



**UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency

# Policy on Addressing Sexual Misconduct

UNHCR/HCP/2024/02



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# Policy on Addressing Sexual Misconduct

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Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (PSEA/SH)

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*This and other official UNHCR guidance material  
is available on the [Policy and Guidance Page](#)  
of the UNHCR intranet.*

# 1.

## PURPOSE

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- 1.1 The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that all UNHCR personnel are aware of their roles and responsibilities in maintaining a workplace that is free from sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, and sexual harassment (collectively referred to as “sexual misconduct”). This Policy seeks to ensure that all personnel are held to a common standard of conduct and that measures are taken to both prevent and address sexual misconduct.
- 1.2 This Policy also clarifies definitions and assigns roles, authorities, and accountabilities to the functions and entities with specialized capacity for addressing sexual misconduct.
- 1.3 This Policy builds upon ST/SGB/2003/13 [Special Measures for the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse](#) and takes into account the [UN System Model Policy on Sexual Harassment](#) and related United Nations guidance. This Policy should be read and applied in conjunction with UNHCR/HCP/2020/04 [Policy on a Victim-Centred Approach in UNHCR’s response to Sexual Misconduct \(the VCA Policy\)](#).<sup>1</sup>

# 2.

## SCOPE

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- 2.1 This Policy applies to all UNHCR personnel.<sup>2</sup>
- 2.2 This Policy governs the obligations of UNHCR and its personnel for the prevention and response to **sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (SEA)** and **sexual harassment (SH)**. Fulfilling these obligations contributes to the respect of victims’ rights and the meeting of their needs, consistent with the VCA Policy.
- 2.3 This Policy does not cover investigations or the disciplinary process in relation to sexual misconduct, which are governed by UNHCR/AI/2019/15 [Administrative Instruction on Conducting Investigations in UNHCR](#) and UNHCR/AI/2018/18/Rev.1 [Administrative Instruction on Misconduct and the Disciplinary Process](#), respectively.
- 2.4 Compliance with this Policy is **mandatory**.

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<sup>1</sup> In line with the current accepted broader UN approach, we are using the term ‘victim’ in this policy, while acknowledging that the term survivor may also be appropriate and is preferred in certain contexts (e.g. in the context of responding to gender-based violence). As an example of the UN use of the term victim, see e.g. <https://bit.ly/49YLq2X>.

<sup>2</sup> For the purpose of this Policy, the term “personnel” encompasses UNHCR staff members, affiliate workforce, and interns as well as UN staff members on secondment or loan with UNHCR from a releasing organization applying the United Nations Common System of Salaries and Allowances (the UN Common System), subject to the provisions of the Inter-Organization Agreement concerning Transfer, Secondment or Loan of Staff among Organizations Applying the United Nations Common System of Salaries and Allowances.

### 3.

## RATIONALE

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- 3.1 UNHCR is deeply committed to its vision of providing a work environment that is respectful, inclusive, and based on trust, where forcibly displaced and stateless persons as well as UNHCR personnel feel safe, heard, equipped, and empowered to speak up for themselves and others, and to take strong and visible action, as appropriate, to eradicate sexual misconduct.
- 3.2 SEA and SH are prohibited and constitute serious misconduct. SEA of forcibly displaced and stateless persons and members of host communities represent grave breaches of trust and of their right to safety, security, and dignity. SH of UNHCR personnel undermines the right to be safe and treated with dignity and respect in the workplace and in connection with work.
- 3.3 UNHCR personnel can expect robust measures, including termination of employment, if it is established that they have perpetrated sexual misconduct. When established sexual misconduct resulted or would have resulted in termination of employment, personal identifying information of perpetrators will be entered into the [UN ClearCheck Screening Database](#), a UN-wide screening database maintained by the UN Office of Human Resources Management, to prevent the rehiring of personnel who have been terminated for SEA or SH. ClearCheck also allows for the inclusion of individuals with pending allegations who leave the organization before the completion of an investigation and/or disciplinary process.
- 3.4 This Policy is part of UNHCR's comprehensive and holistic efforts to eradicate sexual misconduct, building on and contributing to recent efforts internally and in the humanitarian and development sectors.<sup>3</sup>
- 3.5 In 2018, the High Commissioner established the Office of the Principal Advisor on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (PSEA/SH), a dedicated capacity to lead and coordinate UNHCR's efforts to tackle SEA and SH under one umbrella. This approach recognizes the common roots of both forms of misconduct in power differentials and gender inequalities, and the similar needs of victims.
- 3.6 In parallel, the role of Focal Points for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA FPs) has also increased in prominence and engagement. PSEA FPs play a critical role in guiding UNHCR operations in the prevention and response to SEA and in ensuring that victims are heard and provided with necessary support in line with the UNHCR's VCA Policy. This Policy formalizes the PSEA FP role in country<sup>4</sup> and Regional Bureaux.

