



2023-2025 Strategy and Action Plan

In 2018, UNHCR adopted a new approach to tackling sexual misconduct by bringing the fight against sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and sexual harassment (SH) together holistically, and establishing a dedicated team to lead and coordinate these efforts. Recognizing the common roots of both forms of sexual misconduct, this approach places an emphasis on addressing power and gender differentials that give rise to these abuses and ensuring a victim-centred¹ approach in addressing them.

Under the coordination of the Office of the Senior Coordinator on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment, with the support of a technical level Working Group² and with the engagement of the Regional Bureaux and field operations, UNHCR will continue its significant investments in mitigating the risks of, preventing, and responding to sexual misconduct. This updated Strategy and Action Plan builds on the work of the past five years, to further strengthen PSEA and SH capacity at the operational level in line with industry best practice, while maintaining a strong and active role in the interagency arena.³

The objectives and planned actions outlined in this global Strategy and Action Plan require a multifunctional approach and are intended to guide the Organization's overall efforts to tackle sexual misconduct. Support will be provided by specialised and dedicated capacity within the Office of the Senior Coordinator on PSEA and SH, notably in the areas of coordination, policy development and implementation, field support, training and learning development and delivery, victim support, interagency engagement, external relations, and communications.

¹ In the context of sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, a victim-centred approach is a way of engaging with victim(s) that prioritizes listening to the victim(s), avoids re-traumatization, and systematically focuses on their safety, rights, well-being, expressed needs and choices, thereby giving back as much control to victim(s) as feasible and ensuring the empathetic and sensitive delivery of services and accompaniment in a non-judgmental manner. For more information please see UNHCR's [Policy on a Victim-Centred Approach in UNHCR's response to Sexual Misconduct](#), 2020.

² Division of External Relations, Division of Human Resources, Division of International Protection, Division of Strategic Planning and Results, Enterprise Risk Management, Ethics Office, Field Security Service, Innovation Service, Inspector General's Office, Legal Affairs Service and Ombudsman's Office.

³ OECD DAC [Recommendation on Ending Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment in Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance](#); [U.S. Government Engagement Principles on Protection from Sexual Exploitation Abuse and Sexual Harassment within International Organizations](#).

As a key organizational priority, UNHCR's global efforts on addressing sexual misconduct will be guided by the following five main strategic objectives:

- | | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|--|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Ensure that a victim-centred approach guides all of UNHCR's work on sexual misconduct. | Equip and empower UNHCR personnel to mitigate the risks of, prevent and respond to sexual misconduct. | Engage with affected communities, NGO partners, non-traditional and civil society actors, and Governments as key partners to address sexual misconduct. | Strengthen organizational and operational accountability mechanisms in tackling sexual misconduct. | Maintain UNHCR's role as a key stakeholder in interagency and system-wide efforts. |

Strategic Objectives and Actions

1

Ensure that a victim-centred approach guides all of UNHCR's work on sexual misconduct: Strengthen the overall response to victims of SEA and SH, ensuring that it is properly contextualized, nuanced, and victim informed; that it empowers victims and their unique needs; that it safeguards their security, well-being and dignity; and that it ensures the empathetic and sensitive delivery of services. Ensure that victims voices and experiences are integrated into risk mitigation, prevention and response measures, as well as communications, awareness raising and learning activities.

- Develop Standard Operating Procedures and operational and technical guidance to support organization wide implementation of the VCA Policy for victims of sexual misconduct.
- Strengthen consultation and dialogue with a reference group of victims of SH to inform organizational priorities and initiatives on tackling sexual misconduct.
- Increase awareness for GBV and PSEA Focal Points on investigation and disciplinary process for allegations of SEA, so as to better support victims in this process.
- Promote the use of NotOnlyMe among UNHCR personnel as a support resource for victims of SH.

2

Equip and empower UNHCR personnel to prevent, mitigate the risks of, and respond to sexual misconduct: Enhance the capacity of UNHCR personnel to mitigate the risks of, prevent, and respond to SEA and SH through innovative and engaging awareness raising and learning activities. Support operations to provide quality and standardised PSEA/SH training for their personnel. Continue to provide specialized training and tools on PSEA/SH for different functional groups including PSEA Focal Points, Peer Advisors and senior managers. Ensure that PSEA and SH are mainstreamed and integrated in all relevant areas of UNHCR's work. Promote and support efforts on positive organizational and workplace culture, in coordination with relevant entities.

