **FP type:** Senior Human Rights Adviser
(currently: Mr. Ryszard Komenda)
- **The role in the office:**
 - to oversee and guide the planning and implementation of concrete activities within the agreed *Framework for Cooperation* with the Russian Federation and as part of the UN Country Team.
- **Mandate:** technical cooperation



Framework for Cooperation

I. Rule of Law

- Establishment of Human Rights network of judges and systematic provision of the information on the UN HR mechanisms
- Promotion of the role of administrative justice in the protection of human rights
- Support for the piloting of the use of videotaping of interrogation to prevent torture and ill treatment
- Promotion of women's rights and combating violence against women
- Support to improvement of Juvenile justice and promoting child rights



Framework for Cooperation

II. Promotion of Equality and Tolerance

- Coordinated programmes to promote tolerance and counter the most acute manifestations of racism
- Protection of the rights of indigenous peoples
- Protection of the rights of persons with disabilities
- Human rights aspects of HIV/AIDS



Framework for Cooperation

III. Human Rights Education and Information

- Education of human rights professionals
- Dissemination of Knowledge of international mechanisms and procedures

IV. Mainstreaming Human Rights within the UN Country Team



The main activities in the past 3 years

The Rule of Law

- A number of seminars and round tables with **Juvenile Justice federal and regional partners** to discuss the strategy for the adaptation of the JJ indicators manual to the Russian context
- An international expert conference to promote the **role of administrative justice** in the protection of human rights
- A roundtable on the **UPR process and its recommendations to the RF** jointly with the Russian International Law Association at the Chamber of Accounts of the RF



The main activities in the past 3 years

Promotion of Equality and Tolerance

- Translation of the **UDHR** into more than 10 indigenous languages
- Facilitating the Moscow component of the **OHCHR Indigenous Fellowship Programme** for Russian-speaking representatives of indigenous communities
- Co-facilitating the UN Gender Theme group meetings; support to implementation of recent **CEDAW recommendations to the RF** jointly with the Public Chamber, Government, CSO
- Conferences and public hearings on **migration related issues**
- Promoting the **CRPD ratification** by the RF and rights of persons with disabilities



The main activities

HR Education and Information

- Establishment and development of **Human Rights Masters' Programme** with leading Russian universities and the EIUC;
- Establishment of the **Inter-University Resource Center for Human Rights Studies**



The main activities

HR Education and Information

Meeting of the High Commissioner with Human Rights Masters' Programme students at the Peoples' Friendship University



The main activities

HR Education and Information

- **First Moscow International Summer School on Human Rights** in the framework of the Masters' Programme



The Second Summer School on Human Rights 2014

(Seventy five Masters Students, senior undergraduates and post-graduates, experts of UN, representatives of the Ombudsman's Office at the federal and regional levels, representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs)



The main activities

HR Education and Information

- Launch and further maintenance of the **OHCHR website** in Russian
- Yearly participation in the **Moscow International Book Fair** (3000-5000 visitors to “Human Rights” stand; over 5000 UN/OHCHR publications distributed; famous human rights organizations present their publications jointly with OHCHR)



The main activities in the past 3 years

HR Education and Information

- Yearly participation in the **Moscow International Human Rights Film Festival “Stalker”** devoted to Human Rights Day (opportunity to promote human rights to wide audience through cinema; award of special OHCHR prize for civil courage in defense of human rights)



Support to Special Procedures

- several visits before March 2008 (SRs on racism, violence against women)
- SR on Independence of Judges and Lawyers - May 2008
- SR on Indigenous Peoples - October 2009
- SR on Business and Human Rights - March 2010
- RSG on Human Rights of IDPs (transit through Russia on the way to South Ossetia)
- upcoming

Key challenges

- Common understanding of objectives & mandates (what the gov't requests and what OHCHR wants)
- HRA as part of the UN Country Team (need for the gov't to understand and accept that HRA is part of the UNCT with a function to promote HRBA)
- Counterpart issues - one (main “political” counterpart = Ministry of Foreign Affairs) vs. multiple counterparts (in practice, i.e. line ministries, NHRIs, CSO, academia, etc.)

Key challenges

- Arising opportunities - need for flexibility (MOU or framework agreement cannot be changed often but opportunities for additional activities arise every day)
- Linkage between HR reality (though no monitoring mandate), perceived HR needs/priorities (OHCHR, gov't, civil society), recommendations of SP/TB/HRC and the real technical cooperation/FfC.
- Measuring progress – impact indicators (for OHCHR internally and for the gov't to appreciate OHCHR's work; how to measure that we make a difference or add value?)

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Thank You!



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