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<sup>3</sup> See UNHCR's [intranet page on the Protection from SEA and SH](#) for access to relevant tools and resources.

<sup>4</sup> The term 'country operations' will be used in this policy to refer to country operations, multi-country operations and other forms of UNHCR field presence. 'Operations' will be used to refer to all entities with an area of budgetary control, including headquarters divisions and entities, regional bureaux, country operations and multi-country operations.

## 4.

# TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

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4.1 For the purposes of this Policy, the term **sexual misconduct** is used to refer to all forms of conduct characterized as sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, and/or sexual harassment, as defined below.

- **Sexual abuse** means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. Any sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18 years) constitutes sexual abuse.
- **Sexual exploitation** means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. It includes but is not limited to exchanging money, employment, goods or services for sex. This includes transactional sex regardless of the legal status of sex-work in the country. It also includes any situation where sex is coerced or demanded by withholding or threatening to withhold goods or services or by blackmailing.

- **Sexual harassment** is any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offense or humiliation.<sup>5</sup> Sexual harassment may occur in or outside the workplace, and during or outside working hours, including during official travel or social functions related to work. Sexual harassment is grave per se and inherently causes individual, social, and reputational harm. Sexual harassment is particularly serious when it interferes with work, is made a condition of employment, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment. While typically involving a pattern of conduct, sexual harassment may take the form of a single incident. In assessing the reasonableness of expectations or perceptions, the perspective of the person who is the target of the conduct will be considered. Sexual harassment is prohibited under staff rule 1.2 (f) and may also constitute sexual exploitation or sexual abuse under staff rule 1.2 (e).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> In the context of disciplinary proceedings, when assessing the reasonableness of the expectations or perceptions of the person alleged to have engaged in sexual harassment, the perspective of the person who is the target of the alleged conduct will be considered.

<sup>6</sup> You may access the most recent version of the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations at the [UN Policy Portal](#).

## 5.

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES TO ADDRESS SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

### **A Victim-Centred Approach – putting the victim first**

- 5.1 In accordance with the VCA Policy, UNHCR engages with victims of sexual misconduct in a way that prioritizes listening to them, avoids re-traumatization, and systematically focuses on their safety, rights, wellbeing, expressed needs, and choices. UNHCR strives to deliver services and support to victims, including throughout the reporting and the investigation process, should they choose to engage in one. All support and services should be delivered in a confidential, empathetic, sensitive, and non-judgemental manner that seeks to give back as much control to victims as feasible, within a context of ensuring appropriate and reasonable due process.

### **Age, Gender and Diversity**

- 5.2 In accordance with UNHCR/HCP/2018/1 [UNHCR Policy on Age, Gender and Diversity](#), UNHCR engages with forcibly displaced and stateless persons and members of host communities who are victims of SEA in an equitable manner that recognizes age, gender, and diversity characteristics. UNHCR establishes and/or supports safe and accessible feedback and response mechanisms that facilitate confidential reporting of sexual misconduct in line with age, gender, and

diversity considerations. Child protection services must be available to child SEA survivors.<sup>7</sup>

### **Prevention of, Risk Mitigation, and Response to Gender-Based Violence**

- 5.3 In accordance with UNHCR/HCP/2020/01 [UNHCR Policy on the Prevention of, Risk Mitigation, and Response to Gender-Based Violence](#), SEA by humanitarian workers is a form of gender-based violence (GBV). GBV services must be accessible to SEA victims.<sup>8</sup>

### **Do-No-Harm**

- 5.4 UNHCR takes concrete action to avoid or minimize re-traumatization and any adverse effects of its interventions, and it refrains from any action that jeopardizes the safety, security, and well-being of the victim.

### **Duty of Care**

- 5.5 UNHCR takes all reasonable and practical measures, in terms of security, medical, administrative, and psychosocial support, to ensure that members of personnel can effectively and efficiently perform their functions free from sexual misconduct.

<sup>7</sup> [VCA Policy](#), Key Principle 11(i) and [Policy on Child Protection](#) (para 5.6.1). See also: [UNHCR Operational Guidance on Child Protection Core Programme Actions](#) | UNHCR (page 15).

