

March 2019

**The Secretary-General's Report on
Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse**

Key Messages and Highlights

The 2019 Secretary-General's report Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (A/73/744) was prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 71/278 and 71/297. It provides information on measures to strengthen the system-wide response to sexual exploitation and abuse, including progress in implementation of the zero-tolerance policy and the Secretary-General's 'new approach' strategy outlined in A/71/818.

The report includes data on allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse relating to personnel in peacekeeping and special political missions, other United Nations entities, implementing partners, and non-United Nations international forces authorized by a Security Council mandate covering 1 January to 31 December 2018.

Highlights of the Report:

Overview of 2018 Data on Allegations

In 2018, there were 148 allegations system-wide and 111 for non-UN related entities. The total in 2017 and 2016, respectively was 138 and 165 allegations.

Peacekeeping and Special Political Missions

The number of cases of sexual exploitation and abuse reported for **peacekeeping** has decreased, with **54 allegations** reported in 2018, compared with 62 and 104 reported in 2017 and 2016, respectively. The majority (74 per cent) of the allegations received in 2018 are from the peacekeeping missions in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), with the remaining 26 per cent associated with the operations in Mali (MINUSMA), Haiti (MINUSTAH), Liberia (UNMIL), and South Sudan (UNMISS).

The allegations reported for peacekeeping missions were associated with 94 victims, of whom 83% cent were adults and 17% were children. Alleged perpetrators included 64 military, 14 police and 14 civilian personnel. Of the allegations reported in 2018, 20 (37% involved sexual abuse and 34 (63%) sexual exploitation of an adult

There were no allegations reported for **special political missions** in 2018.

Other United Nations system entities and their implementing partners

In 2018, **94 allegations against UN personnel in entities other than peacekeeping** were reported.

Reports of allegations related to personnel of **implementing partners** has increased to **109** in 2018, from 25 in 2017, suggesting that awareness-raising and outreach efforts are having an impact and that there is increased trust among victims and witnesses and increased understanding of the need to report.

Non-United Nations forces authorized by a Security Council mandate

2 allegations were reported for such forces in 2018. There was 1 allegation in 2017 and 20 in 2016.

Key Messages:

- Sexual exploitation and abuse by UN personnel harms those we serve, undermines UN values and principles and tarnishes the reputation of the women and men who work with integrity and dedication to realize the objectives of the Organization.
- It will not be tolerated.
- Combatting SEA is a priority collective effort for the United Nations.
- It is our moral imperative and our duty to end sexual exploitation and abuse, and it demands our constant vigilance and active efforts. We cannot relent.
- The SG's comprehensive strategy -- launched in 2017 to transform the ways we seek to view, prevent, and respond to SEA -- continues to be implemented and is achieving positive results.
- Prevention and accountability remain at the core of the SG's strategy to implement the zero-tolerance policy, as are related measures to raise awareness, conduct risk assessment, improve screening and staff training, and reporting.
- Collaboration and coordination among UN entities has been strengthened, reflecting an increased understanding that those concerns are shared system-wide.
- Prioritizing the rights and dignity of victims of SEA is at the heart of the SG's strategy.
- Supporting victims is the UN's priority, and we seek to ensure that they receive appropriate and quality assistance.
- Our victim-centred approach is increasingly becoming mainstreamed.
- The Secretary-General reiterates his call for continued resourcing of the trust fund in support of victims of sexual exploitation and abuse, which provides the long-term specialized services required by victims.
- New tools have been developed to mitigate risks and prevent the recruitment of those with a history of sexual exploitation and abuse.
- Partnership with Member States and engagement with civil society and outside experts have been strengthened.
- Nonetheless, allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse continue to be reported.

- We are committed to transparency and shining a light on this scourge. We report allegations publicly on a regular basis and have been for some time.
- There was an increase in numbers of allegations in 2018, but the report paints a picture that goes beyond the numbers.
- It reflects increased awareness and outreach, better reporting tools and improved harmonization across the UN system, among others.
- The numbers also show that our victim-centered approach is paying off – there is an increased trust among victims that it is safe to come forward and that if they report an allegation, it will be looked into.
- Measuring progress is a complex task that cannot be examined through numbers alone. For example, an organization that does not report any allegations, may not have a solid reporting and prevention programmes in place.

