THE EDUCATION OF POLICE IN HUMAN RIGHTS – A FRAMEWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRAMMES FOR POLICE

Ralph Crawshaw*

“The General Assembly,

Proclaims this Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms…”1

This extract from the Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights indicates that the significance of teaching and education in human rights was recognized at the very inception of the international system for the protection of human rights, in the middle of the last century. Whilst the need for human rights education generally has continued to be expressed, there have also been numerous calls for education and training of police officials. It is important, especially in this context, to distinguish between education, which is concerned with intellectual, moral and social instruction, and training, which is concerned with teaching and acquisition of specific skills. These calls have been expressed as recommendations and requirements in, for example, many human rights instruments; in the regular reports of United Nations Working Groups and Special Rapporteurs on human rights themes; and in the recommendations of various international conferences on human rights.2

Human rights programmes for police have been delivered regularly by various international organizations for a number of years,3 and good practice in this field has been developed and set out in manuals and other teaching resources produced by

---

* Ralph Crawshaw B.A (Hons), LLM. Research Fellow, Human Rights Centre, University of Essex. I would like to thank Graham Dossett for his comments on the first draft of this text.
1 Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted and proclaimed by General Assembly Resolution 217 (111) of 10 December 1948. Last preambular paragraph.
2 See e.g. Article 10 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT); the reports of the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture to the Human Rights Commission; and the report of the World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna in 1993.
3 These include the Council of Europe, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, and the United Nations Centre for Human Rights.
and for these organizations. Furthermore, at a national level governments and police agencies, for differing reasons, have been required to develop their own programmes. Research and reports by officially constituted bodies and non-governmental organizations have also identified good practice in human rights education for police.

It is particularly appropriate that the subject of human rights programmes for police should be included in a publication honouring professor Göran Melander, as the Raoul Wallenberg Institute for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law has made a significant contribution to the process of educating police in human rights for more than a decade. The programmes the Institute delivers in a wide variety of countries are seen as long-term projects, usually entailing a series of courses and workshops over an extended period of time. This approach has meant that it has been possible to refine the content of the programmes and the teaching material and methods, so that good practice could be developed. The ethos of the Institute has always been to encourage innovation and experimentation, and this has benefited those participating in its programmes, and given impetus to the wider effort to educate police in human rights undertaken by other important international contributors to this field of activity.

The purpose of this paper is to describe a framework for human rights programmes for police that can be adapted and applied to programmes offered by international bodies or resource persons, and national authorities. However, before doing so, it is helpful to consider the relationship between human rights and policing, and to set out the purposes and principles on which such programmes are based.

1. The Relationship between Human Rights and Policing

The relationship between human rights and policing can be usefully regarded as having four components: police powers and respect for human rights; police functions and protection of human rights; the requirement to investigate human rights violations; and the entitlement of police to human rights.

---

4 See e.g. the manual ‘Human Rights and Law Enforcement’ produced by the United Nations Centre for Human Rights; the manual ‘Police and Human Rights’ produced by the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law; the Manual ‘To Serve and To Protect’ produced by the International Committee of the Red Cross; and the Police and Human Rights Training and Awareness Material produced by the Council of Europe.