<sup>8</sup> UNHCR operations must extend existing services to victims or seek support for victims through relevant partners, including local authorities whenever available and safe. There is no requirement to establish new or specialized services for SEA.

## 6.

# DISCLOSURE, SUPPORT, AND REPORTING

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6.1 UNHCR has different mechanisms for managing disclosure, support, and reporting of SEA and SH. While the VCA Policy acts as an overarching framework, the avenues for disclosure, support, and reporting obligations for SEA and SH differ, and they are outlined below.

### **Sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (SEA) committed against forcibly displaced and stateless persons and members of host communities**

6.2 UNHCR personnel must report concerns or suspicions of SEA committed by fellow workers including:

- by UNHCR personnel;
- by any entity/person having a contractual link to UNHCR, including funded contractors, suppliers, or project partners;
- by personnel of another multilateral, civil society, government or other organization;
- by volunteers engaged in humanitarian and/or development activities.

6.3 Reporting any concern or suspicion of SEA is mandatory. UNHCR personnel must report concerns or suspicions of SEA at the earliest opportunity, in as much detail as possible.<sup>9</sup> Failure to report SEA may constitute misconduct.

6.4 A victim may report SEA at any time. There are no time limits for a victim to make a formal report.

6.5 Direct reporting of suspected SEA to the IGO is the primary reporting channel. Alternatively, allegations of SEA can be reported through:

- a manager at UNHCR, who in turn has the duty to report the allegations to the IGO;
- the SpeakUp Helpline;<sup>10</sup>
- the PSEA FP, who in turn has the duty to report the allegations to the IGO.

6.6 Victims of SEA who are forcibly displaced or stateless persons or members of host communities are entitled to immediate multi-sectoral assistance and support,

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<sup>9</sup> UNHCR entities shall only take actions or steps which the victim has not requested or does not agree with when (a) these steps / actions are in accordance with mandatory policy or guidance, or when (b) the step or action is necessary to address a situation that seriously endangers the life or immediate security of the victim or of other persons. In line with the VCA Policy, the victim has as much control as feasible over sharing of their identity information and over any actions in the context of assistance, support, processes and procedures. In certain exceptional situations, if the victim explicitly requests, identity information of the victim should not be shared. The staff member reporting the allegation in this context should contact the IGO to discuss the situation and seek further guidance.

<sup>10</sup> This helpline constitutes an additional point of entry for UNHCR personnel wanting to report misconduct or seek guidance on options for this. The service is provided through an independent external entity and is available year-round.

based on existing services available in the operation or through partners. The provision of victim assistance does not depend on whether the victim makes a formal report. The duration of the assistance and support should be determined in accordance with individual needs. PSEA FPs should facilitate and support this overall approach in their respective operations, working closely with relevant protection colleagues.

- 6.7 Victims will lead on decisions regarding assistance and support, in line with the VCA Policy and with the support of the PSEA FP in the operation.
- 6.8 SEA may constitute criminal conduct.<sup>11</sup> UNHCR will transmit credible allegations of SEA to the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs for referral to national authorities for criminal accountability, subject to the victim's consent.

## Sexual harassment (SH)

- 6.9 In case of SH, in accordance with a victim-centred approach, the member of personnel who is a victim decides on the preferred resolution pathway.<sup>12</sup> The victim has the following recommended options:
- to disclose information on SH to the Victim Care Officer who will provide advice on different support available and/or resolution options;
  - to contact the IGO for an informal consultation on the formal process;
  - to submit a formal report to the IGO which may lead to an investigation and a disciplinary process;
  - to seek resolution outside of the formal process,<sup>13</sup> including by contacting the Office of the Ombudsman and Mediator,<sup>14</sup> or local resolution through the management;<sup>15</sup>
  - to report to a manager at UNHCR, who should subsequently consult with the Victim Care Officer on a victim-centered approach;
  - to report to the SpeakUp Helpline;
  - to record an incident on UNHCR's NotOnlyMe tool.

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<sup>11</sup> As per General Assembly resolution 67/88 of 14 Dec 2012 "*Criminal accountability of United Nations officials and experts on mission*".

<sup>12</sup> This is also the case where the conduct may additionally constitute sexual abuse.

<sup>13</sup> Accessing informal resolution pathways does not preclude the victim from choosing to pursue a formal resolution.

<sup>14</sup> The Office of the Ombudsman and Mediator will work with the victim and in consultation with the Victim Care Officer to facilitate a resolution that is safe and appropriate. This could involve engaging in dialogue with the concerned colleague by making them aware of or confirming the unwelcome nature of the behaviour and its impact and asking for the behaviour to stop on behalf of the victim; or they can facilitate a dialogue between the victim and the concerned colleague.