- Our partnership with Member States is bearing fruit in ensuring accountability, justice and assistance for victims.

Implementation of the SG's new Approach Strategy

Prioritizing victims' rights and dignity

The Secretary-General appointed the first Victims' Right Advocate (VRA) in 2017.

The VRA is mainstreaming a system-wide focus on victims' rights and dignity through advocacy and consultation with Member States, the UN system and other intergovernmental entities and civil society, among others. The VRA established an inter-agency working group to improve the Organization's approach to facilitating paternity claims arising from sexual exploitation and abuse.

The Office of the VRA is undertaking a pilot mapping to provide an overview of gaps, overlap, lessons learned and best practices in victims' rights approaches and available services, including legal, medical, psychosocial, safety, shelter and livelihood support, through the UN system and locally in eight countries.

The VRA visited Haiti, Jordan and Lebanon to gain a first-hand understanding of how UN actors supported victims, identify gaps and recommend further action, including building stronger partnerships on the ground. She met with victims confidentially and individually.

Field victims' rights advocates deployed in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti and South Sudan, working closely with conduct and discipline teams, played a catalytic role in bringing UN and civil society actors together to support victims and to help them to realize their rights.

A uniform protocol is being developed on the provision of assistance to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse to provide guidance on a coordinated system-wide approach to victim assistance, with linkages among missions and country teams.

A policy has been drafted on a human rights-based approach to sexual exploitation and abuse, complementing conduct and discipline and criminal accountability approaches.

The Trust Fund in Support of Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse held over \$2 million and has implemented projects providing services to victims in several countries.

Risk mitigation and ending impunity

An SEA risk management toolkit, a comprehensive framework for peace operations to identify risk, including practical tools, such as a workplan and risk register has been developed for peacekeeping and will be expanded for use across the Secretariat.

Management Accountability

The SG's compacts with senior managers reporting to him require annual certification that all allegations have been reported and the mandatory training delivered.

Conduct and discipline functions across the Secretariat have been consolidated within the Office of Human Resources for an integrated approach to upholding the standards of conduct required of all uniformed and civilian personnel.

All heads of entities with a field presence are requested to provide the SG with annual action plans to include measures for risk mitigation, community engagement and reporting complaints and processing allegations, outreach campaigns and policies for protecting victims, witnesses and family members.

United Nations personnel

All UN personnel are required to report allegations through the appropriate channels.

The third system-wide survey on sexual exploitation and abuse was administered in 2018 and it indicated that over 95 per cent of personnel knew the rules and their responsibilities to report, with an essentially one-to-one correlation between training received and knowledge of the rules.

Screening

The UN has strengthened recruitment screening. In June 2018, it launched 'Clear Check', an electronic tool aimed at preventing UN personnel from being deployed or reemployed within the system if they have been dismissed for substantiated allegations of SEA, or if they left while an investigation was pending.

Regarding uniformed personnel, Member States are mandated to certify that no member of their personnel has been accused of crimes or misconduct, including allegations of SEA. UN Peacekeeping cross checks proposed personnel against a UN database.

Training

Staff training on SEA is mandatory in the Secretariat, IOM, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNWRA, UN -Women, and WFP. Over 30,00 Secretariat personnel have so far completed the e-learning programme on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Strengthened investigations

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) led the development of draft uniform principles and guidelines for investigation of SEA, which are to be finalized in 2019. Furthermore, OIOS integrated a victim-centred approach into investigation by introducing more robust procedures to obtain victims' consent to participate in the investigative process and sharing information. Meanwhile, UNHCR and UNICEF are both strengthening their investigative capacities.

Reporting and data collection

All UN entities are to report any allegations where there is sufficient information to identify a possible act of SEA involving an identified or identifiable victim or perpetrator.

A standardized Incident Reporting Form (IRF) was field tested in the DR Congo and will be rolled out in further countries in 2019. An online application will soon be available.

Engagement with Member States and civil society

The UN has strengthened its partnerships with Member States through the Voluntary Compact on preventing and addressing sexual exploitation and abuse [signed by 101 countries as of February 2019—this is in addition to addition to existing legal obligations] and the Circle of Leadership on improving prevention and response to sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations operations.

Engagement with civil society and external experts has increased, and the members of the Civil Society Advisory Board were just recently appointed.

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