

PPI Biography

James Rodehaver is currently the Deputy Director of the Human Rights field presence within the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. He has previously served as the Director of the Human Rights Departments of both the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina and the OSCE Mission in Kosovo. These field missions have two of the largest human rights field presences in the world. While Director of the Human Rights Department in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Rodehaver oversaw a multi-disciplinary human rights programme that undertook research and advocacy on issues as diverse as war crimes proceedings in the courts throughout the country, progressive realization of economic and social rights, endemic discrimination, and combating trafficking against women. His Department monitored trials before the State Court of BiH on behalf of the ICTY Prosecutor's Office to ensure that cases transferred under the Tribunal's Rule 11 bis back to prosecutors in the state justice system were handled fairly, efficiently, and according to international human rights standards. Over a five year period as Director, Mr. Rodehaver oversaw the publication of over 80 public reports on human rights issues.

Mr. Rodehaver is a human rights professional, having gained considerable experience in a variety of international field presences during both times of conflict and their aftermath. His work has taken him for varying periods to locations throughout the Balkans, Russia, West Africa and now Afghanistan. Having been within the OSCE and United Nations system for a number of years, he has filled a variety of professional roles alternately as an investigator, monitor, advisor, and manager. He has been engaged on substantive issues ranging from war crimes and juvenile justice to returns and minority rights. As a human rights officer in Sierra Leone in 1999 and 2000, he conducted field investigations into violations of international humanitarian law and human rights abuses committed by the various parties to that civil war. A lawyer by vocation, he worked on the draft Statute of the Special Court for Sierra Leone doing both research and drafting on behalf of the UN presence in the country during that period. Mr. Rodehaver also worked in the UN Mission to Liberia as a senior advisor on child protection and juvenile justice issues.

During his four-year tenure in the UN Mission in Kosovo, Mr. Rodehaver acted as an adviser within the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General on minority rights, transitional justice, and returns. Within this context, he helped in preparing the Standards for Kosovo and their respective implementation plans. He also dealt directly with Western European Governments concerning the forcible repatriation of minority asylum-seekers, particularly members of the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities, from Kosovo. Mr. Rodehaver drafted and oversaw implementation of the UNMIK Policy on Forced Returns in which the UN administration in Kosovo strictly adhered to its human rights obligations to protect members of minority communities by refusing to accept the forcible repatriation of Kosovo Serbs, Albanians from Northern Mitrovica, and Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians from Western Europe.

Over the years, Mr. Rodehaver has also been a researcher and lecturer at universities on human rights law. He has helped to coordinate political campaigns in his native region of Appalachia in the US. He remains an avid long-distance runner.

James Rodehaver holds degrees in history from Ohio University in history and contemporary diplomatic history. He received a juris doctorate from the Washington & Lee University School of Law in Lexington Virginia with distinction for his work on issues of public international law.