<sup>15</sup> Managers may engage in a discussion with the alleged perpetrator about the conduct in question, which the victim can choose to take part in or not. As part of a local solution, managers may implement suitable workplace accommodations in consultation with the victim, the Victim Care Officer and/or the Ethics Office.



The victim also has the option to take no action, if that is their wish.

- 6.10 To ensure access to expert and tailored advice, guidance, and support, victims of SH are encouraged to consult with the Victim Care Officer when considering any of the available options to address SH. The Victim Care Officer will provide tailored advice and feedback to victims to support an informed decision regarding the way forward and can accompany the victim throughout the entirety of the process. There is no deadline or maximum timeframe for engaging in a resolution process.
- 6.11 Personnel who witness SH are encouraged to contact the IGO or the Victim Care Officer for information and advice on how to address the situation by applying a victim-centred approach.
- 6.12 All UNHCR entities engaging with SH victims will proactively inform victims of the role of and connect them to the Victim Care Officer for support and accompaniment and for the coordination of services on the victim's behalf. An opt-out model for the Victim Care Officer's services will be applied as per the VCA Policy.<sup>16</sup> A victim is nevertheless not obliged to accept the Victim Care Officer's intervention or support.
- 6.13 SH victims will be offered assistance and support irrespective of whether they make a formal report or engage in any accountability or resolution process. The Victim Care Officer provides confidential psychosocial support to victims of sexual misconduct.<sup>17</sup> The records of the Victim Care Officer are not available to any other party or entity, for any purpose, without the explicit consent of the concerned individual. Upon receiving written consent from the concerned UNHCR personnel to make such records available, the decision to release the records, in what form, and to what extent, shall be made by the Victim Care Officer and in the context of the victim-centred approach.
- 6.14 In coordination with the Victim Care Officer, the responsible entities in UNHCR shall provide or arrange for the provision of necessary, victim-centred, immediate, and long-term support to members of its personnel who are victims of SH. UNHCR entities engaging with SH victims must implement their respective Victim-Centred Approach SOPs accordingly.
- 6.15 When SH also constitutes sexual exploitation and/or sexual abuse under staff rule 1.2 (e), resolution outside the investigative and disciplinary process is typically not appropriate.

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<sup>16</sup> As per [UNHCR's Policy on a Victim-Centered Approach](#), these entities may include the Division of Human Resources, Division of International Protection, Ethics Office, Field Security Service, Inspector General's Office, Legal Affairs Service, Ombudsman's Office, Staff Council, and others. Please consult Section VI the Policy for additional information.

<sup>17</sup> While the Victim Care Officer provides confidential psychosocial support to victims of sexual misconduct, all other psychosocial support for UNHCR personnel is organized or provided by the Psychosocial Wellbeing Section.

## 7. PROTECTION AGAINST RETALIATION

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- 7.1 Any member of UNHCR personnel who reports sexual misconduct in good faith, cooperates with a duly authorized investigation, and/or contacts, cooperates with or participates in the activities of the Office of the Ombudsman and Mediator, is protected against retaliation under the terms provided by UNHCR/ AI/2018/10/Rev.1 [Administrative Instruction on Protection against Retaliation](#). For further guidance, the Ethics Office should be contacted at [HQEthics@unhcr.org](mailto:HQEthics@unhcr.org). All discussions with the Ethics Office are strictly confidential.

## 8. ROLES, ACCOUNTABILITIES AND AUTHORITIES

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- 8.1 This section outlines the key roles, authorities, and accountabilities of UNHCR personnel in preventing and addressing sexual misconduct.
- 8.2 **All UNHCR personnel** have an important role in making UNHCR an Organization free from sexual misconduct, no matter their contractual status, job title, job description, area of expertise, area of responsibility, role, or seniority. All UNHCR personnel are accountable for:
- a) Refraining from engaging in, encouraging, or condoning any form of sexual misconduct;
  - b) Familiarizing themselves with the role of PSEA FPs and working with them and managers to foster a respectful and inclusive working environment that prevents and mitigates the risks of SEA and SH;
  - c) Familiarizing themselves with the existing mechanisms for reporting allegations of SEA and SH;
  - d) Completing UN mandatory courses “[Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse](#)” and “[United to Respect: Preventing Sexual Harassment and Other Prohibited Conduct](#),” both accessible on Workday;

- e) e. Reporting behaviour that is suspected of being SEA or SH in a confidential manner;
- f) f. Familiarizing themselves with the role of the Victim Care Officer and services available to support victims of SH.