- Support the systematic roll out of the PSEA and SH Learning Packages across all operations.
- Strengthen understanding on complex issues and concepts in PSEA and SH policy and implementation, and standardize language to be used in SOPs and interagency and internal products.
- Promote enhanced responsibility and engagement by Representatives and their senior management teams, including in clearly defining roles and responsibilities at the operational level for PSEA and SH and through the development of support tools.
- Develop initiatives to promote engagement and dialogue on workplace culture.
- Strengthen UNHCR's network of Peer Advisors to support efforts around mitigating the risks of SH and the underlying factors rooted in workplace culture.
- Support the global network of PSEA focal points, including through the community of practice and the development of a specialized e-learning.
- Ensure regular coordination and close dialogue with regional and operational PSEA focal points through virtual and in-person meetings, helping to ensure implementation of global policies and tools.
- Develop programmatic guidance on PSEA for functional roles working in areas of heightened SEA risk and identification (such as registration, refugee status determination, and resettlement).
- Strengthen external communications and advocacy efforts on addressing sexual misconduct.





3

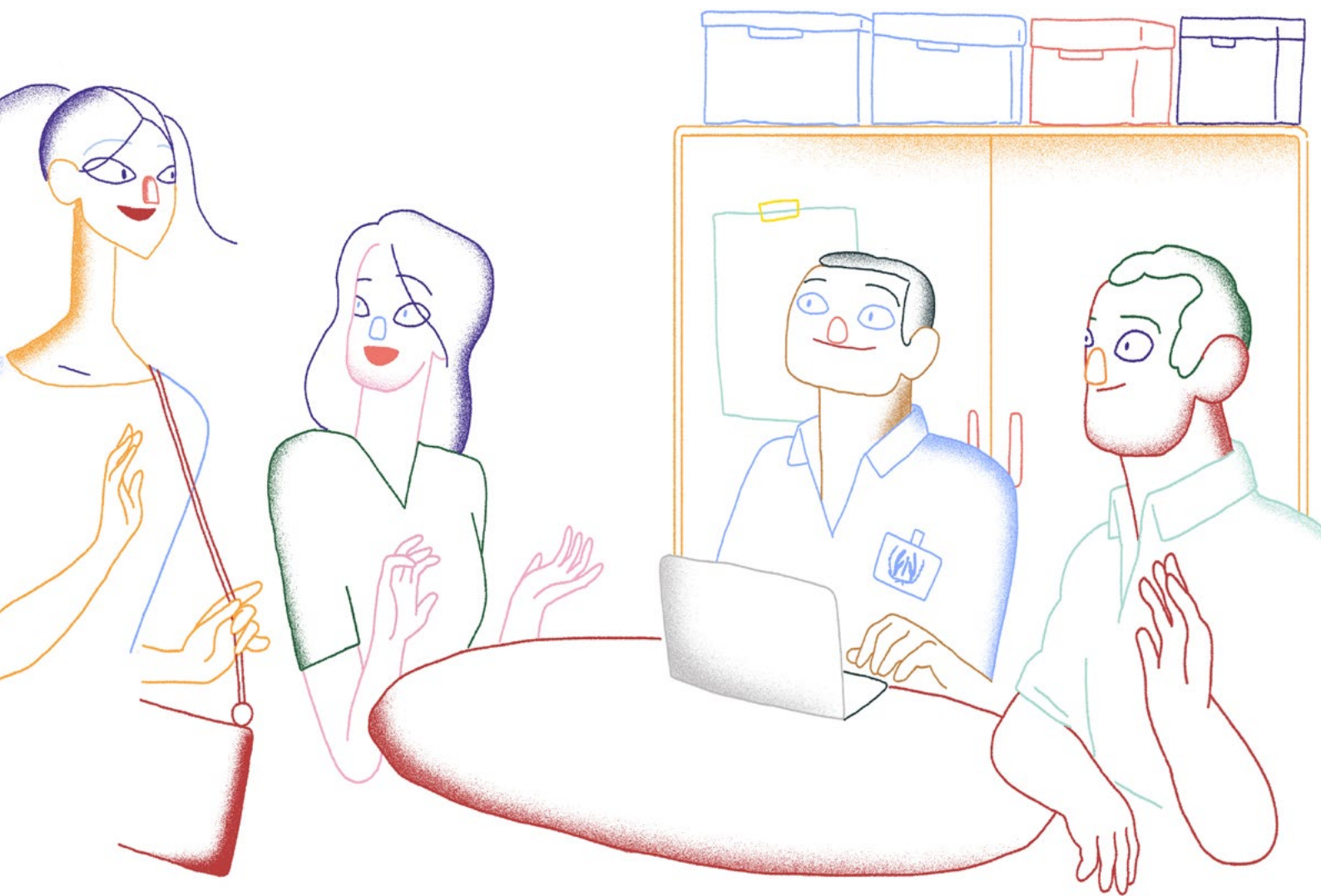
Engage with affected communities, NGO partners, Governments as key partners to tackle sexual misconduct: Promote stronger engagement with affected communities to increase consultation, awareness raising, and dialogue with the people we serve and their host communities, ensuring special attention is paid to accessing children, persons with disabilities and other diverse groups. Support locally led efforts aimed at risk mitigation, prevention, response to victims of SEA. Continue to closely coordinate with NGO partners, ensuring that they receive the support necessary to ensure minimum standards on PSEA capacity. Strengthen engagement with governments on PSEA efforts, including in systemizing an approach on responding to allegations and ensuring adequate capacity to address sexual misconduct.

