

Human Rights Coordination Center (HRCC)

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The Human Rights Coordination Centre (HRCC) is an inter-agency centre based within OHR, which has been established to assist in information exchange and coordination (downloadable as pdf file) amongst various agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina which are working on human rights issues. As each of the large international agencies, including OHR, OSCE, UNMIBH, UNHCR, and OHCHR is mandated to deal to some extent with human rights issues, it is imperative that coordination mechanisms ensure information-exchange, strategizing, and elimination of duplication. The HRCC exists to facilitate such coordination.

Support to the Human Rights Steering Board (HRSB) And Regional Human Rights Working Groups (HRWGs)

An important function of the HRCC is to support the work of the Human Rights Steering Board and the Regional Human Rights Working Groups. The HRCC ensures that policy developments at the HRSB level are communicated to the field, either in the form of guidelines or other resources, and ensures the coordination of the HRSB itself. The HRCC also ensures that important issues emerging in Sarajevo-based Coordinating Groups are, where necessary, addressed by the HRSB, and that the field is aware of and included in policy discussions being undertaken in those groups.

- The *Human Rights Steering Board* is a multi-agency body comprised of senior human rights personnel from OHR, OSCE, UNMIBH, UNHCR, OHCHR, and the Council of Europe. The body meets monthly to share information and set policy for the human rights community. Each year the HRSB engages in a planning exercise which establishes priorities for the coming year.
- The *Regional Human Rights Working Groups* are multi-agency groups, based in the regional centres of Sarajevo, Mostar, Brcko, Tuzla, and Banja Luka. These groups are comprised of field level staff, who are engaging directly on human rights issues throughout the country, working with local authorities to improve the human rights situation throughout BiH.
- There are numerous *Sarajevo-based Coordinating Groups* which bring together representatives of international and local agencies to set policy and plan action on a variety of issues. At present, there are coordinating groups on the following topics: Judicial Reform; Trial Monitoring; Missing Persons; Social and Economic Rights; Gender Equality; Property; Legal Aid; Education; Human Rights Institutions; Civil Society; Minorities; and Health.

Information and Reporting:

Quarterly Human Rights Reports: The HRCC is responsible for producing shared, public, human rights reporting of the member agencies. Based on information received through each of the member agencies, as well as through countless other sources, the HRCC produces quarterly human rights reports for Bosnia and Herzegovina which cover issues including property and right to return, rule of law; war crimes and ICTY; social and economic rights; and much more. The reporting of the HRCC is cross-checked, reviewed and verified by all member agencies, ensuring accuracy.

HRCC Council of Europe Updates: The HRCC also produces monthly updates of the progress of Bosnia and Herzegovina towards meeting the accession requirements of the Council of Europe. In May 1999 the Council of Europe identified 13 requirements for BiH to be admitted into the council of Europe, of which 7 accession requirements pertain to human rights (totaling 40 separate tasks). The HRCC has been monitoring progress on these criteria in each entity as well as at the state level, and releases updates on a monthly basis.

Guidelines to the Field: The HRCC produces guidelines to the field on a variety of topics, as requested by the Human Rights Steering Board. These Guidelines translate policy developments into practical guidance for use of those staff working throughout the country. To date guidelines have been produced on: Immigration policy; ID

Cards and residency registration; Education; and Prosecution of Local Officials.

OHR Human Rights/ Rule of Law Department, May 2000