### 8.3 Managers

In addition to the obligations outlined above for all personnel, managers are accountable for:

- a) Ensuring that all known incidents of sexual misconduct are promptly addressed in accordance with this Policy;
- b) Fostering a respectful and inclusive environment where all colleagues feel safe and encouraged to speak up, promoting a working atmosphere that mitigates the risks of and prevents SEA and SH, and that is responsive to the safety, rights, needs and well-being of victims;<sup>18</sup>
- c) Acting as role models by upholding the highest standards of conduct and communicating clearly on their commitment to zero tolerance for sexual misconduct;
- d) Engaging personnel under their direct supervision in open dialogue on this and related policies, ensuring that personnel are aware of their responsibilities;
- e) Ensuring that colleagues under their supervision have completed the mandatory training and

supporting their participation in additional training on SEA and SH;

- f) Ensuring that colleagues under their supervision are aware of their team's / unit's specific roles in prevention, risk mitigation and response to SEA, and the need to integrate PSEA in their areas of work in coordination with other relevant teams / units.

Failure on the part of a manager to fulfil their obligations under this Policy, if established, shall be reflected in their performance appraisal and may lead to administrative or disciplinary action.

### 8.4 Representatives

In addition to the accountabilities and obligations outlined above, Representatives are also accountable for ensuring that:

- a) All personnel in their operation have undergone the mandatory PSEA and SH training;
- b) Victims who disclose allegations of SEA or SH can access relevant advice and support, and victims of SEA access this support through existing accessible and multi-sectoral GBV prevention and response programmes and, in the case of children, child protection services;
- c) Programmatic and enabling actions are taken by the operation to implement this policy in a multifunctional team approach, as appropriate to the context of the operation;

<sup>18</sup> Please refer to sections 4 and 5 of the [VCA Policy](#).

- d) Functioning, accessible, and safe feedback and response mechanisms are in place and can be used for confidential reporting of SEA allegations and meet the requirements provided in other relevant policies;<sup>19</sup>
- e) A Focal Point or Focal Points for the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA FP) are appointed, and work together with a multi-functional team to support the implementation of this policy and the VCA policy on an ongoing basis;<sup>20</sup>
- f) Implementation of the Policy in the operation is monitored and complex or recurrent challenges are promptly escalated to the Regional Bureaux and Headquarters entities contributing to UNHCR's efforts to tackle sexual misconduct, as relevant;
- g) Risks relating to SEA and SH have been fully considered and assessed under areas of responsibility under the UNHCR Enterprise Risk Management review framework;
- h) PSEA is integrated in contingency and emergency planning and response;
- i) UNHCR provides leadership, as required, and participates actively in interagency efforts to tackle sexual misconduct, including through engagement with Government, UN, and NGO partners.

Representatives have the authority to:

- j) Coordinate country-level efforts to implement UNHCR's global strategy on tackling sexual misconduct as part of the refugee coordination model;
- k) Provide updates on the actions taken by the UNHCR operation in relation to PSEA, including to the Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator, Member States and donors, Government authorities, and partners where necessary.

#### 8.5 **Focal Points for the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse** (PSEA FP)

Each country operation and Regional Bureau has a formally appointed focal point for PSEA. At the discretion of the Representative or Director, the operation may appoint more than one focal point. Focal points for PSEA must be a senior staff member in the international professional category, wherever feasible. The PSEA FP reports to the Representative or Director.

Focal points for PSEA are accountable for:

- a) Facilitating the implementation of this Policy in the operation, including access to advice and support for victims;
- b) Supporting managers and personnel, including field-based focal points, to identify and implement programmatic and enabling actions to prevent or

<sup>19</sup> Please refer to p. 8 [Policy on Age, Gender, and Diversity](#), and section 4(b) [Policy on Addressing Fraud Committed by Persons of Concern](#) [internal link].

<sup>20</sup> In large operations, the Representative may choose to appoint more than one PSEA FP, depending on the operational context and needs.

respond to and to mitigate risks of SEA in their respective areas of work.

In addition, regional PSEA Focal Points are accountable for:

- c) Supporting monitoring, coordination, and exchange of experience in relation to the implementation of the PSEA related elements of this Policy in the country operations under the area of responsibility of the Regional Bureau.

The overall duties and responsibilities of the PSEA FP are outlined in the model Terms of Reference, available at UNHCR's [intranet page on the Protection from SEA and SH](#).