- Develop, strengthen, and promote mechanisms for community participation in SEA prevention and response, particularly through direct engagement with refugee led organizations, notably women led organizations, to reach underrepresented groups.
- Ensure nuanced and tailored engagement with communities regarding sectors/activities where there may be heightened risks of SEA (e.g. beneficiaries of cash or in-kind assistance, those staying in reception/transit centres, children in schools, etc.)
- Promote comprehensive implementation of partner capacity assessments and support partners with development and implementation of strengthening and implementation plans, including through the development of training and information materials.
- Engage government, non-traditional partners, and civil society actors both for capacity strengthening and as key resources in defining best practices and identify ways of mainstreaming PSEA in different sectors.
- Continue to build partner capacity on communications and outreach efforts, specifically targeting children, persons with disabilities, and difficult to reach communities.
- Increase access to e-learning and other relevant interagency materials for partners through translation and awareness raising.

4

Strengthen organizational and operational accountability mechanisms: Support organizational efforts to strengthen and adopt policies, procedures, and practices that better facilitate the integration of and define PSEA and SH in accountability mechanisms, both at the global and operational levels. Ensure that frameworks and systems promote risk mitigation, preventative measures and response mechanisms that are driven by the needs and experiences of victims. Continue to contribute to internal and interagency efforts towards enhancing workplace and organizational culture to tackle gender and power differentials at the root of sexual misconduct.

- Develop a UNHCR policy on addressing sexual misconduct which sets out clear roles and accountabilities for all staff, including managers and Representatives, and equips colleagues with information on how to seek support and advice as well as reporting requirements.
- Strengthen contingency planning on SEA, including through the implementation of PSEA provisions in the UNHCR Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response and the development of operational guidance, establishment of strong coordination among relevant entities, and coordination on crisis communications.
- Strengthen UNHCR's inter-agency coordination role on PSEA, particularly under the Refugee Coordination Model.
- Strengthen efforts to mainstream PSEA in sectoral work, particularly those with heightened risks of SEA, such as delivery of cash and in-kind assistance, shelter and education.
- Enhance screening, vetting, and reference checking mechanisms at the outset of hiring procedures with a view of strengthening capacity to identify perpetrators of sexual misconduct and prevent their moving between organizations undetected, including through the use of ClearCheck and the expansion of the Misconduct Disclosure Scheme.
- Work with relevant entities to develop guidance on harmonized and anonymized data collection on SEA cases for analysis on trends and risk areas, including in particular assistance being provided to victims of SEA; and continue ongoing data collection and analysis on incidents of SH.
- Maintain the integration of PSEA in UNHCR's multifunctional integrity field missions and support joint missions amongst various entities and the Office of the Senior Coordinator.
- Ensure that SEA and SH risks are systematically assessed by operations, and in operations where risks of SEA and/or SH are high, actions to mitigate risks are planned and implemented, in line with the SEA risk management tool, and the Duty of Care Risk Management Tool.



5

Maintain UNHCR's role as a key stakeholder in interagency and UN system-wide efforts:

Continue to actively engage on SEA and SH in policy and guidance development and implementation at the inter-agency level, as well as in advocacy on eradicating SEA and SH in the humanitarian and development sectors. Strengthen partner engagement to promote greater consultation and integration of field perspectives and realities in the establishment of policies, procedures, and tools as well as their adaptability to refugee contexts where appropriate. Support interagency efforts to engage government partners and authorities to constructively contribute to PSEA efforts.

- ➔ Maintain active engagement within the IASC, and with the Office of the Special Coordinator on Improving the UN Response to SEA, the UN Executive Group to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Harassment in the UN System⁴ and the UN Victims' Rights Advocate and related Working Groups and fora.
- ➔ Actively participate in country level PSEA Networks and ensure that PSEA is properly integrated in UNCT/HCT agendas.

- ➔ Promote the rollout of NotOnlyMe for victims of SH across the UN.
- ➔ Continue close coordination with UN agencies on the implementation of the common Implementing Partner Capacity Assessment Tool and capacity strengthening and implementation plans, including through the launch of the PSEA module in the UN Partner Portal to facilitate coordination amongst UN sister agencies.
- ➔ Support in adaptation of the Common Assessment Tool for government partners under the Implementing Partner Protocol Taskforce. Support efforts within the IASC and the UN Executive Group to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Harassment in the UN System to promote and implement a victim-centred approach.
- ➔ Support interagency field missions and regularly share lessons learned on PSEA and SH from UNHCR's field operations in interagency fora.

⁴ Formerly the UN Chief Executives Board Task Force on Sexual Harassment.