#### 8.6 Regional Bureau Directors

Regional Bureau Directors are accountable for overseeing that:

- a) The Policy is coherently applied across the region, taking account of specific operational contexts, country capacities, and relevant risks;
- b) Implementation of the Policy in country operations under their Bureau is monitored, and analysis is available on specific trends concerning SEA;
- c) A Regional PSEA FP is appointed to support regional coordination of PSEA activities and Bureau implementation of this Policy.

Regional Bureau Directors have the authority to:

- d) Coordinate regional and/or situational efforts to implement UNHCR's global strategy on tackling sexual misconduct;
- e) Convene a regional multi-functional team to advance strategies to prevent and respond to SEA and SH;
- f) Provide resources towards the implementation of UNHCR's PSEA efforts, where necessary.

#### 8.7 Directors of Headquarters Divisions and Heads of Entities

are accountable for ensuring that:

- a) All personnel in their respective teams have undergone the mandatory PSEA and SH training;
- b) Victims who disclose allegations of SEA or SH can access relevant advice and support, in line with the VCA Policy; and,
- c) Guidance and technical support under their areas of oversight include measures to take forward the organization's commitment and strategy to address SEA and SH;
- d) If relevant, appoint PSEA Focal Point in consultation with the Office of Principal Advisor on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (PSEA/SH).

## 8.8 **Principal Advisor on the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment**

The Principal Advisor is accountable for overseeing that:

- a) The implementation of this Policy and the VCA Policy is monitored across regions and recurrent gaps and risks are identified and addressed;
- b) Global analysis of trends is readily accessible and recommendations for the prevention and response to sexual misconduct are coordinated with the relevant entities and stakeholders.

The Principal Advisor has the authority to:

- c) Coordinate UNHCR's efforts to tackle sexual misconduct;
- d) Convene entities that contribute to UNHCR's global efforts to combat sexual misconduct including the Inspector General's Office (IGO), the Legal Affairs Service (LAS), the Division of International Protection (DIP), the Division of Human Resources (DHR), the Division of External Relations (DER), the Division of Strategic Planning and Results (DSPR), the Ethics Office, the Ombudsman's Office, Enterprise Risk Management (ERM), as well as the Regional Bureaux and field operations, to jointly address challenges in implementing the Policy, and advance strategies to prevent and respond to SEA and SH and promote the application of a VCA;
- e) Undertake initiatives to support the organization in combating sexual misconduct, including through the development of policy and guidance, tools, materials, training and learning initiatives, support

missions, tailored technical advice and operational support, and coordinating the global network of PSEA focal points;

- f) Lead UNHCR's engagement in the interagency context, including with the Office of the Special Coordinator on Improving the UN Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, the UN Office of the Victims Rights Advocate, the UN Executive Group to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Harassment, the Inter Agency Standing Committee, and ExCom Member States;
- g) Report to the High Commissioner on the implementation of UNHCR's efforts to prevent and respond to sexual misconduct.

## 8.9 **Victim Care Officers** are accountable for ensuring that:

- a) The individual wishes, needs, and risks faced by victims are assessed and are central to the organizational response;
- b) Victims of SH receive confidential psychosocial support and are accompanied throughout the accountability process, upon their request;
- c) Confidential advice and guidance are available to managers dealing with issues of sexual misconduct within their team.

## 9. MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE

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- 9.1. The Principal Advisor monitors the implementation of this Policy globally. Regional Bureaux monitor and support its application in their respective country operations.

## 10. DATES

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- 10.1. This Policy is effective as of the date of issuance. It will be reviewed and updated to reflect major evolutions in United Nations and UNHCR policies or practices, no later than 1 May 2029.

## 11. CONTACT

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- 11.1. For further information, please contact the Office of the Principal Advisor on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment ([HQPSEASH@unhcr.org](mailto:HQPSEASH@unhcr.org)).

## 12. HISTORY

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- 12.1 This is the first version of this Policy. It supersedes UNHCR/IOM/FOM/77-2003, Secretary General's Bulletin: Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, 13 November 2003.<sup>21</sup>
- 12.2 This Policy supersedes the provisions in UNHCR/HCP/2014/4 "Policy on Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Discrimination and Abuse of Authority" related to sexual harassment. Those provisions remain in force to the extent that they refer to harassment, discrimination, and abuse of authority.

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<sup>21</sup> This Policy does not supersede the Secretary General's Bulletin; it does however supersede the UNHCR IOM/FOM of the same name.



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